

The Dr. Gene Scott Bible Collection

STATION 19: THE BISHOPS' BIBLE



*Click on the image
above to see a close-
up view!*

Imagine the chagrin of the English clerical establishment, life-long sworn opponents of the Bible in the hands of the "common people" (being sons of the nobility themselves) when Edward's reign ushered in a flood of Bible printing. Under his successor Queen Mary, though some may have feared the ax themselves, how gratifying it must have been for them to see the Bibles once chained to the lecterns of every church in the land consigned to the fires, and Archbishop Cranmer (supporter of the English Bible, and thus a turncoat to his fellow Bishops) put to death for heresy. Yet under her successor Elizabeth, what should confound them but a new flood of Bibles, loaded with notes that were, to them, every bit as abhorrent as Tyndale's "pestilent glosses," and to add insult to injury, these new Bibles (the **Genevas**, shown at Stations 20, 21-25 and 38) had a more accurate and thoughtful text than anything they had yet approved. Though new editions of the "Great" Bible had appeared, the flaws of that pastiche version were obvious to anyone who could read Latin and Greek. What to do?

In 1566, Matthew Parker, Archbishop of Canterbury, revived the notion that an "authorized revision" be commissioned by the English bishops. Books of the Bible were apportioned among the Bishops, and rules issued to the revisers. The ground rule was to use the text of the

"Great" Bible, as the one **"Commune
Englishe Translacion
used in the Churches,"**

and

no departure from it was permitted **"except wher
eyther the verytie of
the hebrue & greke
moved alteracion."**

Further rules included

the replacement of all terms which smacked of **"lightnes
or obscenitie,"**
**make no bitter notes
upon any text."**

and **"To**

The resulting product was, on the whole, backward-looking, ignoring the musical phrasing of the Geneva version in favor of the "Great" Bible readings. It was a committee product; there was no one firmly in charge. Some sections were lifted whole from the "Great" Bible, while others took as much as possible from the Geneva. It did, however, strive for faithfulness to the Hebrew, and it did carry forward the work of Tyndale and Coverdale.

Examples of its peculiar renderings include **"Lay thy
bread upon wet faces"**

(from the

"Great" Bible) instead of the Genevan **"Cast thy
bread upon the waters"**

, and

**"babble not much, as
the heathen do"**

(from Tyndale and the "Great"

Bible) instead of **"when ye pray, use
no vain repetitions as
the Heathen,"**

and

**"Backbite not one
another"
evil one of another."**

instead of **"Speak not**

And in

their campaign against levity or obscenity, Wycliffe's `waardropis', Purvey's `privies', Coverdale's `prevy house' and the Genevan `jakes' became the Bishops' `draught-house.'

The learned scholar Hugh Broughton, commenting on the new Genealogical Table (placed before the New Testament) and the Bishops' Bible in general, wrote: **"The**

**cockles of the
Seashores, and the
leaves of a Forest,
and the granes of the
Popy may as well be
numbered as the grosse
errours of this
table...our Bishops'**

Bible might well give place to the Alkoran, pestred with lyes."

Yet, for all its defects, the Bishops' Bible must stand square in the stream of the English Bible; there are many phrases or passages which sound familiar to our ears, for example

"The voice of one crying in the wylderness,"
your heart and not your garments."

or ***"Rend***

The first complete Bishops' Bible appeared in **1568**, under royal authority and approval, produced in a "Black Letter" folio edition. Verse divisions followed the Genevas. Between the first edition of 1568 and the final edition of 1602, 18 distinct editions of the complete Bishops' Bible were printed, all but seven as folios (as this was the size Bible the Bishops needed in their churches).

BISHOP'S BIBLES shown at the Station:

- **First Issue, First Edition - 1568** - Printed in "Black Letter" type by R. Jugge, London. Herbert says that in typography and illustration, this is perhaps the most sumptuous of the long series of English folio Bibles. There are 124 woodcut block illustrations as well as maps (mostly copied from the 1560 Geneva Bible) and numerous large initial letters, some of which incorporate the Arms of Archbishop Parker. This is sometimes called the "Treacle" Bible though the word ***"triacle"*** can be found in many previous Bibles beginning in 1535. At Psalms xlv. 9. there is a "curious note":

"Ophir is thought to be the Ilande in the west coast, of late founde by Columbo at this day is brought most fine golde."

Christopher : from whence

This is an early "Biblical" reference to the discovery of the New World. (Herbert #125)

- **Second Folio Edition - 1572** - "Black Letter" type, by R. Jugge of London. While the Old Testament is almost identical with the First Folio edition of 1568, the New Testament was further revised from a memorandum of Giles Lawrence, Professor of Greek at Oxford. Later editions of this Bible followed the OT text of the 1569 quarto edition and the NT text of this volume. The Psalms are present in two side-by-side versions: the "common prayer" text in "Black Letter," taken from the "Great" Bible, and

the "**translation after the Hebrewes**"

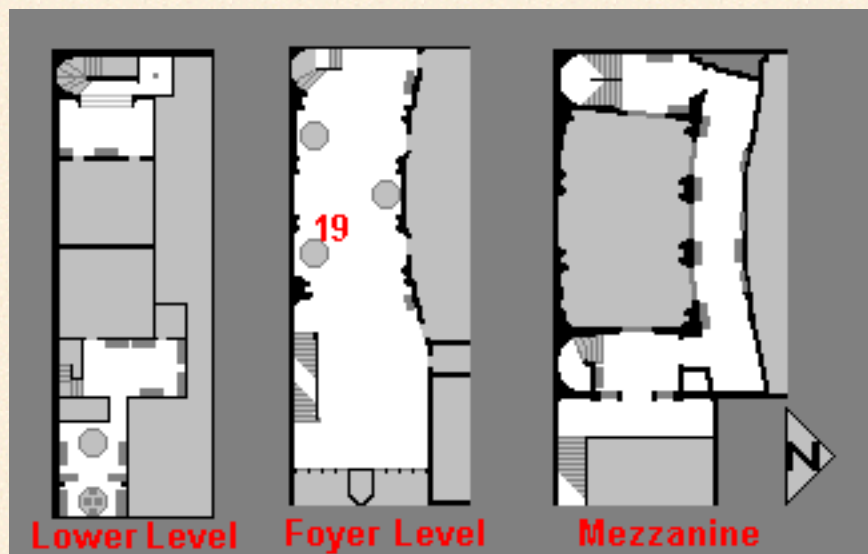
(i.e. the Bishops' version) in

Roman type. (Herbert #132)

- **1577** - Printed by R. Jugge, London, from extremely small "Black Letter" type, with 71 lines per column (a larger quarto of the same year had 60 lines per column). This small quarto is sometimes erroneously considered an octavo edition. Herbert notes that no example containing the general title page is now known. Examples of this particular Bible are not to be found in the British Museum, Huntington Library or American Bible Society collections; it ranks with the scarcest books of its period. (Herbert #151)
- **LAST Edition of this Bible - 1602** - Folio in "Black Letter" type by Robert Barker of London. This edition is the one believed used by King James' translators as a basis for their version. Numerous woodcut initial letters, and a few other illustrations or maps; the text is in two columns with printed rules all around. (Herbert #271)

STATION LOCATION MAP

Below is a floor plan map of the Cathedral in 3 sections, one for each level. The first section is the Lower Level, the second is the Foyer Level, and the third is the Mezzanine Level. This station is located in the East Octagon on the Foyer Level at the red #19.



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