

No novelist ever conceived a romance so marvelous as the story of how God preserved His Word through the centuries. Fire and earthquake and war have blotted many things out of existence, but God's Word has been kept for His people. Mighty kings and emperors have tried to destroy the Word, but He that sitteth in the heavens has laughed at them.

Only the outline of this wonderful story can be told in this essay. It is hoped that the hearer will be led to inquire into some of the more ambitious volumes in which this story is told in greater detail. Such study will make for a deeper interest and a better conception than that which is contained in the following.

Since various phases of history are so intricately interwined with the many revisions of the ^{English} Bible it perforce demands as a requisite the necessary recapitulation of these historical facts as they concern the former. We are of the opinion, therefore, that the hearer's indulgence and patience must be implored.

Early Manuscripts.

To-day a book is called a volume. The word comes from the Latin and means "something rolled up." During the centuries before Christ the books of the law, of history, of poetry, and of prophecy, which we call the books of the Old Testament, were written by the scribes on papyrus or parchement. The papyrus or parchement was fastened to a stick in a somewhat similar fashion as sticks are fastened to wall maps in our day.

It was probably such a volume, or roll, that Hilkiah, the priest, found in the temple and sent to King Josiah. (II Chron. 34, 14-18). The roll of the prophecy of Isaiah delivered to Jesus when He entered into the symagogue at Nazareth must have been of the same general description.

The rolls were copied and recopied by the scribes to whom the work was committed, so that many copies of the books of the Old Testament must have been in existence in the time of Christ. Yet the oldest Hebrew manuscript so far discovered was prepared in the tenth century after Christ!

We have, however, older Bible manuscripts than this. More

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than one hundred years before Christ, learned men finished translations of the Old Testament, as well as a number of other books which we term the apocryphal books. The work thus completed was called the Septuagint, because the translation was authorized by the Sanhedrin of seventy members, or because of the tradition that seventy-two men had done the work in seventy-two days. This tradition has no basis in fact; it is known that the translation required the work of many men during a period of about one hundred and fifty years.

More than 330 M M S of the septuagint (LXX)-(in whole or in part) are now treasured in various museums and libraries. The oldest fragment dates from the third century after Christ. This was not discovered until 1903, at Oxyrhynchus, in Egypt. Scholars are eagerly searching for still earlier M S S.

Other famous M S S of the Septuagint are known as Codex Alexandrinus ("A") which is in the British Museum; Codex Sinaiticus ("S") to be seen formerly in the Imperial Library of Moscow, but recently sold to a British-American syndicate; Codex Ephraem ("C") the treasure of the Bibliothique Nationale in Paris.

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The Septuagint was the standard version of the Old Testament books in use among Christians until Jerome prepared the Vulgate or Latin version from the Hebrew. Though Jerome's work was completed in the fourth century, the earliest known M S of the Vulgate dates from the seventh or eighth century. Few of the more than 8000 M S S so far discovered are older than the 13th or 14th century.

The first M S S of the books of our New Testament were written by Paul when he sent his epistles to the churches. These M S S were preserved by those who received them, and frequently copies were sent to other churches. The Gospels and the other books of the New Testament also were prepared and multiplied by scribes.

Many of the scribes who copied the M S S were connected with monasteries. Copying was often their sole employment. Frequently they were excused from the rough work of gardening, etc., in which all the other monks had to share, in order that their hands might be kept in the best possible condition for writing.

on vellum or parchment. They were of two kinds: Uncials-capital letters., Cursives-written in a running hand. The ordinary Uncial M S was written without spaces, accents or punctuation marks. Abbreviations, which were frequently used, were marked by a stroke above the letters.

Of all the N. T. M S S prepared by the scribes we have to-day only 112 Uncials and about 3500 Cursives. The oldest of the Uncials dates from about the middle of the 4th century, while the oldest of the Cursives dates from the ninth century. Only two of the Uncials contain the entire N, T. ("A" and "S"). The story of "S" MS gives a hint of the wonderful way in which God has preserved the Bible through the centuries. You all know the story of this German scholar, Constantine Tischendorf, whose search in 1844 in St. Catherine's Convent at the foot of Mt. Sinai was so handsomely rewarded.

By many it is thought that this copy of the Bible was one of the 50 MSS prepared by emperor Constantine for the principal churches of his empire. For the MSS only the finest materials and the most skillful artists were to be employed. The fact that Codex "S" was prepared in the most skillful manner on the finest parchment, probably made from the skin of antelopes, would seem to go at least part way to prove this theory.

When Bibles Were Scarce

In the sixth century when England had as yet not been Christianized, the libraries of the monasteries of Ireland held precious portions of the Bible in Latin, and perhaps also in Greek and Hebrew. From these various MSS were made some of the first translations of parts of the Bible used in England.

The Irish Monks guarded their treasured MSS most carefully. Those who were privileged to study them were forbidden to copy them for their own use. Historians tell of an incident that grew, so it is said, out of the failure of one man to whom a MS was lent, to disregard this rule. Columba, famous as one of the early missionaries who introduced Christianity to England, while visiting Finian in Ulster, made a copy of his hosts' Psalter, working while everyone else in the house was asleep.

Because Columba declined to give it up, the case was appealed to Diarmad, king of Tara. After careful consideration, the king decided that Finian was in the right since "to every book belongs its son-book (or copy), as to every cow belongs her calf."

Not many years after the death of Columba a laborer named Caedmon was employed at the abbey of Whitby in Northumbria, England. He was an ignorant fellow, and so felt that he was unable to take part in the entertainment of those who gathered at the abbey on winter evenings. It was the custom to ask each person present to sing, accompanying him on the harp. Caedmon would steal away from the hall before he could be asked for his contribution in song. One night after his escapes from the abbey, he must have fallen asleep thinking of his inability to sing, for he dreamed that a voice said: "Sing to me." Answering the voice that he could not sing, the voice said: "Sing to me the first beginning of created things." He thought he sang a hymn of praise to God. "The next morning---" so the incident is told in "The Ancestry of our English Bible"---"the story of his dream brought him before the Lady Abbess, and he was found to be possessed of a divine gift. For as soon as the monks translated a portion of the Bible story out of the Latin text, he immediately sang it to the accompaniment of his harp in short lines of Saxon verse." The songs he sang were written down. They are known to us to-day as "Caedmon's Paraphrase" or parts of the Scriptures.

Sixty-five years after the Paraphrase was written a monk by the name of Bede died in the monastery of Jarron. But before he died he wanted to finish the translation of the Gospel of St. John, which he had been making, because as he said, "I do not want my boys (his fellow monks) to read a lie, or to work to no purpose after I am gone." When all was done but one chapter Bede was nearly gone. "Take thy pen and write quickly." The scribe wrote, and Bede died with a word of praise on his lips that he had been able to finish the work he so greatly desired to do.

More than 100 years after Bede's death king Alfred of England expressed the wish that all the free-born youths of his kingdom should employ themselves on nothing until they first could read well the English Scripture. In order to make the way easy for those who

died before the work was completed. He had, however, accomplished one purpose that has had its influence on all English law: he made the Ten Commandments a part of the law of the land. (Excerpts of seven C-p.18).

Near the close of the tenth century appeared Archbishop Aelfric's Anglo-Saxon Bible intended for reading in churches. This Bible in the main distinguishes itself in the form of the letters which is vastly different from those employed shortly thereafter.

For more than 300 years not much attention was paid in England to Bible translations. The land was in confusion; there were wars and rumors of wars which took the attention of both rulers and priests. But in the latter part of the 14th century John Wyclif, who had been at the head of Baliol College, Oxford, and was later a country priest, determined to translate the Bible so that it might be read by the common people. The translation was made from the Vulgate, half of the O.T. and all of the N.T. being the work of Wyclif himself, while the remainder was done by Nicholas of Hereford.

No sooner was this MS version bearing Wyclif's name completed than he was brought to trial, in 1378, on several charges, the most important being that he made the Bible more "common and more open to laymen and to women than it was wont to be to clerks well learned and of good understanding, so that the pearl of the Gospel is trodden under foot of swine."

Having triumphed over the enemies who sought his life, Wyclif began to plan to get the Bible before the common people. Few could afford a Bible of their own, so he gathered about himself a company of devoted men, called "Lollards", who went about the country teaching the Scriptures to all who would listen. One of Wyclif's enemies purportedly should have said: "You cannot travel anywhere in England, but of every two men you meet, one will be a Lollard."

In 1384 John Wyclif was stricken with palsy while kneeling with his people in his own parish church. A monk who did not like him spoke of his death in vigorous words, calling him "the idol of heretics, the image of hypocrites, the restorer of schism, the storehouse of lies, the sink of flattery."

THE BIBLE OF WYCLIF WAS REVISED SEVERAL TIMES AND UNDER THE
super@vision of Richard Purvey. (Preface on p. 21 gives an interesting
sideglance on Wyclif's mode of translating).

The circulation of Wyclifs' Bible was so general, in spite of
all difficulties in the way, that in 1414 all persons were legally
warwed against reading the scriptures in English, on pain of for-
feiture of "land, catel, life and goods from theyre heyres forever."
Efforts were made to destroy the books bearing Wyclif's name, yet
70 copies have been preserved to this day.

The law against Wyclifs' version was not enough to satisfy
his enemies. They were not content until his bones had been
burned and the ashes thrown into the river Swift. An old writer
speaking of this occurance, said: "As the Swift bare them into
the Severn, and Severn into the narrow seas, and they again into
the ocean, thus the ashes of Wyclif is an emblem of his doctrines,
which is now dispensed over all the world.

Unfortunately, a single copy of Wyclif's Bible cost what
would be equal to two hundred dollars of our money. (Before present
monetary inflation status). Yet many who could not afford to own
a copy gained access to one by paying a fee for the priviledge.
The case is recorded of one man who gave a load of hay that he
might read a MS an hour a day for a number of days.

But better times were soon to come. Less than seventy years
after the death of Wyclif the art of printing was invented, and thus
cheap Bibles were made possible.

The
Martyr
Translator

William Syndale found it difficult to get access to the Bible. There were no printed copies in English and the MSS of Wyclif's version --completed in 1382--were so expensive that they could be consulted only by the wealthy or by those who could use the few libraries so fortunate as to possess copies. The heart of the young man went out in pity to those who had not even his slender opportunity to read God's Word. Thus he made the resolution that shaped his life; and he stated it to one who was his opponent in a debate in these words: "If God spare my life, ere many years I will cause a boy that driveth the plow shall know more of the Scripture than thou dost."

The task thus set himself by Tyndale would have been comparatively easy if he had been content to print the text of one of Wyclif's MS Bibles. But he knew that Wyclif had merely translated into English from the Vulgate, and he was resolved to make a translation from the Hebrew and Greek. The English of Wyclif's version was, moreover, out of date. (cf. ex. of Lk. 10, 30-34, p. 24).

Tyndale knew that he faced almost certain death if he persisted in his attempt to give the Bible to the people, but he did not pause because of the danger. The man who, when a student at Oxford and when tutor to the boys of a country gentleman, had not hesitated to defeat enemies of powerful men, would not be held back by what he believed to be his duty merely by the fear of death.

He did not begin his translation at once, but first devoted years of study to gaining a more exact knowledge of Hebrew and Greek. He became such a skilled linguist that it was later said of him that he spoke Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Italian, Spanish, German and French as if each were his native tongue.

But his studies did not take him away from his people. As he had opportunity opportunity he left his books and went to the village in the neighborhood of Bristol, where he was staying, and preached in the open air to all who would gather. There were those in authority, who misunderstood his actions, by whom he was "reviled and rated as a dog" --to use his own expression.

Opposition only strengthened his purpose to give to the people the Bible in their own tongue that they might be able to stand against any errors of ignorant and designing men.

Persecution in the country led the young scholar to go to London in 1523, in the hope that at the home of the Bishop of London he might find a refuge while he undertook his difficult task. But the Bishop treated him coldly, as one should have expected. Humphrey Monmouth, an alderman of the city, however, opened his doors to the poor scholar and showed him other kindnesses for which he later suffered imprisonment in the tower of London. Monmouth gives us an interesting description of his six months stay in the words: "He studied most part of the day and of the night at his book; and he would eat but sodden meat by his good will, nor drink but single beer. I never saw him wear linen about him during the space he was with me."

A year's residence in the city showed Tyndale that if he were to succeed in translating the Bible he must leave England and go to the Continent. Thus he came to Hamburg in 1524. Here he was compelled to do his work secretly in order that his life might not be jeopardized until the Book should be translated and printed. After a few months of arduous labor the N.T. was completed. English friends provided funds for the printing at Cologne.

Peter Quentel, who had been engaged to do the mechanical work, had run through the press a large number of the sheets required for the modest edition of three thousand copies, when word was brought to him that the enemies of the Reformation had obtained from the Cologne Senate an order prohibiting the printing. Tyndale hastily went to Worms, carrying the sheets with him.

In Worms plans were changed. It became necessary to print an octave edition, because a description of the latter had been sent to England by spies. Of the 6000 copies prepared--three thousand of each edition--only three are known to-day, an imperfect copy of the quart edition and two copies of the octave edition.

The finished books were smuggled to England hidden in cases and barrels of other goods. As the people came to know about them they eagerly sought them. It is said that some men of wealth were so eager for a copy that they were willing, if necessary, to give a hundred thousand pieces of money in exchange for one. The poor people, for whom the translation had been especially prepared, were as hungry for the books as the wealthy, and the king and his court were as eager to secure the volumes as the people. Their object, however,

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Bonfires were made of the copies secured by the authorities. In London, Oxford, and Antwerp many volumes were thus destroyed. Overtures were made to an English merchant named Packington, trading th Antwerp, to buy secretly all the copies he could find. It was not known that Packington, being an intimate friend of Tyndale, was interested in the success of the new translation. To the Bishop's overtures he replied: "My lord if it be your pleasure, I could do in this matter probably more than any merchant in England; so if it be your lordship's pleasure to pay for them--for I must disburse money for them--I will insure you to have every book that remains unsold."

"Gentle Master Packington", was the answer, "do your diligence and get them for me, and I will gladly give you whatever they may cost for the book are naughty, and I intend surely to destroy them all, and burn them at Paul's Cross."

Packington went to Tyndale and asked him to sell him all the testaments. Tyndale was indignant until the explanation was given that by means of the high price offered for the books by those who would destroy them a much larger edition could be printed, and the good work of spreading the knowledge of the Bible would be carried on and by the aid of the very men who sought to stop his work. The copies were furnished, the money paid, and Tyndale's empty pockets were filled. ("Quid pro Quo.")

The Pentateuch and parts of the Prophets were next translated and were printed in 1534. In the same year appeared a revision of the N. T. printed in 1526, which showed the extreme care of Tyndale's work. His greater familiarity with the Greek enabled him to correct many of his earlier mistakes. With such accuracy was the work done that the Authorized Version of 1611 and the Revised Version of 1881 retained many of his words and sentences. For instance: of the 202 words in the difficult passage of Col. 1,9-17, 158 are retained in the Revised Version. Some of the words used to look strange to us because of the old spelling, but most of them are the words to which we are accustomed. (Cf. ex. of Phil 2,5-8. P.50).

The study of the pure, vigorous English of this version played a wonderful part in fixing the form of the English language. We are using in our daily speech words and phrases put together by a half-

The enmity of those in authority for Tyndale, increased as his version of the Bible found its way into the hearts of the people in spite of all efforts made to prevent this. To Antwerp--where he was living in 1535--he was pursued. He was arrested and imprisoned for more than a year. On October 6, 1536 he was strangled and his body burned. His last words were the prayer: "Lord, open the kind of England's eyes."

Tyndale's monument is the English Bible for which he gave his life, for, as one modern scholar has said: "The Bible of the English--speaking nations was largely the work of one heroic, simple-minded, scholarly man: William Tyndale."

Five Sixteenth Century Versions

The first Complete printed Bible in English was issued one year before Tyndale's death. This volume was compiled by one Miles Coverdale, a monk who had acquired a taste for Bible study while he was in St. Augustine Monastery. He used Tyndale's translations as a basis, supplementing these by translations from other versions. By some means the favor of Henry VIII was secured for the new edition and within a year after Tyndale's death the Bible was being sold openly to the English people. -10-

In 1537 another compilation and translation came from the press. This was known as Marthew's Bible. It was superior to Coverdale's Bible, in consequence it was received heartily on all sides. Briefly this is the story of the new version:

John Rogers frequently visited Tyndale in Vilvorde Castle, where the heroic Bible student was confined. Tyndale, knowing that he would be unable to publish the parts of his Bible not yet given to the world, turned them over to Rogers. Rogers then issued a version of the Bible made up largely of Tyndale's work, though Coverdale's translation was used for the latter part of the O. T. Credit could not be given to Tyndale for this part, since his Bible had been forbidden. Rogus would not use his own name for what was not his work. So the volume appeared with the name, "Thomas Matthew" on the title page. Possibly this was the name of a man of means who paid the expenses for the edition, though it may have been merely a name assumed by Rogus to save himself

Henry VIII to whom the version was dedicated, gave permission for its open sale in England. He did not know that so much of it was the work of Tyndale. Thomas Cromwell, who had urged the approval of the Bible, was evidently afraid that the king might learn the truth, so he hastened to arrange with Coverdale to undertake a new translation. In this Coverdale was to be aided by many Hebrew and Greek scholars.

The version prepared under Coverdale's direction was printed in 1539. In reality it was only a hastily compiled version of Matthew's Bible.

Enemies of the circulation of the Bible interfered with the printing of this book in Paris, consequently the type was taken to England and the work completed there. After many hardships it came from the binder's hands, a handsome book, so large that it was called the "Great Bible."

In 1538--less than thirteen years after the burning of Tyndale's Bible--orders were sent by the king's command to all ministers in the kingdom directing them to secure "one booke of the whole Bible, in the largest volume, in Englyshe, sett up in some conveyent place within the church that ye have cure of, whereat your parishioners may most commodiously report to the same and rede it." The people received the open Bible gladly. So great was the interest of the people in the Bibles placed in the churches that Bishop Bonner complained to the king that "diverse willful and unlearned persons inconsiderately and indiscreetly read the same, especially and chiefly at the times of the divine service, yea, in the time and declaration of the Word of God." And the king found it necessary to tell the minister to warn the people that they should use the Bible "most humbly and reverently" not "having thereof any open reasoning in your open taverns and alehouses."

The name of Richard Taverner must be written on the roll of 16th century ~~celebrity~~ heroes who suffered for his devotion to the Bible. As a young man he was imprisoned because he had been caught reading a copy of the N. T., translated by Tyndale. Later, while practicing law, he devoted his spare time to preparing a new edition of the Bible, on the basis of earlier translations. This was published in 1539. His knowledge of Greek enabled him to correct errors made by others, but his work as a whole was not rewardable. Taverner's Bible passes through several editions, yet the version was soon displaced by others destined

all as strongly worded as the report that has come down to us in the introduction to a discourse given at Oxford, he must have been an oddity. On that occasion he said: "I have brought you some five biscuits, baked in the oven of charity, carefully conserved for the chickens of the church, the sparrows of the spirit, and the sweet swallows of salvation".

Enemies of the Reformation in England were not pleased that the Bible was becoming so well known, so in 1543 they persuaded king Henry VIII to order that no laboring men and women "should read to themselves or to others, publicly or privately, any part of the Bible, under pain of imprisonment." When, however, Edward VI became king the circulation of the Bible was again allowed. Thirty-five editions of the N. T. and thirteen of the entire Bible were issued during the brief reign from 1547 to 1553.

Mary, who began to reign in 1553, did her best to stop the circulation of the Bible. Even its public use was forbidden. Copies were taken from the churches and burned. Hundreds of reformers were burned at the stake, among these being John Rogers, the compiler of the Matthew Bible.

To escape the persecution in England many leaders of the Reformation fled to Geneva. During their exile a company of scholars among these prepared a new version of the Bible which was printed in 1560. The version was dedicated to Queen Elizabeth, Mary's successor, who gave permission for the printing and circulation of this book. The Geneva Bible--the first Bible printed in Roman type instead of black letters--was received in eagerness. Before long it became the popular Bible of the hour.

The popularity of the Geneva Bible did not please the authorities of the established church, consequently the Archbishop of Canterbury ordered the revision of the Great Bible, in the hope that the new work would displace the others. The translation was done by a company of scholars, several of whom were bishops. Their completed work was published in 1568 and was known as "the Bishops' Bible".

The new Bible was not popular. It was far inferior to the Geneva Bible, and the circulation was comparatively small. Only twenty editions

The Rhemes N. T. of 1582 and the Douai O. T. of 1609 did not play much of a part in the development of the modern English Bible, although these were the last of the early versions that brought about the fulfillment of Tyndale's dream to make the Bible familiar to every "boy that driveth the plow." They had paved the way for the king James Version of 1611, the version that displaced all other versions for nearly 300 years.

THE KING JAMES VERSION

Early in the 17th century the Puritans of England made complaint to king James I because of certain things in church government which they thought should be corrected. They did not dream that anything better should be in store for them than the granting of their petitions for reforms. Yet, while their requests were denied, these bore fruits in one of the most momentous events in the history of the English Bible--the kings' call for a new translation.

At the time the Puritans made their complaint, king James called a conference of leaders both of the Puritans and of the High Church party. The conference met at Hampton Court in 1604. On the second day Dr. Reynolds, president of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, complained that the rival Bible versions of the day--the Bishops' Bible, the greater favorite with the people--were defective. Then he suggested that a new and more accurate version be prepared at once. But for this suggestion perhaps the conference would not have found a place in historical records, for the advance plans made by the Puritans came to naught. The suggestion made by Dr. Reynolds, the leader of the Puritans, however, bore unexpected fruit. The idea of a new Bible version made by men under his direction appealed to king James, who was proud of the scholarly attainments that secured for him the title 'the theologian king.'

The Bishop of London objected to a new translation (he would!) on the ground that "if every man's humor should be followed, there would be no end of translations." King James deferred to the objection by giving the direction that no marginal notes should be added to the new version, complaint having been made against previous versions

acquainted with Hebrew or Greek to make known through their bishops any changes they thought should be made in the text. These changes were to be considered by 54 Oxford and Cambridge men, whom the king named. Only 47 of these took part in the work.

The revisers set about their work in 1607, three years after the king decided to undertake the revision. They were divided into five companies, each of which had its own portion of the Bible assigned to it. The companies met in Westminster, Oxford, and Cambridge. The expenses of the revision were to be paid out of funds contributed for the purpose by the bishops. Unfortunately, thirty of the scholars received nothing but their entertainment while at work. The seventeen men to whom other payment was made met in London.

The King made known to the translators fifteen rules by which they were to be guided in their work. It is said that these rules were followed at the discretion of the revisers. One of the rules directed, that the division into chapters should be altered "either not at all, or as little as may be." This division first appeared in Tyndale's Bible; the division into verses first appeared in the Geneva Bible, it is said, having been prepared by a Robert Stephen while he was making a journey from Paris to Lyons! Other rules decreed that "every particular man of each company" should translate the same chapter, and should then compare his work with that done, by the rest of the company. Another that when a book was completed by one company, the result should be sent for criticism and judgment to the other companies. Another that any disagreement arising in a company should be considered at a general meeting to take place when all had done their work.

The men chosen for the work were the best Hebrew and Greek scholars of the time. We know a little of some of them through a writer of that day who says that Lively was "one of the first Linguists of the world"--Reynolds: "a very treasure of erudition"--Killbye: "another Apollow"--Doigne: "composed of Greek and industry"--Miles Smith: "had Hebrew at his finger ends." The details of the work have not come down to us. There is not even a copy of one of the old versions used by the translators. A document like that, with notes of proposed readings, would be a valuable relic. But we are left

a great production like our Authorized Version carried on with less knowledge handed down to posterity of the laborers, their methods, and order of working." Of a certainty we must acknowledge the great spirit of humbleness of mind with which these great scholars were endowed. There is also the remote possibility that the work after passing through so many hands had become frail, fragile, and worn, and resembled more closely a matter ready for the waste basket, rather than a precious MS to be acquired as a museum piece.

It is known that when the three companies busy at Westminster, Cambridge, and Oxford completed their work wach sent the result to London in the hands of two of the company. Where the six men met and received all the suggestions made, and decided on final renderings in the case of every passage concerning which there were different opinoins. How profitable it would be if we could read a report of the proceedings of the conferences held by these men! The final revision in London required nine months, while the work of the companies had occupied almost three years. Since three years had elapsed after the announcement of the proposed revision before the work actually begun, the finished king James Version was not given to the world until 1611. -15-

While the king James Version has always been called the Authorized Version, there is no evisence that it was ever authorized by anybody in power. The title-page bears the words "Appointed to be read in churches," but history does not tell by whom the appointment was made. We only know that the king ordered the revision.

Of course there was widespread opposition to the new version on the part of those who had become used to the Bishops' Bible or the Geneva Bible. But opposition gradually became approval as the readers that the best things in previous versions had been retained. Within a generation the superiority of the Authorized version was gradually acknowledged. No one can wonder at this who goes back to the old versions and finds there such phrases as : "The sin hangeth so fast on us" and "As the hart brayeth for the rivers of water."

The king James Version was a triumph for William Tyndale, the martyr translator of the 16th century. His proscribed version was the basis of the versions on which the revisers of King James did their

Many of his expressions were transferred bodily by them.

A great deal might be said as to the influence of the Authorized Version had upon the English language. To put it briefly and to the point we might add that the Authorized Version, prepared with a view to its use by the common people, went into the hands of the common people at a time when the language was yet in a formative state. As it speedily became the best-read book in the language--the only book known in most homes--naturally the Anglo-Saxon of the Bible became a permanent part of the speech of the people. To this every student of the English language will subscribe.

THE REVISED VERSION.

For more than two centuries the King James Version was the accepted translation of the English Bible. Many thought that it would be the final translation. But during the 19th century there were so many discoveries of important Biblical MSS--some of earlier date than any before known--that scholars began asking if it would not be wise to have a new translation on the basis of a comparison of these MSS with those known to the makers of King James Version. Diligent study of some of the newly discovered MSS revealed differences between these and the MSS on which the Authorized Version was based. The "S" MS especially gave many different readings. -16-

As early as 1857 a new translation of the Gospel of John and of the Epistles of Paul was published by five English scholars. The entire Bible was soon after translated by other scholars, acting independently of any authority. Another translation was given to the public by an American scholar in 1869. Other partial translations were made on both sides of the Atlantic.

Thus the way was paved for the resolution presented February 10, 1870 by Bishop Wilburforce in the Upper House of the convocation of Canterbury. He suggested the appointment of a committee to report on the advisability of revising the Authorized Version of the N. T. Bishop Ellicott--one of the translators of 1857--supported the resolution. The committee appointed was instructed to include the advisability of translating the O. T. in their report. In May 1870 the committee reported urging the importance of the proposed translation.

they may belong." The sixteen members of the original committee-- all identified with the Church of England--invited representatives of other evangelical churches to join them, until there were 54 revisers in all.

Like the king James Version, the new revision was based on certain definitely stated principles. It was proposed--among other things-- "to introduce as few alterations as possible into the text of the Authorized Version consistent with faithfulness," "to limit, as far as possible, the expression of such alterations to the language of the Authorized and other English versions," and "to revise the headings of chapters and pages, paragraphs, italics, and punctuations."

To twenty-seven men was entrusted the work of the O. T. translation, whereas the remaining twenty-seven agreed to undertake the translation of the N. T. The N. T. section began work on June 22, 1870, while the O. T. section first met eight days later in the famous Jerusalem Chamber of Westminster Abbey. The revisers usually met four days each month, ten months in the year, for ten and one half years. At intervals the two sections had a joint session lasting about ten days, sixteen hours each day.

At the end of six years the N. T. section had succeeded in completing their task, all differences of opinion having been settled by a majority vote. Then they went over the translation a second time, settling all differences by a two-thirds vote. Then two and one-half more years were required. And still the N. T. was not ready for publication. In 1870, Dr. Angus, representing the British revision, had visited the U. S. and had proposed that American scholars cooperate with the British Revision Committee. They were to examine diligently the first draft of the work of the British revisers and return their work together with their suggestions. After that they were to examine the second draft sent from England, embodying as many of the suggestions as were adopted, and returning this also with their further suggestions. The British Revision would take final shape only after consideration of the second lot of suggestions from America.

As a result thirty men, representing many denominations and faiths, met at Bible House in New York City, beginning October 4, 1872 and

"The English revisers promise to send confidentially their Revision in all its stages to the American revisers, to take all the Americans suggestions into special consideration before the conclusion of their labors, to furnish their before publications with copies of the Revision in its final form, and to allow them to present, in an Appendix to the Revised Scriptures, all the remaining differences of reading and rendering of importance, which the English Committee should decline to adopt., while, on the other hand, the American revisers pledge themselves to give their moral support to the authorized editions of the University Presses, with a view to their freest circulation within the U. S., and not to issue an edition of their own, for a term of fourteen years."

After the completion of the N. T. section of the second stage of the work, two more years were occupied in discussing, adopting, and rejecting the suggestions of the American N. T. section, and in arranging final details.

The first printed copy of the resultant revision came from the press May 17, 1881. The O. T. section required fourteen years for their task. During this time the revisers spent 792 days in conference, going over their work twice, and considering the suggestions from the U. S.

The first printed copy of the Revised Bible appeared on May 19, 1885 --the final result of at least six laborious revisions--two of these being made in the U. S. and four in London.

THE AMERICAN STANDARD VERSION.

A short time before the expiration of the fourteen years during which the American Committee had agreed to give no sanction to the publication of any other edition of the Revised Version than that issued by the University Presses of England, an edition called by its publishers "The American Revised Version" was given to the public. This edition bore the imprint of the University Presses. British publishers had incorporated in the text the changes proposed years before by the American Committee which had been rejected at the time by the British Committee and inserted in the American Appendix to the

In the meantime the American Committee had maintained its organization, holding frequent conferences and meetings. The result of their labor of love was given to Bible readers on August 26, 1901, called the American Standard Edition of the Revised Bible. This edition did far more than incorporate in the text the textual changes proposed by the American Committee to the British revisers. These changes were first thoroughly revised in accordance with later knowledge gained through new study of the ancient MSS., especially in the light of important discoveries made by explorers and archeologists in Bible lands. Many verbal changes were also made, words in common use in the U. S. being substituted for words which--though intelligible enough to residents of Great Britain--were not entirely clear to the average American reader.

It was the effort of both British and American revisers to retain the old readings except where diligent comparisons of MSS showed that the old reading were incorrect, or where words or phrases had been archaic and therefore unintelligible. Many of the changes adopted make clear passages which before had been obscure, as--for instance--Job 19,26. The King James Version reads: "And though after skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." The American Standard Version says; "And after my skin, even this body, is destroyed, then without my flesh shall I see God." A somewhat improved example is Hebrews 11,1-2. Here the king James Version says: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report." In the American Standard Version we read: "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen. For therein the elders had witness borne to them."

Examples of the substitution of modern words for archaic expressions are:

- "Settings" for "ouches"
- "Baggage" for "stuff"
- "Find" for "amerced"
- "Traders" for "chapmen"
- "Umpire" for "daysman"
- "Hinder" for "let."

The American Standard Version has been accepted by many who look

the king James Version, whose words and phrases have become dear to them by reason of years and familiarity. Then again, the conviction prevents that the King James Version more truly and more clearly connotes the sense of the original meaning than the American Standard Version. A more definite evaluation of this phase does not lie within the scope of this essay. This is, at least the conviction of the writer.

But whether one chooses to read the king James Version, or the Revised Version, or the American Standard Version, it is the Word of God he takes in hand--the Word so completely and wonderfully preserved through the centuries--the Word of which God says; "It shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please."

OBJECTIVE:---SOUTHWESTERN PASTORAL CONFERENCE OF THE WESTERN
WISCONSIN DISTRICT OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN
JOINT SYNOD OF WISCONSIN.

DATE:-----DECEMBER 3, 1940.

PLACE:-----BARABOO, WISCONSIN. REV. H. KIRCHNER, PASTOR LOCI.

Essayist - Pastor Frederic Gilbert