



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

Presenting *every man perfect in Christ Jesus*. Colossians 1:28

Volume 27
Issue 664

How We Got Our Bible

Part 1 of 2

by — Adlai Loudy (1893-1984)

To trace the story of the Sacred Scriptures from the days when the first inspired autographs were made by godly men, divinely chosen for the work, down through the stormy vicissitudes of the centuries to this era in which we enjoy them in the English language printed and bound in handy book form, is a story without a parallel in the whole range of sacred or secular history. As I have explained before, through the many streams – Hebrew, Chaldee, Greek, Syriac, Latin, Anglo-Saxon – the Sacred Word has flowed increasingly onward.

In the scope of this article, we purpose to deal with versions and translations. Many have the conception that God inspired the *King James "Bible."* Not long ago a "professor" wrote me saying that the *King James Version*¹ was ninety-nine and four fifths per cent pure! It is passing strange that men, claiming to be informed, will indulge in such loose statements. Let it be remembered that God *inspired* the original documents of the Scriptures, but He *did not* inspire versions made of them by men.

VERSIONS

It is a rather appalling condition that so many are ignorant of the fact that there were *many versions* of the Scriptures made before the *King James "Bible."*



Keeping in mind that God inspired the sacred originals in Hebrew, Chaldee and Greek, we now give our attention to versions made from them. The ancient versions, or translations, of the Scriptures into the language of the early saints shows us the "Bible" as used by men, some of whose parents might easily have seen the apostles themselves. They are of great value in determining the original in some instances.

The Syriac (Aramaic) Version

The Syriac or Aramaic Version is the most important, and dates from as early as A.D. 170. It is called the Peshitto, and means a very simple and plain version without the addition of the allegorical or mystical glosses. The people among whom our Lord moved were "bilingual," and this version very nearly represents the dialect used in the familiar talk of the household. However they all understood Greek, which was almost a universal language at that time.

The Egyptian (Coptic) Version

Before the close of the second century A.D., at least two translations of the Scriptures had been made into the Egyptian dialects: the Bohairic and Sahidic.

The Gothic Version

About 350 A.D., Ulfilas, Bishop of the fierce Gothic tribes, made a version from the Septuagint. This beautiful silver-lettered book, with its leaves of purple parchment, is most precious to the student of

1. [Editor:] For more information on KJV translation errors, see:
– *The KJV: 400 Years of Bondage*, by Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr. (see order form). Also available in three parts in *Bible Student's Notebooks* #276, #279, #281;
– *The Plowboy's Bible: God's Word for Common Man*, by Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr. (see order form).



language, as the long fragments of the gospels and Pauline epistles contain the oldest specimens of Teutonic² literature.

The Armenian Version

The translation of the Scriptures into the Armenian language falls between 354-441 A.D. It was begun at Edessa by Mesrop and continued by his nephew of Khoren. It was based on the Septuagint.

The Ethiopic Version

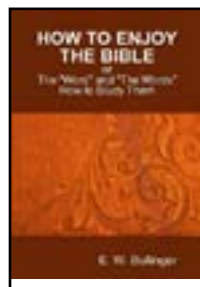
In the fourth century, missionaries from Tyre evangelized Ethiopia, and by the fifth and sixth centuries A.D. the Scriptures had been translated into Ethiopic.

THE LATIN VERSIONS

Several Latin versions saw the light in the early part of the fourth century but were very imperfect, and, in 383 A.D., Pope Damasus of Rome commissioned Eusebius Hieronymus, better known to us as St. Jerome, to revise the Latin version, which became known as the *Vulgate*. No other work has had such an influence on the history of the "Bible." For more than a thousand years it was the parent of every other version of the Scriptures in Western Europe, and its influence is quite perceptible, even in the *King James "Bible"* of today.

Yet we wish to note just here that, in that day, Jerome's version was attacked as heretical, revolutionary and impious, a work that was calculated to undermine the faith of the church! The church people of that day

2. [Editor:] Noting or pertaining to the northern European stock that includes the German, Dutch, Scandinavian, British, and related peoples. – www.dictionary.com



How To Enjoy the Bible
by – E.W. Bullinger (1837-1913)
472 pp., PB
See order form.

A unique introduction to your study of God's Word. You're guided in the adventure of open and honest study of the Scripture from within – allowing it to speak for itself. Twelve practical principles make inductive Bible study come alive.

had their old "Bible," which they venerated highly and believed to be quite correct. Probably the sound of its sentences was as musical in the ears of those who could associate them with the holiest moments of their lives, as the *King James "Bible"* of today is to us. But Jerome fought his battle, perhaps with more temper than necessary, insisting that no amount of sentiment could be a plea for a faulty "Bible." In writing to Marcella, he mentions certain poor creatures (*homunculos*), who studiously calumniate³ him for his correcting words in the "Gospels." "I could afford to despise them," he says, "if I stood upon my rights; for a lyre is played in vain to an ass. If they do not like the water from the pure fountainhead, let them drink of the muddy streams."

There were multitudes then, as now, who could not apprehend that every new version of the Scriptures was a means divinely used to enlighten mankind as to what God had really spoken. They would cling to their old "Bibles" just as their successors of today cling to the *King James Version* in preference to the better and more accurate *American Standard Revised* or some other later version.

ENGLISH VERSIONS

We now pass over eight or nine hundred years, bringing us to the twelfth century, which produced several translators and revisionists, but it was not until 1380 that John Wycliffe, with the aid of a staff of competent assistants, gave the English-speaking world the first complete Scripture revision and translation.

In the midst of his labors, he was compelled to stop and stand trial for heresy! One of the charges brought against him was that he had made the Bible common and more open to the laymen and even women (!) than it was wont to be by clergy, well learned and of good understanding, so that "the pearl of the gospel is trodden under foot of swine." Though fiercely derided and criticized, nevertheless, even in manuscript form, it reached the truth-loving people and was loyally read throughout the kingdom.

3. [Editor:] I.e., blaspheme, *Concordant Keyword Concordance*, page 33.

Tyndale's Version

In 1525, William Tyndale, a contemporary of Luther, began work on his famous version of the Scriptures. Printing had been invented by this time, and Tyndale wished to put his version into the hands of the people, for, as he says,

It is impossible to establish the lay people in any truth, except the Scriptures be laid before their eyes, in their mother tongue.

But everywhere he encountered discouragement, especially among churchmen, preachers and bishops! It was a dangerous period for Scripture translation. Men were imprisoned and even executed for reading a copy of Luther's writings. So Tyndale was forced to leave England to finish his work. Yet after many perilous adventures, this brave revisionist produced at Worms, Germany, about 1526, the first printed English New Testament. An octavo⁴ edition of 6000 copies was made and smuggled into England.

The whole world knows the story of Tunstal, Bishop of London, buying up and burning Tyndale's New Testaments at St. Paul's cross in London. We are informed that the London Bishop, perceiving he could not hinder the version from coming into England, conceived what he termed a "brilliant" idea! He engaged a merchant trading at Antwerp to "buy up all the copies across the waters." As the Bishop gave the merchant money to buy all the "unsold copies across the waters," he would take it to Tyndale, who furnished him with a good supply each trip, and used

4. [Editor:] "The page size, from 5" x 8" to 6" x 9.5", of a book composed of printer's sheets folded into eight leaves." – *American Heritage Dictionary*

the money to print more! As the version began to reach England more *abundantly* the Bishop inquired of his merchant friend how this could be. Upon which, the merchant replied: "My lord, were best for your lordship to buy up the stamps too by which they are imprinted."

The clergymen and bishops throughout the land began frantic pulpit denunciations of the version. Yet in spite of all the opposition, the book was being talked about, sought and read everywhere. One bishop wrote, "It passeth my power, or that of any spiritual man to hinder it now." The path of the "Bible" was opened at last, and no king nor bishop could stay its progress. God's due time for light to dawn upon England's long night of error and superstition had arrived.

But the light-bringer did not live to see that day. For long dreary years he had labored for it, a worn, poverty-stricken exile in a faraway German town, and now, when it came, his life was over – the prison and stake had done their work! And the serious part of the matter to be noted is that the tragedy was schemed and enacted by the clergy and bishops of the church! A traitorous clergyman, by the name of Phillips, won the confidence of the unsuspecting exile, enticing him some distance from his house, where lurking assistants seized and hurried him away to the dungeons of the castle of Vilvorden. It is pitiful, indeed to read of the poor prisoner there, in his cold and misery and rags, writing the governor, begging:

Your lordship, and that by the Lord Jesus, that if I am to remain here during the winter, you will request the procurer to be kind enough to send me from my goods which he has in his possession ►



56 pp., PB

See order form.

No Equals!

by — Christian Educational Services

Reasons Why Our Heavenly Father Has NO Equals or Co-Equals

&

Why "the Holy Spirit" Is Not a "Person" Separate from the Only True God, the Father

Two titles in one book, both exposing the error of the trinity teaching.

a warmer cap, for I suffer extremely from perpetual catarrh,⁵ which is much increased by this cell. A warmer coat also, for that which I have is very thin; also a piece of cloth to patch my leggings – my shirts too are worn out ... Also that he would suffer me to have my Hebrew Bible and Grammar and Dictionary.

There was no hope for escape, and the clerical influence in England was too strong against him to appeal for help in that quarter, and on Friday the sixth of October, 1536, he was strangled at the stake and then burned to ashes, fervently praying with his last words,

Lord open the king of England's eyes.

The chief aids that Tyndale used were the Greek New Testament of Erasmus (1519, 1522), the German New Testament of Luther (1523) and the *Latin Vulgate*. All subsequent scholars have done nothing more than improve the details of the translation. He fixed for all subsequent workers the standard of diction and style of the English "Bible." The vast bulk of the *words* we still read are his. For example, in his version of John 10:7-10, out of eighty-seven words, the *King James* retained eighty and the *Revised Version* retained seventy-seven that are identical with the 1525 *New Testament of Tyndale*.

5. [Editor:] "Inflammation of the nose and throat." – *American Heritage Dictionary*

OTHER ENGLISH VERSIONS

About the time Tyndale was martyred, Myles Coverdale compiled a version from five others, yet he followed Tyndale's lines very closely. Soon after, John Rogers issued what is known as *Matthew's Bible*, which was almost wholly copied from Tyndale's version. A little later another Tyndale imitation appeared in what was called *Taverner's Bible*.

None of these versions were satisfactory to the people, so that about three years after the death of Tyndale, what is known as the *Great Bible* was planned with Coverdale in charge of the work. This famous version, issued by authority of the king, was a compilation from Tyndale, Matthew and Coverdale, but with Tyndale as the principal basis. So the prayer of the old martyr had been answered!

We will pass over the various revisions of the Scriptures that followed in the next few generations – the principal ones being the *Geneva Bible*, 1560; the *Bishop's Bible*, 1568; and the *Rheims-Duoday Bible*, 1582-1610 – and will come down to the most eventful period of modern history in which the *King James Bible* saw the light.

"Authorized Version"

When King James VI of Scotland became King James I of England, there were three versions of the Scriptures in use. The *Great Bible*, *Geneva Bible*, and the *Bishop's Bible*. The king, a man of fair abilities, but



292 pp., PB

See order form.

Without Form and Void: A Study of the Meaning of Genesis 1:2

by — Arthur C. Custance

Considered a classic in Christian apologetics, this scholarly analysis of the biblical phrase "without form and void," from the opening chapter of Genesis, observes the rules of linguistics, grammar and syntax, and also examines how words are used in the rest of Scripture. This book has been described as the best argument that has ever been written for the Gap Theory.

A well respected Canadian scientist, and listed in the 1971 American Men in Science, Dr. Custance contends that we should not allow science to determine what Scripture says. Neither should we allow Scripture to determine what the scientist observes in the laboratory. Yet observed fact in the one cannot, ultimately, conflict with revealed fact in the other. Any conflict, then, is in the interpretation of the facts – not in the facts themselves.

vain and cherishing to the fullest extent a belief in the “divine right of kings,” resolved to exercise his authority as God’s anointed. So, in order that his dutiful subjects should have a uniform version of the Scriptures, by his kingly power he set aside all three of the versions then in use, and authorized a new revision of the entire Scriptures to be made, which should bear the name of himself – the *King James Version*.

The next few years saw stirring times in England. The king was twice in peril of his life. The Catholics hatched the infamous “Gunpowder Plot” to blow up the king and Parliament and pave the way for the restoration of Romanism. The plan was narrowly frustrated. But amid the internal and external turmoil, the people of the united kingdom – Scotland and England – awoke one morning in 1611 to the fact that the one great act of King James’ reign was complete and accomplished – the *King James “Bible”* had arrived.

It is little known, yet it is an incontrovertible fact, that the *Authorized Version* of King James was *not* a translation, but simply a *revision* of the “Bishop’s Bible.” The translators say in their preface, “Truly, good Christian Reader, we never thought from the beginning that we should need to make a new translation, nor yet to make a bad one a good one ... but to make a good one better.”

The scholars of King James’ day did not have access to the treasuries of ancient manuscripts, versions, and quotations which present day scholars possess; they did not have the science of textual criticism which teaches the value and the best methods of

dealing with the ancient documents, all of which has sprung up since; neither did they possess the wide and thorough acquaintance with the sacred languages and the ability to distinguish and express the delicate shades of meaning that scholars of today are capable of doing. They were also circumscribed by fourteen rules devised by King James, as to how they should proceed. Some withdrew and refused to serve when the rules were submitted. They had no *system* by which to effect a true version, but simply trusted to their own judgment in the matter, and when not certain, they simply arrived at an agreement among themselves on their “opinions” and put it in!

When issued, Dr. Broughton, one of the foremost Hebrew scholars of that era, wrote King James.

I would rather suffer my body to be rent in pieces by wild horses than to have such a version forced upon the church.

He also said,

In fifteen verses of Luke 3 (verses 24-38), the translators have fifteen score of idle words to account for in the Day of Judgment.

NEW VERSIONS

Within a comparatively recent time, so great has been the increase of knowledge concerning ancient lands and languages that Germany, France, Holland, Norway, Sweden and Denmark have made *revisions* of their “Bibles.” These were not changes of the *original* Scriptures themselves, but rectifications of ►

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<https://dailyquickquotes.wordpress.com/>

their old translations so they would conform more perfectly and express more exactly the thought of the *originals*, the meaning and spirit of which had not been understood before.

The Revised Version

The *Revised Version* was made because of the following reasons given by the Committee: (1) Because the Greek Testament had been carefully studied in the manuscripts and existing authorities, and many weak points in the *Authorized Version* had thus become evident. (2) Because in the course of nearly three hundred years, words or phrases had become obsolete or changed in meaning. (3) Because Greek and Hebrew scholarship had developed to a much higher degree than was possible in the seventeenth century.

It was objected by some, when the revision was first proposed, that it would be dangerous to unsettle men's faith by showing them that the old "Bible" they so revered contained many passages wrongly translated, and some even which had no right to a place in it at all. But our faith should be founded on the divine verities. It is no disparagement if we discover that fallible men in studying and translating these words have sometimes made mistakes, and it is certainly no honor to the words which we profess to reverence if we knowingly allow the mistakes to remain uncorrected!

The English work was issued in parts, the New Testament in 1881 and the Old Testament in 1885. A re-

vision⁶ of this work, called the *American Standard Edition*, and embodying many important emendations made by the American Revision Committee, was issued in 1901.

The system used in this work was a two-thirds majority, which often hindered the better and more correct renderings from going into the text, as may be noted by considering the renderings given in the footnotes.

MODERN VERSIONS

Many versions have been issued in recent years. All have some good qualities and many have much that is to be deplored. The most important of these are as follows: Wilson's *Diaglott*, Ferrar Fenton, Darby, Rotherham, Weymouth, the *R.S.V.*, Moffatt, Phillips, the *New English Bible*, and the *New American Standard*.

The Concordant Version

The question may be asked, With all of the versions enumerated, what room is there for another? This question leads us to the consideration of the *Concordant Version of the Sacred Scriptures*. More than a half century ago, the late A.E. Knoch, an earnest student of the Scriptures, desiring to understand the Word of God, made the discovery that practically all solid progress in the recovery of truth during the last century had come through the concordance. He found

6. [Editor:] An editorial revision of a literary work, especially on the basis of critical examination of the text and the sources used. – www.dictionary.com



216 pp., PB.

See order form.

What Is Truth? Absolute and Relative

by — Don Bast

High above the storm clouds the sun is always shining. When we get a glimpse of God's perspective we are able to experience the Son of His love shining through the darkest storms of life.

Dean Hough of the *Concordant Publishing Concern* and the *Saviour of All Fellowship* writes to Don concerning his book:

"Your book is full of important truth and a good aid to understanding Scripture."

that tracing words through all of their occurrences was the safe and satisfactory method of becoming assured of the real meaning that God intended by their use. Thus it was that the idea of a concordant version suggested itself to his mind. No one could honestly object to this method, for it is the only one not based on human scholarship, but on a worshipful recognition of the divine Author's ability to make Himself understood. *The Concordant Version* is the only one which practically acknowledges that "All Scripture is inspired by God" – literally, "God-spirited"⁷ (II Timothy 3:16), by using a method of translation based on the denial of human ability to sound its depths or scale its heights, and insisting on its superhuman perfection to the minutest detail – considering every element and listening to every letter.

A RESTORED GREEK TEXT

The concordant method of studying the Scriptures uses a concordance to discover the meaning of a word, *not in any version*, but in the original Hebrew, Chaldee and Greek, and discovers its usage and fixes its signification by its inspired associations, according to the

7. [Editor:] "Inspired by God" (II Timothy 3:16). Θεόπνευστος (*theopneustos* [Strong's G2315]), a compound word, "God" (θεός, *theos* [Strong's G2316] and "breathe" (πνέω, *pneō* [Strong's G4154]); thus "God-breathed": given by God, divinely inspired. See:

– *God's Eonian Purpose*, by Adlai Loudy, chapter 1 (The Sacred Scriptures), chapter 2 (How We Got Our Bible). A concise history of 53 pages covering everything from the original Greek text to the Concordant Version (see order form).

laws of language, and turns it into English. To do this, the three great witnesses to the text of Holy Writ have been used – the *Codex Sinaiticus*, the *Codex Vaticanus*, and the *Codex Alexandrinus* – by which a restored Greek Text has been effected, conforming as closely as possible to the inspired autographs.

A concordance of every form of every Greek word was made and systematized and turned into English. The whole Greek vocabulary was analyzed and translated, using a STANDARD English equivalent for each Greek element. The Greek grammar was entirely revised in accord with the findings made in this task of transcribing into English precisely what God has really revealed in the sacred original. The result of this arduous and exhaustive work is the *Concordant Version of the Sacred Scriptures*, which is at once scientific, systematic, uniform and consistent – a standard by which all other translations may be tested – truly the most valuable work ever printed. Never before has such earnest endeavor been made to give the people the revelation of God with the unvarying uniformity, consistency and purity found in the *Concordant Version*, enabling the reader to establish his faith on divine verities rather than human authority.

A SPECIMEN EXCERPT

Now we give a specimen excerpt from this version, taken from the third chapter of Paul's epistle to the Romans. ▶



264 pp., PB

See order form.

Daily Gleanings – 365 Selections on Scriptural Truths

Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr., Editor

This book contains a collection of gleanings from some 200 different authors. These excerpts are intended to be an encouragement to those who are walking on a different path with the Lord – a journey that is "outside of the camp."

Some quotations are from beloved and trusted authors, but more often than not, they are from unusual sources. Sometimes, it is simply amazing how an author can admit in print to some grand truth that their writings and ministries otherwise generally deny. For the authors of these quotes, the truth that is conveyed by them may oddly seem "out of place"; but in some ways, the more unlikely the source, the more amazingly it testifies to the truth – and the fact that it cannot be hidden.

Thanks for your ministry and the time you put into this work. – TX

Interesting, instructive and faith building. – Canada

I love that you have done this for

us. There is no way that we could go through half the amount of material you go through and pull out these tasty morsels. – VA

What a treasured collection! – MI

You have made me aware of authors I didn't even know. – GA

Truly an invaluable resource. – IL

These gleanings are so encouraging! – Kenya

ΠΡΟΦΗΤΩΝ ΑΙΚΑΙΟΣΥΝΗΛΕ 100
22 ΕΡΕΥΝΑ-ΑΓΩΓΗΣ JUSTICE YES
 ΘΕΟΥ ΔΙΑ ΠΙΣΤΕΩΣ ΙΗΣΟΥ Χ 20
OF-GOD THOU BELIEF OF-JESUS AN-
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OF-THOU BRAND-THY-THUS AS-1 AND AND-OF-ALL OF
 ΠΑΝΤΑΣ ΤΟΥΣ ΠΙΣΤΕΥΟΝΤ 60
ALL THE WHO-BELIEVING
 ΑΣ ΟΥΓΑΡ ΕΣΤΙΝ ΔΙΑΣΤΟΛΗ 80
NOT IN IS SEPARATION

The Concordant Greek Text
 (Romans 3:22)

19 Now we are aware that, whatever the law is saying, it is speaking to those 'under the law, that every mouth may be barred', and the entire world may 'become' subject to the just verdict of 'God, because, 'by works of law, no' flesh at 'all shall be justified in His sight, for through law is the recognition of sin.
 21 Yet now, apart from law, a righteousness of God is 'manifest' (being attested' by the law and the prophets),
 22 yet a righteousness of God through Jesus Christ's faith,
 23 for all, and on all who are believing, for there is no' distinction, for all sinned and are wanting' of the glory of God.

Concordant Literal New Testament
 Romans 3:19-23

JUSTIFICATION Individual

21 The previous section found no one just but God Himself. No one has been able to attain God's standard by doing or keeping the law. How then may we become just before God? Only by becoming partakers of His righteousness.

22 The channel through which we may obtain this righteousness is the *faith* of Jesus Christ. He alone of all mankind, not only did good and kept the law, but He believed God even when He smote Him for our sins. It is out of His faith for our faith.

24 They hated Him *without a cause* – gratuitously. Such is the meaning of this precious word. Justification on any other ground than the free and unforced favor of God is impossible, for none deserve it. But now Christ Jesus has effected a deliverance from all judgment, which is absolutely free to all who believe.

Concordant Commentary on the New Testament
 (Romans 3:19-24)

(to be continued)

Bible Student's Notebook™

Paul Our Guide – Christ Our Goal

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Scripture education in a semi-weekly format!

This free electronic publication is dedicated to:

- the proclamation of the riches of God's abundant, exceeding grace (Romans 5:20; 11:6; Ephesians 1:7);
- the affirmation that God will save all mankind through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (I Timothy 2:3, 4; 4:10; Titus 2:11);
- the "preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret in ages past" (Romans 16:25);
- true freedom and liberty apart from law (Galatians 5:1);
- the organic nature of the Body of Christ (I Corinthians 12);
- the distinct message and ministry of Paul, the apostle to the nations (Ephesians 1:1-3);
- the importance of receiving all whom Christ has received (Romans 14-15);
- the recovery of rich Biblical truth that has too long remained hidden under the veils of traditionalism, prejudice, misunderstanding, and fear (Mark 7:7, 13);
- the completeness of the believer in Christ (Colossians 2:10), with:

- total freedom from sins (Colossians 1:14);
- union in His death, burial and resurrection (Romans 6);
- adult sonship position (Galatians 4).

We do not claim infallibility for the contents of this publication. Our readers are asked to be as the Bereans and search the Scriptures (Acts 17:10-11; I Thessalonians 5:21).

This publication is not connected with any "church," "denomination," "movement," "organization," "mission," "creed," "meeting," "school," "conference" or "fellowship."

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