

[PDF] God's Secretaries: The Making Of The King James Bible

Adam Nicolson - pdf download free book

Books Details:

Title: God's Secretaries: The Making

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Description:

From Publishers Weekly The King James Bible remains the most influential Bible translation of all time. Its elegant style and the exalted cadences of its poetry and prose echo forcefully in Shakespeare, Milton, T.S. Eliot and Reynolds Price. As travel writer Nicolson points out, however, the path to the completion of the translation wasn't smooth. When James took the throne in England in early 1603, he inherited a country embroiled in theological controversy. Relishing a good theological debate, the king appointed himself as a mediator between the Anglicans and the reformist Puritans, siding in the end with the Anglican Church as the party that posed the least political threat to his authority. As a result of these debates, James agreed to commission a new

translation of the Bible as an olive branch to the Puritans. Between 1604 and 1611, various committees engaged in making a new translation that attended more to the original Greek and Hebrew than had earlier versions. Nicolson deftly chronicles the personalities involved, and breezily narrates the political and religious struggles of the early 17th century. Yet, the circumstances surrounding this translation are already well known from two earlier books-Benson Bobrick's *Wide as the Waters* and Alister McGrath's *In the Beginning*-and this treatment adds little that is new. Although Nicolson succeeds at providing insight into the diverse personalities involved in making the King James Bible, Bobrick's remains the most elegant and comprehensive treatment of the process.

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From **Starred Review** The quip about the Bible being the greatest book ever written by a committee is just a quip, but the English Bible that King James I commissioned in 1604 really was committee work. Each of six committees, or companies, as they were called, was charged with translating a different portion of the original Hebrew and Greek texts. The Translators (their official title, and as such, capitalized) were far-from-saintly Anglican clergymen and scholars, selected to exclude radical Puritan sentiments from the finished translation (James had had enough of Puritan divisiveness while on the throne of Scotland). Their handiwork was to be the preferred pulpit Bible, so it had to be accessible in vocabulary and tonally. In that respect, the Translators succeeded so brilliantly that their style remains the quintessence of sacred prose to this day. Religious utility wasn't, however, the primary original purpose of the King James Version. Rather, the KJV was an element of James' grand dream of forging a harmoniously united realm out of the faction-ridden one he inherited from Elizabeth I. In that respect, the book was a failure, for not until after the Puritan American colonies embraced it (ironically, given its anti-Puritan conception) did England accept it. Nicolson tells the KJV's story so well that his book may prove to be the KJV's indispensable companion for years to come. *Ray Olson*

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