

The Dr. Gene Scott Bible Collection

STATION 20: An Introduction to the GENEVA BIBLE



Overview of Station 20.

For three generations, this Bible held sway in the homes of the English people. While Great Bibles and Bishops' Bibles were read out in the churches, Genevas were read by the firesides, well before and after the King James Version was issued. The Geneva Bible was the Bible of William Shakespeare, John Milton, John Bunyan and Oliver Cromwell. Pilgrims and Puritans brought it with them to America.

The Geneva Bible was the product of English scholars and Bible lovers, Puritans who sought refuge in Geneva from the religious persecutions of Queen Mary's reign (with Miles Coverdale among them). They wanted to produce an annotated Bible for the use of their families while in exile. In 1557, William Whittingham completed a New Testament which included copious notes in the margins; a rarity of rarities, an example of it is shown at [Station 25](#). It used Roman type instead of the traditional "Black Letter" for the first time in English scriptures. Also for the first time, it had numbered verse divisions, following earlier French, Latin, Greek and Hebrew editions (starting with Robert Stephanus' pioneering work, as shown in this collection by his "Royal" edition of the Greek New Testament with his verse divisions indicated in manuscript by his own hand; [Station 35](#)).

With this Testament off the press in Geneva, Whittingham, aided by Anthony Gilby and Thomas Sampson (all trained at Cambridge or Oxford), plunged into producing a similar text of the whole Bible, continuing the Tyndale-Coverdale tradition by using the Great Bible (which reflected it) as a point of departure. Corrections were based on improved Latin and Greek texts; elaborate notes covered historical or geographical explanations as well as moral lessons.



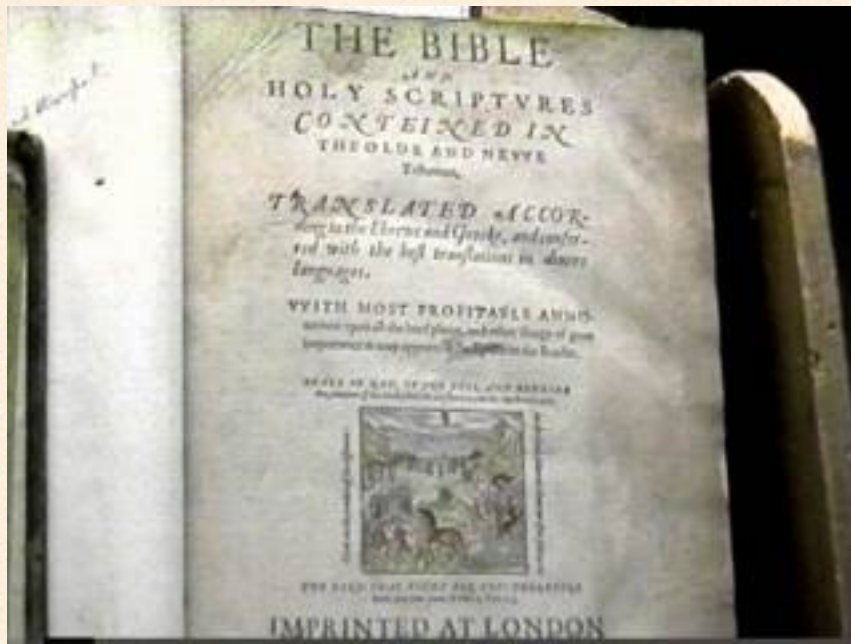
***1560 First Edition -
one of the five examples
shown as part of Dr.
Scott's Collection.***

Financed by the English congregation at Geneva, the complete Bible was first printed by Rowland Hall of Geneva in **1560**. Its quarto size (half that of many preceding English Bibles), clear Roman type and copious notes (it was often called a "Bible school in one volume") rapidly made it popular. Royal permission was obtained from Queen Elizabeth for its printing in England. In the eighty-four years of its publication, some 140 editions of the Geneva Bible or New Testament were produced.

The Geneva Bible, in large measure, was responsible for the spread of knowledge of the Bible among the rank and file of the English people and entered into the early history of America (perhaps the greatest gift of the Old World to the New). The Dr. Gene Scott Collection includes "bench mark" editions of the Geneva Bible in various sizes, from the first edition of the complete Geneva Bible to a hybrid edition of the King James Version with the ever-popular Geneva notes. This is one of the world's foremost collections of the Geneva Bible, rivalled in America only by the holdings of the Huntington Library and the New York Public Library.

Geneva Bibles shown at Station 20 include:

- **FIRST EDITION - 1560** - Printed in Geneva by Rouland Hall. The **first** English Bible printed in Roman type and with verse divisions, and the first of some 140 editions of the Geneva Bible or Testament. Believed translated by W. Whittingham, Anthony Gilby, Thomas Sampson, and perhaps others, with the Old Testament and Apocrypha based mainly on the Great Bible, corrected by reference to the original Hebrew and Greek, and compared with the Latin versions of Leo Juda and others. The New Testament is based on the Latin of Theodore Beza, as incorporated in Whittingham's Testament of 1557. (Herbert #107). Ecclesiasticus 15:13 has the error: "**The Lord hateth all abominacion [of error:] and they that feare God, will love it.**"
Three more examples of the First Edition (of a total of 160 printed!) are shown at [Station 25](#), and another at [Station 38](#).



**The first Geneva Bible
Printed in England;
click on the image
above to see a close-
up view.**

- **First Folio Edition Printed in England - 1576** - Printed in London by Christopher "Barkar." The engraving on the title page is the same used for the first edition of the Geneva Bible (1560). The title page engraving, and others throughout the Bible, are delicately hand-colored; this book was used as the Hall family Bible in Gloucester,

England, and has extensive records of births, deaths, and family matters of the 18th and early 19th Centuries. John Hall (1740-1797), an accomplished painter, was appointed Historical Engraver to King George III. (Herbert #143)

- **First Large Folio Edition - 1578** - Printed in London by Christopher Barker; "Black Letter" type. Contains Cranmer's Prologue (to the Great Bible) as well as "The booke of Common prayer." (missing from most copies, as it was cut out by collectors; this copy is virtually intact!). (Herbert #154). This is the earliest Bible to contain the introductory verses: ***"Here is the spring where waters flowe, to quenche our heate of sinne: Here is the tree where trueth doth grow, to lead our lives therein..."***

Two more examples of this important edition are shown at [Station 38](#).

- **The "Noblest" Large Folio Edition - 1583** - Printed in London by Christopher Barker, the court printer to Queen Elizabeth. Large "Black Letter" type, black & red title page with Royal Initials at sides. Contains Cranmer's Prologue (to the Great Bible), and several typographic woodcuts as well as a full-page engraving facing Genesis. A sumptuous book and a very well preserved example, at that. (Herbert #178)

Dr. Scott's collection of the Geneva Bibles surpasses that of the British Library, the Huntington or indeed any other collection in the world. More Geneva Bibles are shown at Stations [21-22-23-24-25-26](#) and Station [38](#).

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 #20.



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