

A portrait of William Tyndale, a prominent English scholar and Protestant reformer. He is depicted from the chest up, wearing a dark, high-collared garment. He has a full, dark beard and mustache. His right hand is raised, pointing towards the right, while his left hand rests on an open book. The background is a dark, textured brown. In the upper right corner, there is Latin text: "GUILIELMVS TINDALE MARTYR" and "OLIM EX AVLA MAGD".

GUILIELMVS TINDALE MARTYR
OLIM EX AVLA MAGD

THE KING JAMES BIBLE

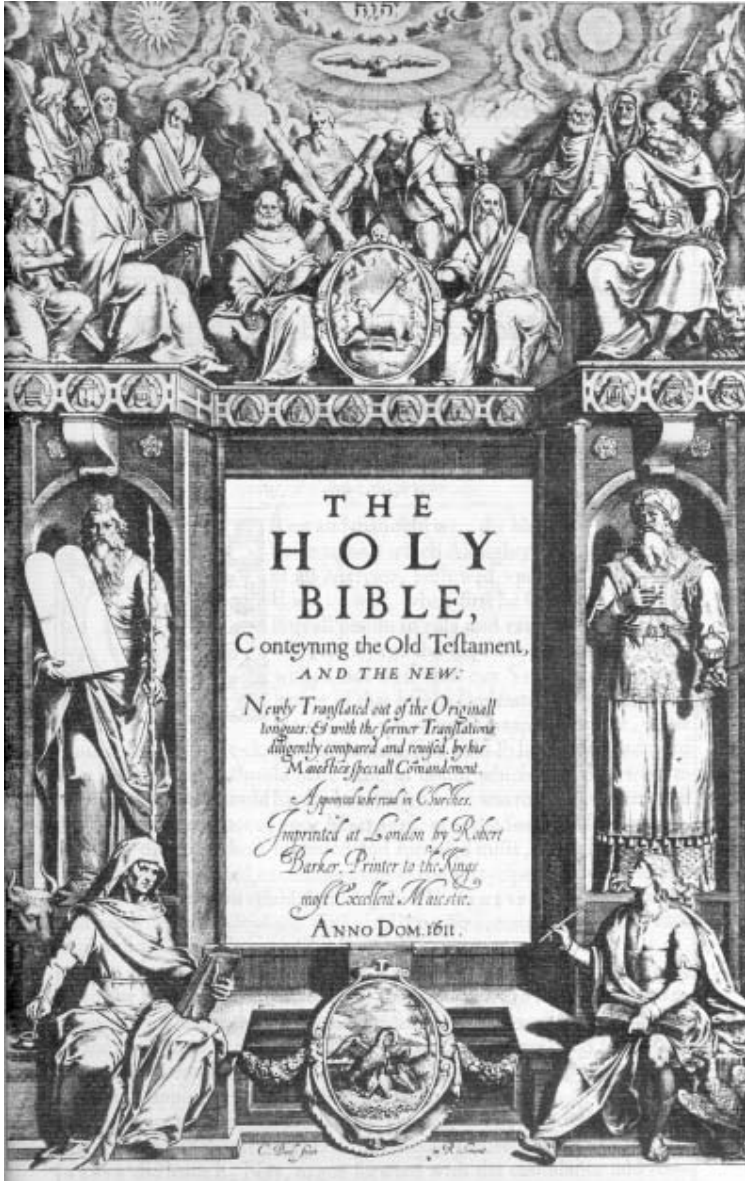
ITS HISTORY AND ITS EXCELLENCE

EDITED BY

J.R. BROOME

The King James Bible

Its History and its Excellence



1: The Title Page of the 1611 Authorised Version

The King James Bible

Its History and its Excellence

edited by J. R. Broome

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Cover Picture:

Unknown man, until very recently always considered to be a portrait of
William Tyndale.

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Preface

The year 2011 marks the 400th Anniversary of the publication of the Authorised Version of the Bible, otherwise known as the King James Bible.

To mark this event the Gospel Standard Trust is publishing a commemorative book. It includes a lecture given by Stephen Hyde (a former Chairman of the Trinitarian Bible Society) at the Annual General Meeting of the Gospel Standard Trust in 2008 on the excellence of the Authorised Version.

Also included are a series of articles by John Broome on the history of Bible translations from the time of John Wycliffe until the 1611 translation with comparable extracts taken from the various translations. (These articles were first published in the *Friendly Companion* in 1965.)

Added to this is a reprint of *The Old Is Better* by Alfred Levell (former Chairman and President of the Trinitarian Bible Society), first published in 1990.

Also included is *The Translators to the Readers* which Myles Smith, later Bishop of Gloucester, wrote for the readers of the new version when it first appeared in 1611 and which was appended for many years to every copy of the Authorised Version. It was reprinted in 1911 by the Trinitarian Bible Society to commemorate the tercentenary of the 1611 version. Sadly it is now omitted from present day editions of the King James Bible.

While we are aware there may be some duplication, the three authors have each looked at the history and excellence of the Authorised Version from different angles. As Stephen Hyde said at the end of his lecture, "the Authorised Version is internationally recognised as the most accurate English translation in the world. It is not perfect, but it is a reliable, faithful translation which has been used of God to the blessing of multitudes over the past four hundred years. Other versions have come and gone, but the Authorised Version remains."

Part 1

The King James Version – A Summary

By Stephen Hyde

Chairman of the Trinitarian Bible Society 1990 2001

Various attempts have been made to translate the Bible into English. These include Bede in 735 AD, and Alfred the Great in 900 AD, but these translations were only parts of the Bible. It was not until 1382 that an English translation was made by John Wycliffe and his followers, the Lollards, and then it was from the Latin Vulgate Bible and not the Greek. (The Latin Vulgate Bible had been translated from the Greek in the period 380 400 AD by a man called Jerome.) This first complete English version was a translation of a translation and was not a translation from the original Greek. Greek learning had been at a low ebb in Europe for many years until the Renaissance. The Renaissance heralded a revival of learning when due to the fall of Constantinople in 1483 many Greeksscholars fled to Europe. During the sixteenth century, when interest in Greek scholarship came to the fore, one result was the printing of an edition of the Greek New Testament, in 1516 by a Dutchman called Erasmus. A number of Greek printed texts followed including one by Robert Stephens in 1550 AD. This edition, with some small modifications by Beza, eventually became the accepted Text produced by Elzevir in 1633, now known as the Received Text (Textus Receptus).

The first steps towards the Authorised Version were brought about by a man called William Tyndale. He was born in 1494 and was a very educated man who could speak eight languages fluently. He had been educated at Oxford. He took up a position as tutor in a family in the Cotswolds and while there, he was appalled at the ignorance of the clergy that he met at his master's table and by accusations of heresy which he received. He resolved as is well known to "cause a boy that driveth a plough to know more of the Scripture than they." Sadly he was driven from London and England and fled at first to Cologne and then to Worms

The King James Version – A Summary

where he issued a complete New Testament in about 1525. He sacrificed much and for his efforts was martyred at Vilvorde in Belgium in 1535. Here was a very able, clever man but by the grace of God directed to translate the Bible into English from the original Greek. For a large part of his life he worked in a small cold room, and covered with a threadbare overcoat to keep him warm, there by candlelight translating the Scriptures. On one occasion he was on a voyage and the ship was shipwrecked and he lost all his work that he had done and the money he had. Far from giving up his work, he went back and started again and so by the grace of God produced his version of the New Testament in English.

Much of the Authorised Version, is in fact Tyndale's work. Undoubtedly he has not had the recognition that he deserved. About ninety two per cent of the New Testament is in fact his work. In the preface to a recently published edition of Tyndale's New Testament the writer says, "The Authorised Version has been loved throughout the English speaking world and considered a particular glory of English letters right through the sixty six books of the Bible from "And God said, Let there be light: and there was light," to "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

Phrases of beauty have been admired: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:" "With God all things are possible:" "In him we live, and move, and have our being:" "Be not weary in well doing:" "Fight the good fight of faith:" "Lay hold on eternal life:" "Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith:" "Behold, I stand at the door and knock." All these phrases are Tyndale. Sometimes there are phrases which we might think are proverbial. We may wonder whether they are, in actual fact, in the Bible or whether they are from Shakespeare such as: "Am I my brother's keeper?" "The salt of the earth:" "The signs of the times:" "Where two or three are gathered together:" "The burden and heat of the day:" "They made light of it:" "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak:" "Eat, drink, and be merry:" "Clothed, and in his right mind:" "Scales fell from his eyes:" "The powers that be:" "Filthy lucre:" "Let brotherly love continue:" "The patience of Job." These are not proverbs; these are all in the Authorised Version and were all Tyndale's work. So all these phrases and many more were taken by the Authorised Version translators directly from Tyndale. Throughout the New Testament where the Authorised Version is

The King James Version – A Summary

direct and simple and strong, it repeats Tyndale, yet Tyndale's name is never mentioned. In the long preface of the 1611 edition of the Authorised Version, the translators acknowledge only in passing other English translations.

When Tyndale died, Myles [also spelt Miles] Coverdale took up the battle and published a complete translation of the Bible in 1535. This was followed by the Matthew Bible, then the Taverner Bible [a revision of Matthew's Bible] in 1539. Great Bible. Translations did not stop; this was followed by the Great Bible in 1540 and the Geneva Bible as a complete volume in 1560. The Geneva Bible was produced through a time of severe Protestant persecution. This version had marginal notes exposing the errors of the Roman Catholic Church. It was popular and remained in use long after the Authorised Version was published in 1611 being printed as late as 1644. It was in the Geneva translation that verses were first introduced into the English Bible. It was the version used by Cromwell and Shakespeare. The Bishop's Bible was commissioned by Queen Elizabeth I because of the controversial nature of the marginal notes that had appeared on the Geneva Bible and to replace what was then the Great Bible in churches. It was completed and presented to her in October 1568, but it never achieved popularity, although it was the one that James I stated should be used by the translators of the Authorised Version. All of these translations were based on various editions of the Greek Received Text.

In the opening months of 1604 a conference was held at Hampton Court Palace and presided over by James I. This had been requested by the Puritans although they were greatly outnumbered by their opponents. On the second day, Dr John Reynolds, one of the only four Puritans present but one of the greatest scholars of his age, requested the King, that because of the imperfections of the previous versions, another translation of the Bible be undertaken. It was agreed there should be a new translation as consistent as could be to the original Hebrew and Greek. It was to be printed without any marginal notes and to be the only version used in all Anglican churches in times of divine service. Since that date it has been revised on four occasions, in 1629, 1638 and 1762, and finally in 1769 at Oxford. It is this edition which is used as the Authorised Version today. Although there were numerous minor amendments,

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principally spellings, italics and punctuation etc., no major changes have occurred since the 1611 Edition. Since then other manuscripts have been discovered, notably the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus Codices, but it has been established that these two were in fact developed from a corrupted Greek Text. These corrupted manuscripts were used by Westcott and Hort as the Greek text from which they produced the Revised Version of the Bible in 1881. Since then many further translations in the twentieth century have been based on them, or been used together with the Received Text to produce defective translations.

In the Authorised Version there are in the margins alternative readings, where the translators were not sure which word to adopt, so they put an alternative rendering in the margin. Then also where the English language limits the translation, words are incorporated to make the sense and these are placed in italics. We believe the Authorised Version is the best English translation at the present time, but realise that Luther was converted using the Roman Catholic Latin Vulgate, which we would not consider to be actually a good version today. The first Greek translation from the Hebrew of the Old Testament (the Septuagint) was in use when the Lord Jesus was on earth. He quoted from it, which explains why in the New Testament there are variations between the Hebrew Old Testament and the way it is quoted in the New Testament.

Why is the Authorised Version translation the best available English translation today? Firstly the spiritual and linguistic qualifications of those who undertook the translation of the Authorised Version has never since been equalled. William Tyndale laid the foundation of over ninety per cent of that work, together with Myles Coverdale, to be followed by a body of very able and gracious men who formed the large committee which produced the Authorised Version in 1611. Secondly it is because of the form of text they used. This was the best Text of the Hebrew and Greek, the Masoretic Hebrew Text, and the Greek Received Text. Also the translators used a form of translation being as literal as possible and only free when necessary. It is the English translation that has borne the test of time and has been the instrument under the Lord's blessing of bringing salvation to millions of people throughout the English speaking world. Although there have been more than a hundred other versions of the English Bible published in the twentieth century, it is still acknowledged as

The King James Version – A Summary

being the standard Bible in the English language. Other versions may in specific instances give better translations of certain words or phrases but they are deficient and some very deficient in other areas.

This is internationally recognised as the most accurate English translation in the world. It is not perfect, but it is a reliable, faithful translation which has been used of God to the blessing of multitudes over the past four hundred years. Other versions have come and gone but the Authorised Version remains. In Nehemiah's day, we read (Nehemiah 8. 8), "So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading." The Bible is a book to be preached. Preach the Word. It is the duty of ministers to open the meaning of the texts of Scripture, giving the sense and cause those that hear to understand the reading. We have a Bible in a reliable translation in our own language. Do we read the Bible as the Word of God; does it speak to our heart? Now that is a blessing if when you and I read the Authorised Version, it speaks to our heart. What does it tell us? It tells us it is the Word of God; it is that which conveys life to our soul. May we have the evidence that it speaks to our heart. Although we know this is the best translation in English available, let us not settle back, let us read it and may God bless it to our souls for His honour and glory and for our eternal good.

(The above Summary is the substance of an address delivered at the Annual General Meetings of the Gospel Standard Trust at Uffington, Oxfordshire on 17th May 2008.)

Part 2

The History of the English Bible

By J.R. Broome

1. Introduction

The year 2011 marks the 400th anniversary of the King James Authorised Version of the Bible. Throughout the sixteenth century from 1525 to 1568, scholars, who included William Tyndale, Myles Coverdale, William Whittingham and the Elizabethan bishops, had translated the Scriptures into English from the original languages of Hebrew and Greek and between them refined the translation. This work was to be the basis of the new translation that was carried out on the instructions of King James I and completed in 1611.

Among the English versions of the sixteenth century were Tyndale's New Testament (1525), the Coverdale Bible (1535), the Matthew Bible (1537), the Great Bible (1540), the Geneva Bible (1560) and the Bishops' Bible (1568). The Great Bible, sponsored by Henry VIII and his Chancellor, Thomas Cromwell, was the version appointed in 1541 to be used in all Anglican churches. The Geneva Bible was the version favoured by the Puritans, but it had annotations which caused offence in royal circles and prevented its use by the Anglican community. The scholarship of its translators exceeded by far that of the Elizabethan Anglican Bishops whose version of 1568 was never fully accepted in the Church of England.

So while the Great Bible remained the official version of the Church of England, other versions such as the Geneva Bible were in common use. This led to a demand for a new translation, omitting all annotations, which would be nationally acceptable. A panel of forty seven scholars was approved by the King on 30th June, 1604, and the final revision came from the printers in 1611. The work of these scholars was not entirely original.

Introduction

They were following on from the work of previous translators beginning with John Wycliffe in the fourteenth century. They were conducting a revision of the work of other men. Between eighty and ninety per cent of their version was the work of William Tyndale, though his name is nowhere mentioned in the Authorised Version. A study of each of the translators whose work preceded the 1611 version, reveals that the new Bible owed something to all of the scholars who had laboured throughout the sixteenth century, some, as William Tyndale, at the expense of their own lives.

An overruling, divine hand was watching over this work, against which there was so much opposition from the Roman Catholic Church, which had declared John Wycliffe a heretic and in the sixteenth century attempted to collect and burn all the English Scriptures. Their aim was to keep the Scriptures from the hands of the common people. The Bible used in their own churches was the Latin Vulgate Bible, which only their priests could understand. But the ambition of William Tyndale, whom they were eventually to send to the stake at Vilvorde in Flanders on 6th October, 1536, was vividly expressed in his own words,

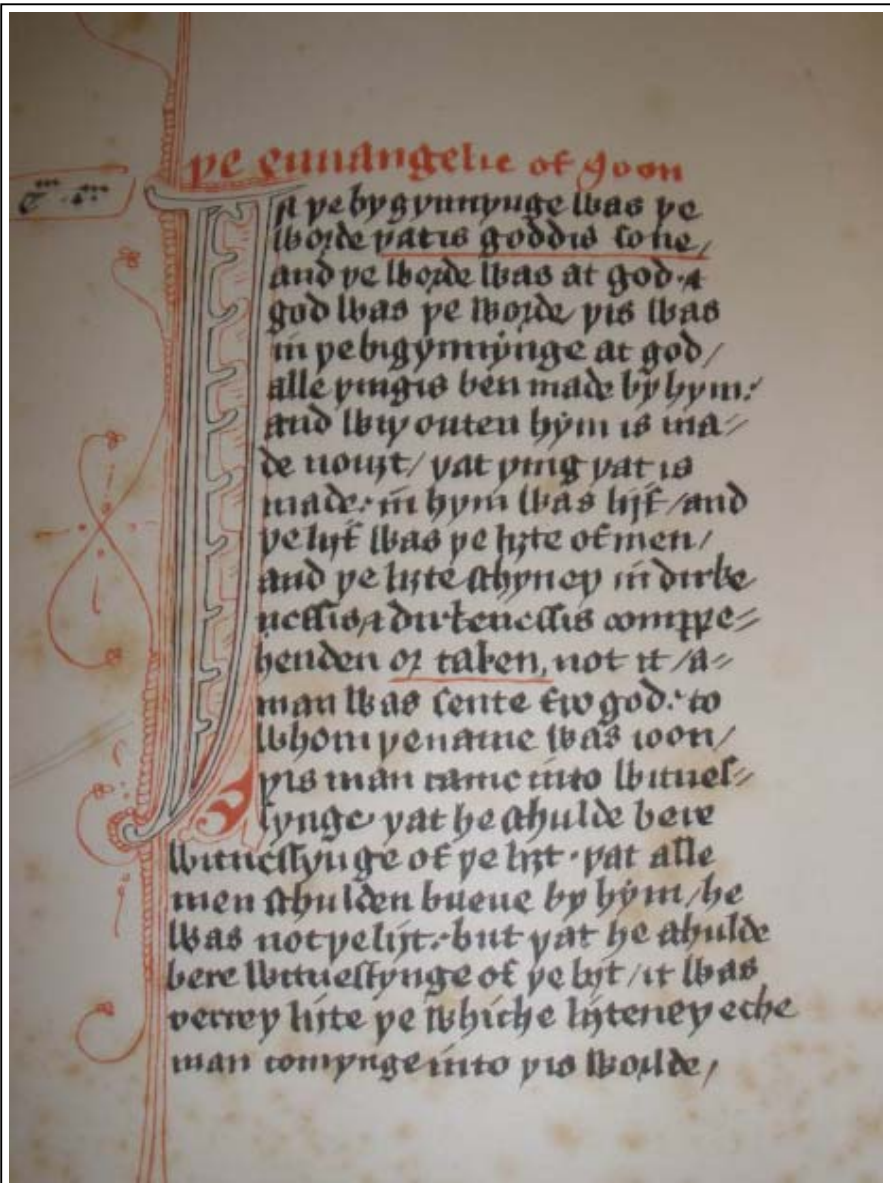
I defy the Pope and all his laws; if God spare my life, ere many years I will cause a boy that driveth the plough shall know more of the scripture than thou doest.

The following chapters, outlining the life and work of the translators and the various editions of the Bible which they produced, trace the progress of the work until the final revision of 1611. History shows that it was a composite effort—the idea being generated by John Wycliffe and his followers the Lollards; the advent of printing which made possible the rapid production of large quantities of Bibles (as opposed to the laborious work in Wycliffe's day on manually copying); the coming of the Renaissance when Biblical Greek manuscripts came to Europe from Constantinople; the work of Erasmus, the Renaissance scholar, in printing his Greek New Testament; and the ability of able Greek and Hebrew scholars such as William Tyndale, William Whittingham and Theodore Beza, the successor of John Calvin at Geneva, reckoned to be the most able Biblical scholar of his day.

All these factors combined under the hand of God to produce a reliable English Bible, brought together in over a century, to be blessed to

The History of the English Bible

untold thousands in the generations following. Still today it commands a unique position in the English speaking world. In the United States it is always known as the King James Bible; in the United Kingdom as the Authorised Version (the AV). Of modern translations, none have obtained the universal acceptance that has been obtained and maintained by the Authorised Version. In this year in which its 400th Anniversary is celebrated, we can with gratitude look back to those godly men who devoted their lives to the laborious work, in the days of quills and candles, a work which was a labour of love to them, a work which has born immense, untold fruit in the blessing of the Word to an untold number of immortal souls whom the Lord has seen fit to convert through His Holy Word in their own tongue.



2: John's Gospel Ch.1 from the Wycliffe Bible

2. John Wycliffe

John Wycliffe was born in Yorkshire in 1324 and died at Lutterworth in Leicestershire on the last day of the year 1384. He was bitterly hated by the Catholic Church for his beliefs. He was for ten years Professor of Divinity in the University of Oxford (1372–1382), and was largely responsible for the first translation of the Bible into English, a work done by himself and his followers in the University. By a decree of the Council of Constance, his body was disinterred in 1428 and burnt, and his ashes were thrown into the Swift, a river which flows through Lutterworth.

The translation was from the Latin Vulgate Bible of Jerome, the version used in translation by the Roman Catholic Church today. The Vulgate itself had been translated about 380–400 AD into Latin from the Greek, and from second century Latin and Hebrew sources. It was the only source available to Wycliffe and his followers. Later translations from Tyndale onwards used the Greek text published in 1516 at the time of the Reformation by Erasmus. The Old Testament, originally written in Hebrew, was translated about 300 BC into Greek for certain Greek speaking Jews living at Alexandria and is known as the Septuagint Version. The New Testament books were written by the Apostles in Greek. Early manuscripts exist of the complete Bible in Greek; such a manuscript copy is the famous Codex Sinaiticus dated to the fourth century AD which is kept in the British Museum. But Wycliffe had no access to these Greek manuscripts as it was not until the sixteenth century that Greek again became a language known to Biblical scholars, such as William Tyndale, and Greek manuscripts became available for study.

So Wycliffe translated from the Vulgate Latin and this is not so inaccurate as one might expect. "To what extent Wycliffe did the translation work with his own pen it will hardly ever be possible to ascertain with perfect certainty: but so much as this is certain, that it was he who first conceived the idea, that he took a personal share along with others in the labour of its execution, and that the accomplishment of the task was due to his enthusiastic zeal and judicious guidance" (*John Wycliffe and his English Precursors* – Professor Lechler D.D.). Among the others who helped was Nicholas of Hereford, who translated most of the

John Wycliffe

Old Testament. His original manuscript has been preserved and is kept in the Bodleian Library at Oxford. It breaks off in the Apocrypha, and as it is known that in June 1382 Nicholas was excommunicated by the Catholic Church and later imprisoned at Rome, this would explain the unfinished nature of his work. This would also suggest that Wycliffe himself was at work on the New Testament translation and that a possible date for the completion of the whole Bible is sometime in 1382.

The whole work was later revised. It has been suggested that this was done by John Purvey, Wycliffe's Curate at Lutterworth. This revision was completed by 1388, four years after Wycliffe's death in 1384. There are in existence 150 manuscripts of this revised edition of the translation, all copies made by the laborious process of handwritten copying. Our extracts are taken from a print of a manuscript dated to about 1389-90, kept at the Bodleian Library, printed by Oxford University Press in 1850.

Extracts from the Wycliffe Translation

a). The Gospel of Matheu. Chapter 16, verses 18 to 21.

18. And Y seye to thee for thou art Petre and vpon this stoon I shall bilde my churche and the gatis of helle shulen nat han migt ageins it.

19. And to thee I shal geue the keies of the kyngdam of heuenes; and what euer thou shalt bynde vpon erthe shal be bounden and in heuenes; and what euer thou shalt vnbynde vpon erthe shal be vnbounden and in heuenes.

20. Thanne he comaundide to his oken ul that thei shulden seie to no man, that he was Crist.

21. Fro that tyme Jhesus bygan for to shewe to his oken ul, that it byhouith hym to go to Jerusalem, and oken many thingus of the eldris and scibis and oken u of oken u; and be sleyn, and the thridde day ryse up agein.

b). The Gospel of Mark. Chapter 1, verses 1 to 5.

1. The bigynnyng of the gospel of Jhesu Crist, the sone of God.

2. As it is writun in Ysaie, the prophete, Lo ! I sende myn angel oken thi face, that schal make thi weye redy oken thee.

The History of the English Bible

3. The voice of oon cryinge in desert, Make ye redy the weye of the Lord, make ye his pathis oken ul.

4. Jhon was in desert baptisyng, and preachinge the baptym of penaunce into remiszioun of synnes.

5. And alle men of Jerusalem wenten out to him, and al the cuntre of Judee; and weren baptisid of him in the flood of Jordan, knowlechinge her synnes.

c). The Gospel of Luke. Chapter 24, verses 13 to 17.

13. And lo! Tweyne of hem wenten in that day to a castel, that was fro Jerusalem in space of sixty furlongis, by name Emaws.

14. And thei spaken to gidere of alle thes thingis that hadden falle.

15. And it was don while thei talkiden, and sougten with hem silf, Jhesu him silf neigyng, wente with hem.

16. Sothli her ygen weren hulden lest thei knewen him.

17. And he seide to hem Whiche ben thes wordis, that ye speken to gidere goyng and ye ben sorwful ?

d). The Gospel of Joon. Chapter 1, verses 1 to 5.

1. In the bigynnyng was the word, and the word was at God, and God was the word.

2. This was in the bigynnyng at God.

3. Alle thingis ben maad by hym, and with outen him is maad nogt, that thing that is maad.

4. Was lyf in him, and the lyf was the ligt of men;

5. And the ligt schyneth in derknessis, and derknessis oken not it.

The Newe Testament

dylygently corrected and compared with the Greke

By

W I L L Y A M T I N D A L E :

and fynessed in the yere of oure Lorde God.

A. M. D. & XXXIIII.

in the moneth of Nouember.

The Newe Testament,

imprinted at Anwerp

by

Marten Emperowr

Anno. M. D. XXXIIII.

3: Front and Imprint Pages from a Reprint of Tyndale's New Testament

3. William Tyndale

William Tyndale was born in Gloucestershire about 1484 and studied first at Oxford and later at Cambridge, obtaining degrees at both universities. Leaving Cambridge he became tutor to the children of Sir John Walsh, at Little Sodbury in Gloucestershire. Here he conceived the idea which he expressed in very forceful language to an educated Catholic who asserted that, "we were better be without God's Laws than the Pope's." Tyndale replied, " I defy the Pope and all his laws; if God spare my life, ere many years I will cause a boy that driveth the plough shall know more of the scripture than thou doest."

Shortly after this Tyndale went to London to see Bishop Cuthbert Tunstall, to ask his help in making a translation of the New Testament into English from the Greek New Testament published in 1516 by Erasmus. Tyndale commented on this visit, "My lord answered his house was full ... and advised me to seek in London, where he said I could not lack a service. And so in London I abode a year and marked the course of the world and heard our praters, I would say our preachers, how they boasted themselves and their high authority, and beheld the pomp of our prelates ... and understood at the last, not only that there was no room in my Lord of London's palace to translate the New Testament, but also that there was no place to do it in all England." Sad at the lack of wisdom of the churchmen of his day, Tyndale left the shores of his native land for Hamburg, with the help of £10 given him by a London merchant, Henry Monmouth, and there undisturbed he completed his translation.

Before December 1525, a copy of the translation was in the hands of a Cologne printer, and eighty pages of an edition of 3,000 copies in small quarto had been printed, when a man who hated Reformation teaching persuaded the Cologne magistrates to stop the work. Tyndale, with his helper, William Roy, fled along the Rhine to Worms, taking 'the eighty pages', and so it was at Worms and not at Cologne that the first printed edition of the New Testament in English was published. A single copy of the eighty pages printed at Cologne has survived and is now in the British Museum. At Worms a quarto copy is supposed to have been printed but nothing has survived of it. What has survived is an octavo edition. This

William Tyndale

exists in a copy at the Baptist College at Bristol and another copy in St. Paul's Cathedral Library. 6,000 copies of the quarto and octavo editions are thought to have been printed. The eighty pages of the Cologne edition contain Tyndale's Prologue (reformation teaching) and the text of the Gospel of Matthew down to the middle of chapter 22. To this text were added marginal notes. These notes were omitted in the Worms octavo edition. (These notes are given below where they relate to our extracts from Tyndale's translation of the Gospel of Matthew).

In his translation, Tyndale principally used the Greek Text. It is probable that he referred to Luther's German translation, the Vulgate Latin, and a Latin New Testament of Erasmus translated from the Greek. We have Tyndale's own words to show that he had no manuscript of Wycliffe to help him—he said, "Nor was I holpe with English of any that had interpreted the same or such like thing in the Scripture befortime." But his own work set once and for all the language of the English Bible, so that later Protestant versions of the New Testament contain a very high proportion of his work and are rather a revision of his work than a retranslation.

After the octavo edition of Worms there exists no new edition until August 1534. During this period he was translating, with the help of Myles Coverdale, the Old Testament. Copies of his New Testament were on sale in England in the Spring of 1526, smuggled into the country by merchants who were favourable to the new teaching. In the autumn of 1526 the English bishops officially condemned his translation. In the years 1526-1534, several reprints were made without Tyndale's official consent. Eventually, in November 1534, he revised his work and had an octavo edition printed at Antwerp.

In May 1535 Tyndale was tricked by Catholic agents into leaving the free city of Antwerp (where Protestants could live unmolested) and once outside its walls was arrested by the Catholic Imperial authorities and taken prisoner to Vilvorde in Flanders. After more than a year's imprisonment he was brought to the stake, strangled, and his body burnt on 6th October, 1536. His dying utterance was, "Lord open the King of England's eyes," a prayer answered in the following year when Henry VIII authorised the publication of an English Bible, of which the New Testament was largely Tyndale's work!

The History of the English Bible

Tyndale never completed translating the whole Bible. With the help of Myles Coverdale he had, in 1529, translated the five Books of Moses and published them the following year. Probably he had translated the Old Testament as far as Chronicles when his life was taken from him. The completion of the Bible translation into English was left for Coverdale who must have been grieved and yet strongly urged on by the death of his friend.

How the New Testament came to be sold in England and with what persecution the buyers met from the Catholic authorities is a long story. One interesting episode occurred when Cuthbert Tunstall, Bishop of London, became acquainted with an English merchant who knew the channels of sale for the illegal New Testaments. This man, who favoured Tyndale, pretended to agree with the Bishop in his hatred of the Reformed teaching and offered to buy up all the New Testaments he could obtain, if the Bishop would give him a high price, so that the Bishop could burn them. The Bishop agreed to this readily, but was not aware that his money found its way to Tyndale, who used it to print even larger numbers of the New Testaments.

And so the Lord prospered the work and as John Foxe says in his *Book of Martyrs*, "When these godly books of Tyndale, especially his translation of the New Testament, began to come into men's hands, they wrought great profit to the godly." In all, between 1526–1566 when the last edition was issued, more than forty editions of Tyndale's New Testament were printed. As many of these editions are known only by single surviving copies, and as the Catholic Church used all its powers to burn them as fast as they came out, it is possible that the evidence of other editions has been lost.

Extracts from William Tyndale's Translation

a). The Gospell of Mathew. Chapter 16, verses 18 to 21.

18. And I saye also vnto the, that thou arte Peter, and apon this roocke I wyll bylde my congregacion, and the gates off hell shall nott prevayle a geynst it.

William Tyndale

19. And I wyll geve vnto the the keyes of the kyng-dom of heven ; and whatsoever thou byndest vpon erth, yt shall be bounde in heven ; and whatsoever thou lowsest on erthe, yt shalbe lowsed in heven.

20. Then he charged his disciples that they shulde tell no man, that he was Jesus Christ.

21. From that tyme forth Jesus began to shewe vnto hys disciples, howe that he must go vnto Jerusalem, and suffer many thinges of the seniores, and of the hye prestes, and of the scribes ; and must be killed, and ryse agayne the thirde daye.

(Note – Peter i the Greeks sygnieth a stpone i Eglysshc. This confession is the rocke. Howe is Simo bariona or simo ionas sons called Peter ? Because of his confession. Whosoever the thys wyse confesseth of Christ the same is called Peter. Now is this confession so too all that are true Christian. Thus every Christian man-or woman is a Peter . . . Rede Erasmus' anotations. It was nott for nought that Christ badd beware of the leuen of the Pharisees . . . The evagelion, that foyfull tidynges is nowe biterer than the old lawe. Christes burthe is heavier than the rocke of Moses/oure condicion and estate is ten tymes more grievous than was ever the Jewes. The Pharisees have so levened Christes swete breed).

b). The Gospell of S Mark. Chapter 1 verses 1 to 5.

1. The begynnyng off the gospel of Jesu Christ, the sonne off God.

2. As yt ys written in the prophettes, Beholde! I sende my messenger before thy face, whych shall prepare thy way before the.

3. The voyce of won that cryeth in the wildernes, Prepare ye the way off the Lorde, make his pathes streyght.

4. Jhon did baptise in the wyldernes and preache the baptim or repentaunee, for the remission of synnes.

5. And all the londe off Jewry, and they of Jerusalem went out vnto hym; and were all baptised of hym in the ryver Jordan, knowledgyng theire synnes.

c). The Gospell of S Luke. Chapter 24 verses 13 to 17.

13. And beholde! two of them went that same daye to a toune, whych was from Jerusalem about thre scoore forlonges, called Emaus.

14. And they talked togedder of all thinges which had happened.

15. And it chaused, as they commened togedder, and reasoned, that Jesus hym silfe drue neare, and went with them.

16. But their eyes were holden, that they coude nott knowe hym.

17. And he sayde vnto them, What maner of com-municacions are these, that ye have one to another as ye walke, and are sadde ?

d). The Gospell off Sancte Jhon. Chapter 1 verses 1 to 5.

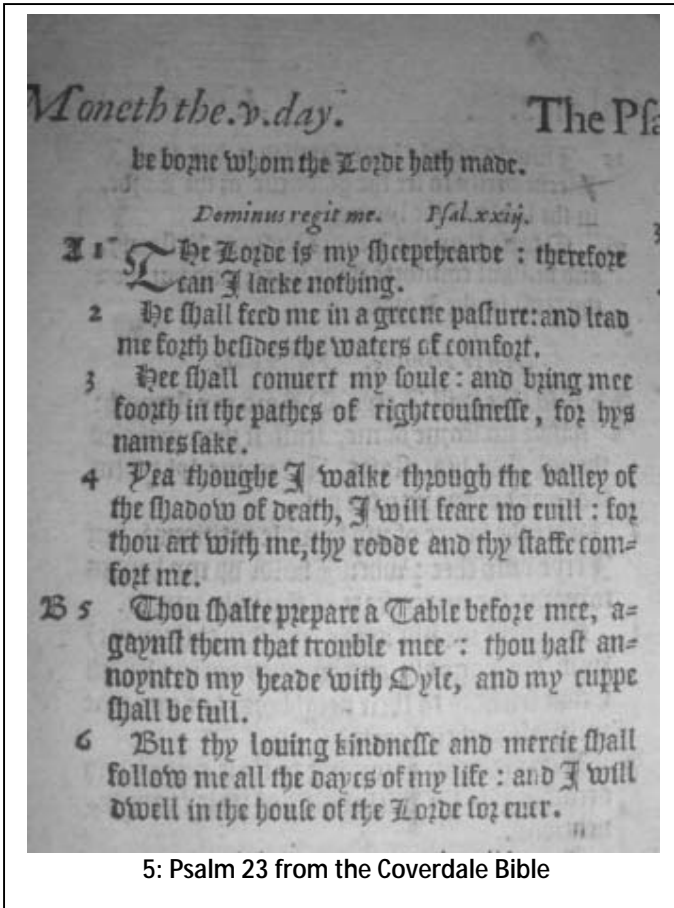
1. In the begynnyng was that worde, and that worde was with God, and God was thatt worde.
2. The same was in the begynnyng wyth God.
3. All thynges were made by it, and with out it was made noo thinge, that was made.
4. In it was lyfe, and lyfe was the light of men;
5. And the light shyneth in darcknes, and darcknes comprehended it not.



4: Title page of the Coverdale Bible 1535

4. Myles Coverdale

“Lord open the King of England’s eyes.” This final prayer of Tyndale was being answered almost as he died, for in October 1535 the first complete English Bible was printed (probably at Cologne) in Germany. It was the work of Myles Coverdale (1488–1569). He was a native of York and had graduated at Cambridge. His work was not of the same high scholarship as Tyndale’s. None the less, next to Tyndale, he did most to produce the



5: Psalm 23 from the Coverdale Bible

English Bible. Coverdale had originally been a friar, but at the time of the Reformation he had been brought to see the truth, left his order and in

Myles Coverdale

1528 fled to the Continent, where he helped Tyndale at Hamburg in translating the Old Testament.

In 1535 he returned to England and received royal patronage from Anne Boleyn, Queen of Henry VIII, and the Chancellor, Thomas Cromwell. He dedicated his Bible of 1535 to Henry VIII. He also had a silent supporter in the new Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Cranmer, appointed in 1533. In December 1534, the Convocation of Canterbury had asked Henry VIII to authorise a translation of the Bible into English. But nothing came of the request, since many of the bishops were not so favourable to the Reformation ideas as Cranmer. When in the interval Coverdale's translation came to Henry's notice, dedicated to him, he gave it to ecclesiastical advisers to assess its merits as a translation. They criticized it for various deficiencies but could find no heresy. Henry's reaction was, "If there be no heresy, then in God's name let it go abroad among our people." And so the royal permission was granted and Tyndale's prayer answered.

The sources Coverdale used for his translation are a little obscure. The New Testament was undoubtedly a revision of Tyndale's work. He says in the preface to the Bible that he used German and Latin translations. He was not able to translate directly from Hebrew and Greek, since he did not know these languages. He makes no reference to being helped by Tyndale's work, but undoubtedly he used Tyndale's translations, as far as Tyndale had gone. The Church in England and Henry VIII were not favourable to Tyndale and so it was not expedient to refer to Tyndale in the Preface to his Bible. The German would have been Luther's translation; the Latin, the Vulgate Bible. There was also a new Latin translation available, done by a Catholic scholar in 1528 from original Greek texts, and another German version of Luther adapted to the Swiss dialect of German and published at Zurich 1524–29. The evidence of his dependence on the German appears in such compound words as Romans ch. 8 v. 26, "unoutspeakable [for groanings] which cannot be uttered." Coverdale's Bible was the first to use chapter summaries and was the first to separate the Books of the Apocrypha from the rest of the Old Testament and print them as an appendix at the end.

It seems extraordinary that such a Protestant translation should have been authorised by Henry VIII—for the King was politically a Protestant, in

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that he rejected the Pope's claims over England politically; but theologically he remained a staunch Catholic to his end. The answer to this problem is to be found in the influence Anne Boleyn exerted over him. When she fell from favour and was executed in May 1536, Coverdale's Bible also fell out of favour. At one time it seemed possible that it might have been authorised for use in every English parish church. It was reprinted twice in 1537, once in 1550 and again in 1553. Coverdale eventually found it necessary to leave England in 1540 and return to Europe where he remained until Henry's death in 1547. But before he went, he was given the task of editing the Great Bible of 1539.

On the accession of Edward VI, Coverdale returned to England and in 1551 became Bishop of Exeter. He was deposed in 1553 on the accession of Mary and spared from the stake and the fire through the intervention of the King of Denmark and allowed to go into exile for a third time. During the last period of his exile he was at Geneva where he was in contact with John Knox. He returned to England finally in 1559 and took part at the installation of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Matthew Parker, in that year. During the last ten years of his life he kept out of public affairs, partly because of old age and partly because he disagreed with the Elizabethan Church Settlement, his views tending more towards a purer form of the Reformed faith. But it is interesting to know that he was not idle and took some part in the work of the Geneva Bible before its publication in 1560. He died in 1569, over eighty years of age, having been preserved, like his friend Knox, from sudden death at the hands of the enemies of truth and having used the talents the Lord had given him for the lasting benefit to the English speaking peoples.

Extracts from Coverdale's Translation

Ruth i. 16-18.

Ruth answered : Speake not to me thereof, that I shulde forsake the, and turne backe from the: whitherso ever thou goest, thither wil I go also : and loke where thou abydest, there wil I abide also : Thy people is my people, and thy God is my God. Loke where thou diest, there wil dye, and

even there wil I also be buried. The LORDE do this and that unto me, death only shal departe us.

Now whan she sawe, that she was stedfastly mynded to go with her, she spake nomore to her thereof.

Matthew xvi. 18-21.

And I saie to ye: Thou art Peter, & upo this rpcke wil I builde my congregacion : and ye gates of hell shal not prevayle agaynst it. And the keyesof heaven wil I geue unto the: Whatsoever thou shalt bynde upon earth, shalbe bounde also in heaven : & whatsoever thou shalt lowse upon earth, shalbe lowsed in heave. Then charged he his disciples that they shulde tell no man that he was Jesus Christ.

From that tyme forth beganne Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffre many thinges of the elders, and of the hie prestes, and of the scribes, and be put to death, and ryse againe the thirde daye.

Mark i. 1-5.

This is the begynnyng of the gospell of Jesus Christ the sonne of God, as it is wrytte in the prophetes. Beholde, I sende my messenger before thy face, which shal prepare thy waye before the. The voyce of a cryer is in the wyldernes: Prepare the waye of the LORDE, make his pathes straight.

Jhon was in the wyldernes, and baptysed, and preached the baptye of amendment, for the remyssion of synnes. And there wente out unto him the whole londe of Jewry, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptysed of him in Jordan, and knowledged their synnes.

Luke xxiv. 13-17.

And beholde, two of them wente that same daye to a towne (which was thre score furloges from Jersulaem) whose name was called Emaus. And they talked together of all these thinges that had happened. And it chaunced as they were thus talkinge and reasonyng together, Jesus himself drue nye, and wente with them. But their eyes were holden, that they shulde not knowe him. And he sayde unto them: What maner of comunicacions are these that ye have one to another as ye walke, and are sad.

John i. 1-5.

In the begynnyng was the worde, and the worde was with God, and God was that worde. The same was in the begynnyng with God. All thinges were made by the same, and without the same was made nothinge that was made. In him was the life, and the life was the light of men : and the light shyneth in the darknesse, and the darkness comprehended it not.