

## A SAMPLER OF THE PRODUCTION, TEACHING, AND MARKETING OF THE ENGLISH BIBLE

I thank you for inviting me to this significant occasion and congratulate Dr. Hodo for his vision, the HBU's board, administration, staff and donors for establishing this Bible museum.

Why have a Bible museum? One obvious answer is to preserve Bibles which for any number of reasons most people will never be able to know about let alone see. But why should we care to know and investigate them, especially why should Americans who, very generally speaking, are not particularly interested in history. Just from English Bibles, the motives for translating, the dangers of translating, the notes for explaining and debating, the acceptance or lack thereof, and even the formatting can reveal history, politics, and theologies of their times. Daniel observed from books that the 70 years of Babylonian captivity was nearly at an end. Darius found in his archives the decree of Cyrus to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem. (Ezra 6). It was from a library that sleepless Ahasuerus read of Mordecai's warning which saved the king's life and resulted in Mordecai's promotion and Haman's hanging. (Esther 6). In the synagogue at Nazareth our Lord read from the scroll of Isaiah.

[ But the greatest library is the Bible itself. Jerome called it the Divine Library c. 400 AD. ] The word Bible comes from the Greek biblia meaning books. By 13<sup>th</sup> c. a fortunate solecism (an abnormality) the neuter plural biblia came to be regarded as a feminine singular so that the books became the Book. And, of course, the book is a unified library of 66 books. In this library are the truths about creation, miracles, the spirit world, ethics, the future, forgiveness. ]

So many avenues could be explored about English Bibles, but I want today to focus of three motives or incentives for having English Bibles throughout its history. The first and basic one was simply to produce a Bible in English. Both Wycliffite and Tyndale Bibles stem from that motive.

Wycliffe's incentive to produce an English Bible grew out of his concern over the status of the Roman Catholic church in English society of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Instead of the feudal hierarchical ( and often luxurious and tax free) position of the church in society, he saw each individual as immediately responsible to obey God's law. But how could one unless he knew what God's law was? Hence the need for a Bible people could understand; i.e., one in English rather than Latin. As a result people eagerly sought even the loan of a page of the Wycliffite Bible. Too, having a Bible in other than Latin helped spur the Reformation. A pure motive and a <sup>worthy</sup> successful product.

The torch Wycliffe ignited passed to William Tyndale who was moved by a similar motivation--to produce an understandable translation (in contrast to 'Wycliffe's Latinized English). Tyndale once said to a learnen man: "if God spare my life, ere many years I will cause a boy that driveth the plough to know more Scripture than you do." During the century between Wycliffite and Tyndale Bibles many important changes had taken place

in Europe. Nationalism was on the rise. Gutenberg printed the first Bible in 1454. The first Greek grammar 1476; the first Greek lexicon 1492; the first Hebrew grammar in 1503; the first Hebrew Bible and lexicon 1506; the first Greek NT in 1516. Gutenberg was Latin. The first printed vernacular was in German. By the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century the printed Bible was also issued in Italian, Spanish, French, Dutch, Danish, Russian, Slavic, Bohemian, but not in English and certainly not an English one based, not on the Vulgate, but on available Greek and Hebrew texts. Tyndale possessed the depth of scholarship, the felicity of translation skill, and the persistence of will to accomplish the task at all costs. Whether smuggled into England or purchased by the bishop of London so that he could burn them, Tyndale gave English readers a readable Bible at his personal cost of exile and martyrdom. Next month on Oct 6 will be the 472<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of his death. But there was opposition. Sir Thomas More labeled them “heresy”, “a cunning counterfeit,” and “the testament of his [Tyndale’s] Antichrist.” Yet, he being dead yet speaks--not only through his own translation but also through subsequent English Bibles: Coverdale, the Greats, the King James, the English revised of 1881 (which some estimate contains as much as 80% of Tyndale), and even this Revised Standard of 1946 where in its preface the translation committee was instructed to “stay as close to the Tyndale-King James tradition of the version of 1901“.

*1901 in America*

A second motive surrounding English Bibles was to teach people what it meant. Theological and ecclesiastical preferences certainly affect that motive; nevertheless it is a worthy one. Sometimes the choice of a word in the translation itself was partisan. Tyndale, for example, chose “congregation” instead of “church“; “senior” and “elder” instead of “priest“; and “repent” instead of “do penance“. In his New Testaments of 1534-37 he included prefaces to individual books which he derived from Luther.

Many of his notes were explanatory (“Peter is Satan“, Matt. 16:23). On Matthew 16:18 the note explains that “Christ is the rock whereupon the true church is builded . . . Peter is through faith one of the stones wherewith this church is builded.” In 1 Timothy 3 he uses the word “bishop” in the translation, but refers to them as “priests” in the marginal note.

But many were clearly anti-Catholic. On Exodus 16:33 concerning placing a jar of manna in the tabernacle, he wrote: “Reliques ought to be but a remembrance only”. On ~~Wzozua~~ <sup>Exodus</sup> 32:35 concerning the pestilence that broke out after the Israelites worshiped the golden calf, he wrote: “The Pope’s bull slayeth more than Aaron’s calf.“ On Exodus 36:5-7 where the people are asked to bring no more offerings for the building of the tabernacle, Tyndale asked: “When will the Pope say ‘Hold!’ and forbid an offering for the building of St Peter’s church?” On Numbers 23:8 when Balaam asks “how shall I curse whom God curseth not?” Tyndale replies, “the Pope can tell howe.” However, these polemic attacks against the Roman church were not the principal reason for the success of the translation--its readability was.

*← 2A*

[ Although the Coverdale, Matthew and Great Bibles used introductory, explanatory and notes as theological propaganda for various viewpoints, it was the Geneva Bible that notes reached a pedagogical zenith. When Mary came to the English throne in 1553, she ]

Coverdale, Matthew and the Great Bibles used introductory and explanatory material as well as chapter summaries to express various viewpoints.

I mention one example of unadulterated propaganda in a note at the end of 1 Peter 3 in a 1549 reprint of the Matthew Bible (edited by Edmund Becke) explaining the phrase “to dwell with a wife according to knowledge.” It reads: “And if she be not obedient and helpful unto him endeavores to beat the fear of God into her head, that thereby she may be compelled to learn her duty and do it.” One wonders how Mrs. Becke reacted to this note! Not surprisingly, this Bible is called the “Wife Beater’s Bible.”

However, it was the Geneva Bible whose notes reached a theological peak. When Mary came to the English throne in 1553, she

reversed the pro-Bible policy her brother Edward and allowed no Bible translation during her reign. But that did not stop Englishmen translating in Geneva, and their labors resulted in the immensely popular Geneva Bible. It was the first English Bible with verse divisions. There were maps, illustrations, chapter headings, marginal variant readings and many marginal notes which were Calvinistic and stressed the importance of doctrine. The preface gives the justification for their apparatus of notes: " And considering how hard a thing it is to understand the holy Scriptures, and what errors, sects and heresies grow daily for lack of the true knowledge thereof, and how many are discouraged (as they pretend) because they cannot attain to the true and simple meaning of the same, we have also endeavoured . . . to gather brief annotations upon all the hard places, as well for the understanding of such words as are obscure, and for the declaration of the text, as for the application of the same as may most appertain to God's glory and the edification of his church." Whether one agrees with their notes or not, their motive was a worthy one. Here are some examples of the notes.

Proverbs 16:4--"So that the justice of God shall appear to his glory, even in the destruction of the wicked."

John 6:37--"God doth regenerate his elect and causeth them to obey the Gospel.:

Acts 13:48--"None can believe, but they whom God doth appoint before all beginnings to be saved."

Titus 1:2--"Hath willingly and of his mere liberality promised without foreseeing our faith or works as a cause to move him to this free mercy."

Acts 4:18--"All things are done by the force of God's purpose, according to the decree of his wil."

Luke 10:31--How did these Geneva Calvinists explain the words of Christ when He said that the priest came "by chance"? they explained: "For so it seemed to mans judgement, although this was so appointed by Gods counsel and providence." The Bishops' Bible escaped by translating "by chance" as "it befell."

In order to counteract the Calvinistic Geneva Bible, the Anglican Bishops' Bible was issued in 1568. But rather than creating Anglican notes, the Bishops' often simply eliminated the Calvinistic Geneva notes. For example there are about 250 notes in Romans in the Geneva but only 70 in the Bishops'. The Bishops' employed a curious device. In the margins they used an apostrophe to indicate passages which were not appropriate for public reading.

When James I instructed the King James translators he ordered that "no marginall notes should be added, having found in them which are annexed to the Geneva translation . . . some notes very partiall, untrue, seditious, and sauouring too much of dangerous and traitorous conceites." Nevertheless, the King James Bible is not entirely theologically neutral, for headlines and chapter summaries occasionally make theological statements ("the calling of Egypt to the church" Isa. 19, and "the increase of the church" Isa. 60--is this incipient replacement theology?!). Marginal notes are almost always cross references or alternate readings. I omit from this talk the notes in the Catholic Rheims-Douay and the counterblast of notes by William Fulke.

In the King James Bible there are 774,746 words. So it seems inevitable that mistakes would occur. Here are some of them. Add 1 Cor 10:1.

→ 4A

A third incentive concerns marketing the Bible. Throughout the years here are some of the ways the English Bibles has been marketed.

1. By having royal authority recommend it. Henry VIII in 1537 gave his royal license to two versions of the English Bible--Coverdale and Matthew. This made them permitted but not actually authorized.

More explicit authorization of the Bible was granted to the Great Bible, the title of the second edition describes it as "the Bible appointed [by royal authority] to the use of the churches." This plus the ban on using earlier versions (because of their use of Tyndale) helped spread the use of the Great Bible.

2. By having ecclesiastical authority promote it. Perhaps the best example is the determination of the Church of Scotland to see that the Scots became well acquainted with the Geneva Bible. Every parish and also every householder with an income over a certain sum had to purchase a copy. In addition "searchers" were appointed to make sure that householders possessed their own copy, and if not, the fine was greater than the price of the Bible.

Roman Catholic English Bibles, of course, have the ecclesiastical approval of the church. The Rheims-Douay translation was authorized for use of English speaking Roman Catholics in America in 1810.

3. By securing the Bible patent. In 1537 Richard Grafton, publisher of the Matthew Bible, asked Cromwell to protect him from printing pirates and to instruct every curate in England to buy one copy and every monastery six copies. Cromwell agreed and the Bible patent was on its way. In 1547 Henry VIII awarded the Bible patent to Grafton and Whitchurch. Elizabeth I awarded it to John Cawood and Richard Jugge whose first Bible was the sumptuous Bishops' Bible in 1568.

In 1576 Christopher Barker obtained the patent to publish the Geneva Bible in England (1576). He printed a number of Bibles until his death in 1599 and had the foresight to secure the patent for his son, Robert who became the printer of the King James Bible for which exclusive right he paid 3500 pounds. Since the King did very little to finance the project, it was up to Barker to pay the translators. With expenses mounting he had to borrow money from Bonham Norton who disputed with Barker about the patent until they settled in 1629. Today copyrights, contracts, and licenses are used to control the marketing of the many modern English translations.

1631  
Wichard

- 4B 4B

5.4. Today, marketing ploys target specific potential buyers by gender, age, status, level of language. Men, women, seniors, young people, children, prisoners, soldiers, airmen, elementary school level of language, and even rap. In addition self-styled titles attract potential buyers. Simplified, distinctive, expanded, amplified, condensed, inspirational, Quest, new, new living, adventure, application, Spirit-filled, serendipity, comparative, chronological, one year, contemporary. God's Word translation (registered trademark) and on and on.

500 million  
\$/yr.

Rheims, shows considerable learning and ability, especially wide acquaintance with the church fathers. Three more reprints of his work were issued after his death. However, Fulke's refutation backfired, merely increasing the distribution of the Catholic translation. When you view this volume, notice the many fonts of type and their arrangement on the page, certainly a monumental task of composition and formatting.

Although the King James Bible included marginal references, headlines, chapter summaries, and some translation options, there were no doctrinal notes as such. Interestingly, however, a number of King James translations combined with notes from the Geneva Bible were published in Amsterdam from 1642 to 1715.

Some twentieth-century Bibles are replete with helps which include book introductions, marginal or center column references, topical headings or outlines, and doctrinal and explanatory notes at the bottom of the pages. The Scofield Reference Bible (first published in 1909) has had untold influence in propagating its particular doctrinal position. Although not many fonts are used, formatting the layout of its pages was not an easy task before computers. On the title page of the second edition published in 1917 are the words "New and Improved Edition." This was accomplished without disturbing the layout and necessitating reformatting and resetting the pages by simply adding information to the existing center columns. The Moffatt Bible (1924, [2.6]) contains a significant amount of textual information indicated by a system of symbols. Study Bibles have flooded the market in the last third of this century. Some are truly study Bibles, while many were rushed to the marketplace only with material added either at the beginning and/or end of the text and minimal helps within the biblical text. In one religious books catalog I recently counted forty-one study Bibles advertised! "Of the making [and marketing] of many books [especially study Bibles] there is no end" (with apologies to Eccl 12:12).

4. **The First Shall Be Last**

In this exhibit one will see several separate New Testaments published before the entire Bible. Matthew 19:30 becomes a truism in Bible publishing: "The first [the Old Testament] shall be last, and the last [the New Testament], first."

When this happens, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that marketing may drive the release of the New Testament portion of a new translation before the entire Bible is completed. In this way the Christian audience can see the part of the Bible with which they are better acquainted and (the publisher hopes) will want to purchase the entire translation when it is released. This results in two sales instead of one.

This sequence of publishing the New Testament before including the Old Testament occurred with a number of nineteenth- and twentieth-century English Bibles as well. Some examples follow:

	Translation	New Testament	Old Testament or Entire Bible
	Revised Version	1881	1885
NT	Concordant 1919-26		
	Amplified Bible	1958	1964
"C	Berkeley 1941-49		
	New English Bible	1961	1970
	Living Bible	1962-67	1971
	New American Standard Bible	1963	1970
	Good News for Modern Man	1966	1979
	New International Version	1973	1978
	New King James Bible	1979	1982

The motivation for doing this with earlier Bibles is less obvious. Perhaps it was also a marketing issue or, more likely, the Christian translator purposefully gave preference to the "new law" of Christianity. William Tyndale's New Testament first appeared in 1525, and later he undertook the translation of the Pentateuch which appeared in 1530 [7.2]. The first printed Greek New Testament was part of the great Complutensian Polyglot [2.4]. It was printed in 1514 but withheld from publication until the entire Polyglot was finished, then released in 1521. In the meantime Erasmus pub-

5

Many are promoted by recommendations from popular and well-known Christian leaders. In America that kind of recommendation began in 1782 with the Aitken Bible, for on September 12 of that year, Congress voted "to recommend this edition of the Bible to the inhabitants of the United States" and authorized Robert Aitken to publish their recommendation as he wished.

I assume that publishers using these 'hooks' would insist that their motive is to get the Bible into as many hands as possible--an entirely worthy motive. Also, many include helps and notes, also worthy and useful additions. No Bible comes without note or comment. Headlines, chapter titles, even verse divisions and of course annotations, often display doctrinal slants and preferences. I counted over 40 Bibles advertised in one catalog described as study Bibles. People need an understandable translation, and people need additional help to grasp the meaning of the text. If notes help do that, then more power to them. If notes are unacceptable to someone or group, then do as the early Englishmen did--produce your own. If that is too daunting a task, then just go buy a RSB!

*But, do we need so many?*

The abundance of English Bibles available today should evoke some important reminders. (1) There are still 2251 languages in the world that do not have any of the Bible in their own tongue. We have a super abundance; many have nothing. (2) No English speaker has an excuse for not possessing and reading the Bible. Availability is everywhere; use is spotty. (3) Hearing the words of Scripture is basic but not enough; heeding and obeying them is life-changing. Matthew Parker wrote in his preface to the Bishops' Bible: "Christ calleth . . . not only to the single reading of the Scriptures, but . . . to the exquisite searching of them, for in them is eternal life to be found, and they record His whole works wrought for us to our salvation."

Never forget at what cost in exile, diligence, scholarship, martyrdom we have English Bibles today. And this Bible museum will certainly help many to do that. May it prosper, grow in depth and breadth, so that many will come to appreciate in depth and breadth the living Word of the Lord and the living Lord of the Word.

lished his first Greek New Testament in 1516 [5.2], and three years later the printer Aldus released the first Greek Bible [5.3]. Martin Luther published his German New Testament in 1522 and the entire Bible in 1534. In Luther's case it is doubtful that he did this as a marketing ploy but rather as a way to introduce his movement to more people. We should also consider the fact that, for most Renaissance translators, their command of Greek was probably better than their Hebrew.

The Spanish Bible followed the same pattern. The first Spanish New Testament appeared in 1543, the second in 1556 [6.5], but the whole Bible not until 1569 [6.6]. The first translation into Welsh consisted of the four Gospels in 1551 followed by the New Testament in 1567 [6.7] and the entire Bible in 1588. The Irish New Testament was published in 1602, but the entire Bible not until 1690 [6.9]. The first Danish New Testament appeared in 1524 [6.3] and the Bible in 1550. The French and Italian Protestant Bibles [6.4 & 6.8] did not follow this pattern.

Among English Bibles there was no separately published New Testament before the entire Bible until the Geneva New Testament was released in 1557 [11.4], three years before the Geneva Bible [10.2]. The Coverdale, Matthew's, Taverner, Great, Bishops', and King James Bibles all appear as complete Bibles before any separate parts were published.

The Roman Catholic New Testament translation in English, the Rheims, was published in 1582 [10.3], but the Old Testament in two volumes not until 1609–10 [10.4]. In the meantime a second edition of the New Testament had appeared in 1600.

The New Testament of the Indian Bible translated by John Eliot, the first Bible printed in the New World, was released in 1661 and the entire Bible in 1663 [12.1]. Fifteen hundred copies of the New Testament were printed of which 1,000 were reserved to bind with the copies of the Old Testament when it was ready in 1663. Anyone who reads of the self-sacrificing life and ministry of Eliot could never suspect him of any motive for doing this other than to get the portion he considered most necessary to his beloved congregation published as soon as possible. Although the Saur Bibles were issued in seven separate New Testaments between 1745 and 1775, none preceded the first Saur Bible in 1743 nor followed the last one in 1776 [12.2].

### *The Bottom Line*

Although this exhibit focuses on differing formats, this must never obscure what is being formatted in these various ways—the Word of God. Still today the Word motivates missionary efforts, including the arduous task of reducing an unwritten language to writing and then translating and printing the Bible.

Still the Word of God is being translated into many existing languages.

Still its teachings are a standard for moral conduct for many people and civilizations.

Still its favorite passages are called to mind in times of special needs.

Still it becomes the target for attacks by those who do not accept it.

Still it is used and misused to prove almost any viewpoint.

Still it is annotated for various and sundry reasons.

All these features demonstrate its uniqueness among books, its staying power throughout the centuries, and its relevance for different times, peoples, and cultures.

Whatever one's view of or interest in the Word of God, the words of Archbishop Matthew Parker are still worth pondering. He wrote in his unsigned preface to the Bishops' Bible (1568): "Of all the sentences pronounced by our Saviour Christ in his whole doctrine, none is more serious or more worthy to be borne in remembrance than that which he spoke openly in his gospel, saying 'Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think to have eternal life, and those they be which bear witness of me.' . . . Christ calleth . . . not only to the single reading of the Scriptures, but sendeth to the exquisite searching of them, for in them is eternal life to be found."

C.C. RYRIE