

General Topics :: KJV Translators were Catholic?

KJV Translators were Catholic?, on: 2005/11/8 6:54

I know this is kinda coming out of left field, but I was thinking this morning about the numerous threads concerning the KJV... and I recall a number of people who have argued on here *against* the KJV have stated that the KJV translators were Catholic, and that King James was Catholic.

Of course, this is false.

Part I

Here is a quote from the "Translators to the Reader" of the KJV:

*The Unwillingness Of Our **Chief Adversaries**, That The Scriptures Should Be Divulged In The Mother Tongue, &c.*

*Now the **Church of Rome** would seem at the length to bear motherly affection towards her children, and to allow them the Scriptures in their mother tongue: but indeed it is a gift, not deserving to be called a gift, an unprofitable gift: they must first get a License in writing before they may use them, and to get that, they must approve themselves to their Confessor, that is, to be such as are, if not frozen in the dregs, yet soured with Leaven of their superstition. Howbeit, it seemed too much to Clement the 8. That there should be any License granted to have them in the vulgar tongue, and therefore he overruleth and frustrateth the grant of Pius the fourth. **So much are they afraid of the light of the Scripture (Lucifugus Scripturarum, as Tertullian speaketh), that they will not trust the people with it, no not as it is set forth by their own sworn men, no not with the License of their own Bishops and Inquisitors. Yea, so unwilling they are to communicate the Scriptures to the people's understanding in any sort, that they are not ashamed to confess, that we forced them to translate it into English against their wills.** This seemeth to argue a bad cause, or a bad conscience, or both. Sure we are, that it is not he that hath good gold, that is afraid to bring it to the touchstone, but he that hath the counterfeit; neither is it the true man that shunneth the light, but the malefactor, lest his deeds should be reprov'd: neither is it the plain dealing Merchant that is unwilling to have the weights, or the meteyard brought in place, but he that useth deceit. But we will let them alone for this fault, and return to translation.*

Part II

And here are some quotes from King James concerning the Catholic Church:

Quote #1

"As for Purgatory and all the trash depending thereupon, it is not worth the talking of; Bellarmine cannot find any ground for it in all the Scriptures...But as for me I am sure there is a Heaven and a Hell...for the elect and reprobate...Heaven and Hell are there revealed to be the eternal home of all mankind, let us endeavor to win the one and eschew the other."

Quote #2 (Concerning the infallibility of the Pope)

"...so I utterly deny that there is an earthly monarch thereof, whose word must be a Law, and who cannot err in his Sentence, by an infallibility of Spirit...Christ did not promise before his ascension to leave Peter with them to direct and instruct them in all things; but he promised to send the Holy Ghost unto them for that end...But how they are now come to be Christs Vicars, nay, Gods on earth, triple crowned, Kings of heaven, earth and hell, judges of all the world, and none to judge them; heads of the faith, absolute deciders of all controversies by the infallibility of their spirit, having all power both spiritual and temporal in their hands; the high bishops, monarchs of the whole earth, superiors to all emperors and kings; yea supreme vice-gods, who whether will or not cannot err; how they now come is say to the top of greatness I know not but sure I am we that are kings have greatest need to look into it. As for me, Paul and Peter I know, but these men I know not...but I am sure none will condemn for an heretic save such as make the Pope their God, and think him such a speaking Scripture as they can define heresy no otherwise...Rome shall be the seat of the Antichrist--Rome is the Seat of the Antichrist."

Quote #3

"And first for the blessed virgin Mary, I yield her that which the Angel Gabriel pronounced of her...I reverence her as the Mother of Christ,...But I dare not mock her and blaspheme God, praying her to command and control her Son, who is he

...God and her Savior, nor yet not I think that she hath no other thing to do in heaven, than to hear every idle mans suite, and busy herself in their errands; while requesting, while commanding her Son, while coming down to kiss and make love with Priests, and while disputing and brawling with Devils. In heaven she is in eternal glory and joy, never to be interrupted with any worldly business, and there I leave her with her blessed Son our Savior and her in eternal felicity."

The RCC had this to say about King James:
"King James is no Catholic, neither is he a Christian."

King James' response to that was: *"...not only having ever been brought up in that Religion which I presently profess...and so cannot be properly an heretic, by their own doctrine, since I never was of their Church."* --King James, Basilicon Doron, p. 15

And of course he had this to say about the Pope:
"I am sure none will condemn for an heretic save such as make the Pope their God." --King James, Basilicon Doron, p. 36

Part III

Many claim that Erasmus was Catholic, and therefore make claim that the Received Text was therefore influenced by a Catholic from almost the very outset. This is false. He was Catholic, however he merely passed on the Greek Text that was considered the traditional and received text. Even Westcott and Hort admitted this. He did not influence... he compiled. There is a huge difference.

Part IV

The translators and King James were Anglican, not Catholic. The Anglican Church of today is but a thin shadow of what it was 400 years ago. You can not look at the Anglican Church of today and assume it was the same 400 years ago. It is not.

As for the Anglicans who worked on the KJV, they translated the Received Text, however they found that the Tyndale Bible was extremely accurate, and found themselves basing over 80% of the KJV on the Tyndale NT. Tyndale was a separatist, Bible-believing Christian who was martyred for his faith. Further, in spite of their Anglicanism, the translators of the KJV did accept the Bible as the infallible Word of God.

It would do one well to read the individual writings of the translators and understand that these were truly men of God of the caliber which we rarely see in this day and age. For people today to sit in judgement of these men without knowing anything about them is arrogant to say the least. To sit in judgement over men who have been dead for 400 years, and make false statements about them is still a sin.

Krispy

Re: KJV Translators were Catholic? - posted by philologos (), on: 2005/11/8 8:54

Hi Krispy

James and his translators were not Catholic; they were anti-Presbyterian. He tried to unite the kingdoms of England and Scotland and saw religion as a good channel for that. He had been brought up under harsh Presbyterians who beat him through much of his early education and constantly lectured him on the notion that 'kings' were to be subject to the 'church'. James hated this. He had to sit in the main part of the church building with the pulpit towering over him. When he came to power in England he had a church built where the monarch's throne dominated the pulpit.

When he came to the throne on Elizabeth's death he was determined that the 'united kingdom' (this is where the phrase comes from) would have a united church of which he was the head. His belief in the divine right of kings was the most extreme of any English monarch for centuries. He rejected Presbyterianism because a monarch cannot control

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Presbyterians. He was determined that the 'united church' of the 'united kingdom' would be the Anglican Church with its episcopalian hierarchy which was subject to his patronage and hence control.

He commissioned the Authorized Version as part of his policy to produce a united church in a united kingdom. His specifications for the new translation (and they are publicly available) included the stipulation that the 'older ecclesiastical words' should be restored. This brought back 'church', bishops, confession, and the whole hierarchical concept of the Catholic order. He began by trimming the extremes of his translation committee to eliminate Catholics on the one side and Anabaptists on the other. From the middle ground he chose men who would do his bidding and maintain the status quo.

His translation was designed to support the Elizabethan Settlement (or Compromise as it is often called by academics). Elizabeth had created a 'united' Anglican church of which she was the head and which had a Protestant theology and a Catholic liturgy. James' commissioned translation was designed to support this position, which is why you have good solid protestant theology on justification by faith combined with a catholic concept of the 'clergy'.

His obsession with the king as the supreme head of church and state was continued by his son Charles 1st who, as an anglo-catholic (high church anglican) went to war against his Presbyterian parliament and plunged England into its most bloody war.

I love the KJV; I use it constantly and always preach from it unless specifically requested otherwise, but I do not believe in the verbal inspiration of the KJV translators.

Quote:

-----To sit in judgement over men who have been dead for 400 years, and make false statements about them is still a sin.

Does your charity extend to those who have only been dead for a hundred years like Westcott and Hort? ;-)

Re: KJV Translators were Catholic? - posted by ccchhrrriiss (), on: 2005/11/8 9:33

Hi Krispy...!

I am in the process of compiling a reference guide about Bible Translations, but I have had to put it off while finishing my thesis. I hope to begin work on the compilation as soon as I defend my thesis (hopefully in early December).

I began my research as a result of participating in the threads here on SI. This reference guide will not be pro or con KJV. It will hopefully explain the facts, myths and urban legends about the various major Bible versions. I have also spoken to several of the major denominations to find out what their preferred translations are, and why they endorse such versions.

While you are correct about most, if not all, of the translators were not Roman Catholic (I was mistaken about this at first because of conflicting information in various academic sources). However, it is safe to consider the possibility that King James might not have been a believer. And it is also quite safe to say that, while the Word of God is completely inspired, the *translators* were not divinely inspired.

To date, I use the KJV as my primary reference version. However, I am quite open to using some other versions. I am looking forward to recommencing the research soon.

:-)

Re:, on: 2005/11/8 10:17

Quote:

-----I love the KJV; I use it constantly and always preach from it unless specifically requested otherwise, but I do not believe in the verbal inspiration of the KJV translators.

That was a great response, Philogos, and there is very little that you wrote that I would disagree with.

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Like you, I do NOT believe in the verbal inspiration of the KJV translators. There are those on the extreme of the "KJV-O" who hold to that... I do not. I merely believe the KJV is the best translation of the best manuscripts that is available.

Quote:

-----Does your charity extend to those who have only been dead for a hundred years like Westcott and Hort?

I do not sit in judgement of their salvation, only God knew their hearts. However, their own writings seem to indicate that they were not orthodox believers. They leaned heavily toward Darwinism, they questioned the bodily resurrection of Christ, etc.

While I can not judge their hearts, I can certainly weigh and balance what they claimed to believe in their own words... and they have been found to be lacking.

As to King James... he was a religious persecutor. Especially toward the Anabaptist, of which I would consider my own personal beliefs to have descended from. King James would have persecuted ME! In fact, one of my ancestors (last name of Crane) left England and came to the "New World" to escape religious persecution in the early 1600's.

See, the point of what I posted this morning was not to put a blanket defense on King James, or the translators. I merely wanted to respond to the mantra that gets repeated "The KJV translators were Catholic." They were not.

Krispy

Re:, on: 2005/11/8 10:19

Quote:

-----And it is also quite safe to say that, while the Word of God is completely inspired, the translators were not divinely inspired.

ccchhhrrriiisss,

Absolutely, and I agree. Check out my last post.

By the way, this thread was not in response to you when you made that claim. I remember that discussion, and I remembered that you corrected yourself. It just seems to me that this myth is being repeated more and more by those who seek to tear down the KJV.

Krispy

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2005/11/8 11:07

Quote:

-----In fact, one of my ancestors (last name of Crane) left England and came to the "New World" to escape religious persecution in the early 1600's.

As the more 'with it' folks over here might say... 'cool'. The Pilgrim fathers, of course, were escaping from James' England and took with them the Bible that James hated... the Geneva Bible.

Last week I took a friend from France for a day out in London. We spent half of our time in the British Library and the other half in the British Museum. The British Library has original Wycliffe, Tyndale, Bishops, Geneva and the Authorized Version (KJV). (It also has the Codex Alexandrinus and the Codex Sinaiticus, although I know that won't impress you as much. ;-)) It was a fascinating time. It is a sad sign of the times however that the British Museum's 'treasures' are now part of 'sacred writings' and as such sit next to copies of the Qu'ran and the Buddhist scriptures. If you are ever over here, I can give you a guided tour!

Re:, on: 2005/11/8 11:18

My Crane ancestor was not a Pilgrim, he came over after they did and settled in Conn., not Mass. I cant tell you what Bible he carried... it could have very well been a Geneva. I dont know.

I would love to visit England sometime. Probably after the kids are grown!

Krispy