The King James Version of the Bible represents a revision of Tyndale's translation of the Bible into English. Many of the vernacular translations of the time were said to be filled with "heretical" ideas.

The New Testament of the King James Version was translated from the Received Text (Textus Receptus), called the Majority Texts. The Old Testament was lifted the criminal penalties associated with the Geneva Bible and the former biblical texts; in a similar fashion, Protestantism had the idea that the Bible was almost the sole source of doctrine (see sola scriptura) and should be translated into the local vernacular. The act of Bible translation into any vernacular was a political as well as a religious statement, and remained so whether the Bible translation was a private endeavour, or sponsored by a monarch and his government, though at the particular place in question secularity was not a norm. The English translations made by John Wycliffe's followers, and later by William Tyndale, were the salvos of the Protestant Reformation in England and Scotland. Translating the Bible into English meant the idea that everyone should have direct access to the word of God, and not depend on the church hierarchy for interpretation.

By the time the King James Version was written, there was already a tradition going back almost a two hundred years of Bible translation into English. Many of the vernacular translations of the time were said to be filled "heretical" translations and notes and were thus banned by the Church. The English translation of the Bible authorized by the Roman Catholic Church was the contemporary Douay-Rheims version which was a strict translation of the Latin Vulgate.

The King James Bible represents a revision of Tyndale's translation. When his New Testament appeared in 1525, another supporter of the Church's puritanism led to the creation of the King James Bible. Protestantism had the idea that the Bible was almost the sole source of doctrine (see sola scriptura) and it should be translated into the local vernacular. The act of Bible translation into any vernacular was a political as well as a religious statement, and remained so whether the Bible translation was a private endeavour, or sponsored by a monarch and his government, though at the particular place in question secularity was not a norm. The English translations made by John Wycliffe's followers, and later by William Tyndale, were the salvos of the Protestant Reformation in England and Scotland. Translating the Bible into English meant the idea that everyone should have direct access to the word of God, and not depend on the church hierarchy for interpretation.

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In January 1601, King James VI of Scotland attended the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland at St. Columbia's Church in Burntisland, Fife, and proposals were put forward for a new translation of the Bible into English. Two years later, he acceded to the throne of England as King James I of England. He's therefore sometimes known as "James the Sixth and First".

The King James Version was first conceived at the Hampton Court Conference, which the new king convoked January 1604, in response to the problems posed by Puritans in the Millenary Petition. According to an eyewitness account, Dr. John Rainolds "moved his majesty that there might be a new translation of the Bible because those which were allowed in the reign of King Henry the Eighth and Edward the Sixth were corrupt answerable to the truth of the original."

Rainolds offered three examples of problems with existing translations: "First, Galatians lv. 25. The Greek saxiothi is not well translated as now it is, bode there neither expressing the force of the word, nor the sense. Secondly, psalm cxvii. 2, 'They were not obedient'; the original being, were not disobedient. Thirdly, psalm cxvii. 30, 'Then stood up Phineas and prayed'; the Hebrew hath, 'exec judgeth.'"

King James proposed that a new translation be commissioned to settle the controversies; he hoped a new translation would replace the Geneva Bible and the Bishop's Bible. After the Bishop of London added a qualification that no marginal notes were to be added to Rainolds's new Bible, the king cited passages in the Geneva translation where he found the notes offensive. King James gave the translators instructions, which were designed to discourage polemical notes, and to guarantee that the new version conform to the ecclesiology of the Church of England. Eventually five different editions of the King James Bible were produced in 1611, 1629, 1638, 1762, and 1769. It is the 1769 edition which is most commonly cited a King James Version (KJV).

King James' instructions included requirements that:

1. The ordinary Bible, read in the church, commonly called the Bishops' Bible, to be followed, anc as little altered as the original will permit. 
2. The old ecclesiastical words to be kept, as the word church, not to be translated congregation, &c. 
3. When any word hath divers significations, that to be kept which has been most commonly use by the most eminent fathers, being agreeable to the propriety of the place, and the analogy of the faith. 
4. No marginal notes at all to be affixed, but only for the explanation of the Hebrew or Greek word which cannot, without some circumstance, so briefly and tily be expressed in the text. 
5. Such quotations of places to be marginally set down, as shall serve for the fit references of one scripture to another. 
6. These translations to be used when they agree better with the text than the Bishops' Bible, viz. the 4th Revelation, the 1769 edition, &c. 
7. No expressions of their own to be used, as shall serve for the fit references of one scripture to another. 
8. The original tongue to be read by the hearers, and the interpretation thereof to be given by the interpreter.

King James's instructions made it clear that he wanted the resulting translation to contain a minimum of controversial notes and apparatus, and that he wanted the ecclesiastical structure of the Established Church, traditional beliefs about an ordained clergy to be reflected in the new translation. His order directed the translators to use the Bishop's Bible, comparing other named English versions. It is for this reason that the Tyndale-Arminian reading of some Bible passages is restored.

In January 1609 a General Committee of Review met at Stationers' Hall, London to review the completed manuscripts from the six companies. The committee included John Bois, Andrew Downes, John Hamer, I others known only by their initials, including "AL" (who may be Arthur Lake).
Criticism

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Now, when the time was come that she should be delivered, behold, there were twain in her womb. And when she was in travail, the one put out his hand: and the midwife tooke and bound a red threde about his hand, saying, This is come out first. But when he plucked his hand backe againe, k his brother came out, and the midwife said, How hast thou broken the breach vpone thee? and his name was called Pharez. And afterward came out his brother that had the red threde about his hande, and his name was called Zarah.

Here, by contrast, is the same passage in the 1611 King James:

And it came to passe in the time of her travaile, that beholde, twinnes were in her wombe. And it car to passe when she travaileth, that the one put out his hand and the midwife tooke and bound a red thred about his hand, saying, This is come out first. But when he plucked his hand back againe, k his brother came out, and the midwife said, How hast thou broken the breach ouer thee? and his name was called Pharez. And afterward came out his brother that had the red thred about his hand, and his name was called Zarah.

Both passages owe a great deal to Tyndale's earlier rendition of this text. But the King James text repeats came to pass where Geneva has now or when.

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Here are some brief samples of text that demonstrate the King James Version's literary style:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. (John 1:1-5)

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whatsoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (John 3:16

When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto them, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. (Matthew 16:13-18)

Criticism

Literary attributes

Translation

Like the earlier English translations such as Tyndale's and the Geneva Bible, the King James Version was translated from Greek and Hebrew texts, bypassing the Latin Vulgate. The King James Version's Old Testament based on the Masoretic Text while the New Testament is based on the Textus Receptus as published by Erasmus. The King James Version is a fairly literal translation of these base sources; words implied but not actually in the original source are specially marked in most printings (either by being inside square brackets or italicized text).

Some have claimed that the playwright William Shakespeare was involved in the translation, pointing to P as proof, where, counting 46 words from the beginning, one comes upon the word "shake", and counting the word "skarlet" backwards from the end, one comes upon the word "spear". Additionally, Shakespeare was 46 years of age at the time of the translating. Most scholars dismiss claims of Shakespeare's involvement in translating the King Version, and do not accept this example as evidence of his involvement. Notably, the Geneva Bible and some other earlier translations contained the same coincidence, despite several of them being published before shortly after Shakespeare's birth. [1]

The original printing of the King James Version was published by Robert Barker in 1611 and could be bound looseleaf for ten shillings (s), or bound for twelve.

Style

The King James Version has traditionally been appreciated for the quality of the prose and poetry in the translation. However, the English language has changed since the time of publication so that it employs grammatical structures that may be foreign to modern readers. For example, the King James Version uses second person singular pronouns, such as "thy". Some words used in the earlier translations (for the same reason that some find Shakespeare more difficult to read than more recent translations (for the same reason that some find Shakespeare mon to read than more recent authors).

At the time William Tyndale made his Bible translation, there was no consensus in Early Modern English whether the older pronoun his or the neologism its was the proper generic case of the third person singular pronoun. Tyndale dodged the difficulty by using phrases such as the blood thereof rather than choosing his blood or its blood. By the time the King James translators wrote, usage had settled on its, but Tyndale's was familiar and considered a part of an appropriately biblical style, and they chose to retain the old word.

As the King James Version was "appointed to be read in churches", and aimed at a particularly dignified formal style, it tends to flatten stylistic differences in the source text and aims instead for a uniformly elegant "biblical" sounding prose. For example, here is the Geneva Bible's rendition of Genesis 37:27-30:

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And it came to passe in the time of her travaile, that beholde, twinnes were in her wombe. And it car to passe when she travaileth, that the one put out his hand and the midwife tooke and bound vpone his hand a skarlet thred, saying, This is come out first. But it came to passe as he drowe backe his hand, that beholde, his brother came out; and she said, How hast thou broken forth? this breach bee vpone thee: Therefore his name was called Pharez. And afterward came out his brother that had the skarle thred vpone his hand, and his name was called Zarah.

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Some scholars working with Greek, Aramaic, and Hebrew versions regard the KJV as an inferior English translation of the Bible, (see Dynamic equivalence) suggesting that its value lies in its poetic language, the cost of accuracy in translation, whilst other scholars would firmly disagree with these claims. Some of exegesis (Walter Brueggemann, Marcus Borg, Warren Carter, James L. Crenshaw, Robert W. Funk, John Dominic Crossan, and N.T. Wright) do not endorse the KJV for Masters or Doctoral level exegetical work. Subsequent history

While the King James Version was meant to replace the Bishops' Bible as the official version for readings Church of England, it was never specifically mandated. It nevertheless began to replace earlier editions introduced in the Church of England.

Its acceptance by the general public took longer. The Geneva Bible continued to be quite popular, and to be reprinted well into the period of the English Civil War, in which soldiers of the New Model Army were Genevan New Testaments called “The Soldiers’ Bible”. One early printing of the King James Bible combing King James translation text with the Geneva marginal notes. After the English Restoration, however, the Bible was held to be politically suspect, and a reminder of the repudiated Puritan era. The King James Bible became the only current version circulated among English speaking people as familiarity and stylistic merits the respect of the populace.

Current printings of the King James Bible differ from the original in several ways.

The opening of the Epistle to the Hebrews of the 1611 edition of the King James Bible shows the original typeface. Marginal notes refer to variant translations and passages.

Difference in the contents

The original printing of the King James Version included the Apocrypha, so named in the text. It contained books and sections of books present in the Latin Vulgate’s Old Testament but missing in the Hebrew. Unc Thirty-Nine Articles, the doctrinal confession of the Church of England established in 1563, these books were considered non-canonical but were to be “read for example of life and instruction of manners.” This sect includes apocrypha from the Vulgate’s appendix. (For more information, see the article on apocrypha. These texts are printed separately, between the end of the Old Testament and the beginning of the New Testament. Verses unique to the Septuagint’s version of the Book of Esther (The Four Sections, Bel and the Dragon, Susanna) were placed here, rather than included in the texts of those books approximately 1827, many editions have omitted this section, and the most common contemporary editor include them. A list of these apocrypha can be found here.

The original printing also included a number of variant readings and alternative translations of some passages. Most current printings omit these. (One American edition that does still print these notes is the Cornerston UltraThin Reference Bible, published by Broadman and Holman.) The original printing also included some marginal references to indicate where one passage of Scripture quoted or directly related to another. Most printings omit these.

Prefatory material

The original printing contained two prefatory texts; the first was a rather fulsome Epistle Dedicatory to “the high and mighty Prince” King James. Many British printings reproduce this, while a fewer cheaper or smaller American printings fail to include it.

The second, and more interesting preface was called The Translators to the Reader, a long and learned essay that defends the undertaking of the new version. It observes that their goal was not to make a bad translation good, but a good translation better, and says that “we do not deny, nay, we affirm and avow, that the very very translation of the Bible in English, set forth by men of our profession... containeth the word of God, nay, is word of God.” Few editions anywhere include this text.

The first printing contained a number of other apparatus, including a table for the reading of the Psalms at vespers, and a calendar, an almanac, and a table of holy days and observances. Much of this matter became obsolete with the adoption of the Gregorian Calendar by the UK and its colonies in 1752 and thus editions invariably omit it.

Typeface, spelling, and format

The original printing was made before English spelling was standardised. They wrote “v” invariably for low initial “v” and “v”, and “u” for “u” and “v” everywhere else. They used long “i” for non-final “i”. The letter “f” only after “y” or as the final letter in a Roman numeral. Punctuation was used differently. The printers some ye used ye for the, (replacing the Middle English thorn with the continental y) and wrote a for an or am (in the sorber’s shorthand) and so forth when space needed to be saved. Current printings use the bold, but not the variant spellings; the punctuation has also been changed, but still varies from current usage norms.

The first printing used a black letter typeface instead of a Roman typeface. This contrasted with the Geneva which was the first English Bible printed in a Roman typeface. It also used Roman type instead of italics to indicate text that had been supplied by the translators, or thought needful for English grammar but which was present in the Greek or Hebrew. The first printing used the device of using different type faces to show such words sparingly and inconsistently. This is perhaps the most significant difference between the original text and the current text.

Even the typeface made a political and a religious statement. Like the Great Bible and the Bishops’ Bible, James Bible was “appointed to be read in churches.” It was a large folio volume meant for public use, not devotion; the weight of the type mirrored the weight of establishment authority behind it. The Geneva Bible was always printed in Roman type, usually of the Garamond family; it was meant to be user-friendly for personal private use. A folio Roman typeface edition of the King James Bible followed in 1614.
The current text

Current printings of the King James Bible are typically based on an edition published at the University of C
1769, edited by Benjamin Blayney, and contain substantially the same text; however, there are a number
of differences between the 1769 and the 1611. The Oxford edition applied the device of supplying italics for;
words much more thoroughly, corrected a number of minor errors in punctuation, and made the spelling n
consistent and updated (that is, to the standards of the 18th century). However, in 2005, Cambridge Unive
Press released its New Cambridge Paragraph Bible, edited by David Norton, which modernized the spelli
more thoroughly (that is, to present-day standards) and introduced quotation marks.

The University of Cambridge is one of the very few organisations which directly hold the right to print
the King James Bible, and continues to exercise this right even today; many King James
Bibles such as this one hail from the printing presses of either
Cambridge or Oxford, the only
other university accorded this privilege.

Copyright status

In most of the world the King James Bible is freely reproduced as if it were out of copyright. This is not the
United Kingdom itself.

In the United Kingdom, the rights to the Authorized Version are held by the British Crown. The rights fall o
the scope of copyright as defined in statute law. Instead they fall under the purview of the Royal Prerogativ
as such they are perpetual in subsistence. Publishers are licensed to reproduce the Authorized Version u
letters patent. In England, Wales and Northern Ireland the letters patent are held by the Queen's Printer, i
Scotland by the Scottish Bible Board. The office of Queen's Printer has been associated with the right to
reproduce the Bible for many years, with the earliest known reference coming in 1577. In England, Wales
Northern Ireland the Queen's Printer is the Cambridge University Press, CUP inherited the right of being Due
Printer when they took over the firm of Eyre & Spottiswoode in the late 20th century. Eyre & Spottiswoode
been Queen's Printer since 1901.

Other letters patent of similar antiquity grant Cambridge University Press and Oxford University Press the
produce the Authorized Version independently of the Queen's Printer. In Scotland the Authorized Version
published by Collins under license from the Scottish Bible Board, but in recent years the
Queen's Printer has been associated with the right to
produce the Bible for many years, with the earliest known reference coming in 1577. In England, Wales
Northern Ireland the letters patent are held by the Queen's Printer since 1901.

The terms of the letters patent prohibit those other than the holders, or those authorized by the holders fr
printing, publishing or importing the Authorized Version into the United Kingdom. The protection that the
Authorized Version, and also the Book of Common Prayer, enjoy is the last remnant of the time when the
held a monopoly over all printing and publishing in the United Kingdom.

It is common misconception that the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office holds letters patent for b
Queen's Printer. The Controller of HMSO holds a separate set of letters patent which cover the office Due
Printer of Acts of Parliament. The Scotland Act 1998 defines the position of Queen's Printer for Scotland a
being held by the Queen's Printer of Acts of Parliament. The position of Government Printer for Northern I
also held by the Controller of HMSO.

Royal prerogative is not recognized in United States law, and therefore the KJV is effectively in the public
in that country. [citation needed]

Literary influence

The King James Version has proved to have been an influence on writers and poets, whether in their liter
or matters of content such as the images they depicted, until the advent of modernism. Although influence
Bible in general, they likely could not have helped being influenced by the style of writing the King James ' u
used, prevalent as it was during their time. John Hayes Gardiner of Harvard University once stated that "it
study of English literature, if there be any one axiom which may be accepted without question, it is that the
standard of English prose style is set by the King James version of the Bible". Compton's Encyclopaedia or
that the King James Version "...has been a model of writing for generations of English-speaking people."

A general effect of the King James Version was to influence writers in their model of writing; beforehand, t
generally wrote as scholars addressing an audience of other scholars, as few ordinary peasants were liter
the time. The King James Version, as it was meant for dissemination among the ordinary man and to be n
preachers to their congregations, could not afford the luxury of using such a technique. The simpler, more
style used by the translators of the King James Version so influenced authors that their prose began to ad
the reader as if he or she was an ordinary person instead of a scholar, thus helping create the idea of the
reader.

19th century preacher Charles Spurgeon once declared of author John Bunyan, "Read anything of his, an
will see that it is almost like reading the Bible itself." Bunyan's allegorical novel, The Pilgrim's Progress, w
connection of early Protestant literature; frequently, it would be the second piece of literature translated i
vernacular by missionaries, the first being the King James Version itself — though it is noteworthy that th
Pilgrim's Progress mostly quoted from the Geneva Bible. According to Thomas Macaulay, "he knew no lar
but the English as it was spoken by the common people: he had studied no more than an exception of our noble translation of the Bible. But of that his knowledge was such that he might have bee
a living concordance".

John Milton, author of the blank verse epic poem Paradise Lost, was heavily influenced by the King James
Version, beginning his days with a reading from that version of the Bible; in his later life, he would then spa
tour meditating in silence. Milton, who cast two Psalms into meter at the age of 15 while an undergraduate
Cambridge, filled his works with images obviously taken from the Bible. The poem Lycidas, for example, d
the Apostle Peter and the keys he was given by Jesus according to a literal reading of the Bible:
Last came and last did go
The plot of the Galilean lake;
Two dusty keys he bore of metals twain,
(From the golden keys, the iron shuts remain).

The allusions made to the Bible by John Dryden were inescapable for those who had studied it well; as an example, in the poem *Mac Flecknoe*, he wrote:

> Sinking, he left his druggist robe behind,
> Borne upward by a subterranean wind,
> The mantle fell to the young prophet's part,
> With double portion of his father's art.

Several more famous writers and poets have taken inspiration from the King James Version. William Wordsworth composed poems such as *Intimations of Immortality* and *Ode to Duty* contained obvious references to the Bible. Poe and Byron even composed poems which required prior understanding of the Bible before one could fully comprehend them, such as *Jephthah's Daughter* and *The Song of Saul Before His Last Battle*. John Keats described "the heart of Ruth; / when, sick for home, She stood in tears amid the alien corn." The poetry of William Blake greatly influenced the language and imagery of the King James Bible, a famous example being *The Lamb*, whose theme of innocence.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, an American poet, once wrote "There are times when the grasshopper is a thing of great and spirit-lifting power. He lifts the spirit for the waters of Shiloah, that go softly," a clear reference to the King James Version. Both in its content and in its style, Herman Melville, too, could not avoid being influenced by the King James Version; his book *Moby Dick* is clearly related to the Bible, with characters going by name such as Ishmael and Ahab. Walt Whitman was deeply influenced by the King James Version, and especially by biblical poetry of the prophets and psalms. Whitman wrote in *Leaves of Grass*:

> I sit and look out upon all the sorrows of the world, and upon all oppression and shame;
> I hear secret convulsive sobs from young men, at anguish with themselves, remorseful after deeds done;
> I see, in low life, the mother misused by her children, dying, neglected, gaunt, desperate...

The language of Emily Dickinson was informed by the Bible. Mark Twain used the book of Genesis as the source for *From Adam's Diary* and *From Eve's Diary*. The *Rye* of Silas Lapham's William Dean Howells uses the gospels for Jacob wrestling with the angel as an important metaphor. Many poems by T. S. Eliot employ images drawn from the Bible. Ernest Hemingway titled his first novel *The Sun Also Rises*, after a quote from Ecclesiastes, and Flannery O'Connor drew on the gospels for the title and imagery of her book *Wise Blood*. Byron even composed poems which required prior understanding of the Bible before one could fully comprehend them, such as *Jephthah's Daughter* and *The Song of Saul Before His Last Battle*. John Keats described "the heart of Ruth; / when, sick for home, She stood in tears amid the alien corn." The poetry of William Blake greatly influenced the language and imagery of the King James Bible, a famous example being *The Lamb*, whose theme of innocence.

Martin Luther King used Isaiah 40:4 in his "I have a dream" speech:

> I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of it shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.

See also

- Pocket Canons
- King-James-Only Movement
- Sinner's Bible
- New King James Version
- 21st Century King James Version

References

- While the Nelson facsimile edition is out of print, the same facsimile is currently published by Hendrickson Publishers, ISBN 1-55653-160-9. Both of these Bibles reprint a Roman-type facsimile originally published by the University of Oxford in 1833.
- Spurgeon, Charles (1899). *The Last Words of Christ on the Cross*.

Notes

1. ^ Article VI: Of the Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for Salvation see 1762 edition as recorded on Anglicans Online

External links

- Wikisource has original text related to this article: *King James Bible*
- Cambridge University Press - One of the official distributors of the King James Bible
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