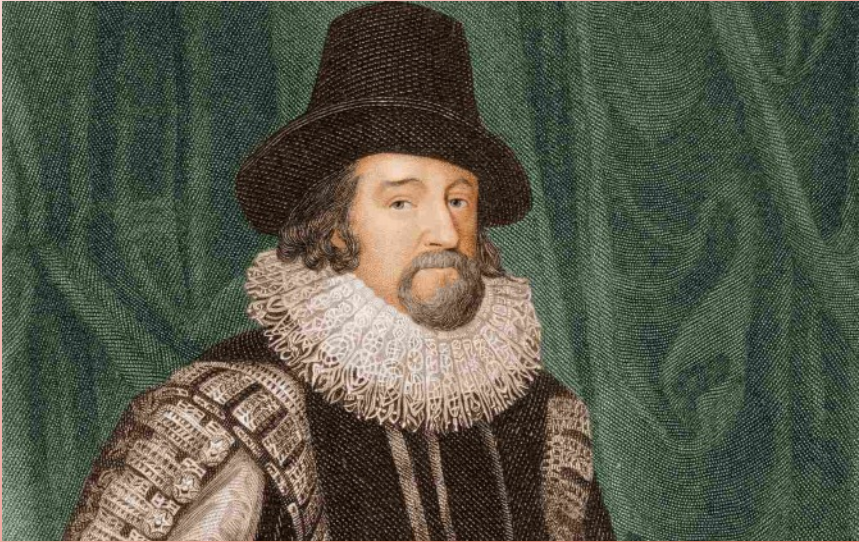


Francis Bacon and The James 1st Bible



**By
A. E. Loosley**

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**Engraving
For
First Folio Shakespeare**

Beard and Hat Added

Pictorial Evidence of Francis Bacon's Authorship of 1623 Folio By John Clennell. The writer of this short article presents his explanation of the. Droeshout Frontis piece of the 1623 Folio, in a somewhat new treatment of the subject.—**Editor.**



IN THE CORRESPONDENCE COLUMNS OF *BACONIANA* OF JANUARY 1948, there appeared a letter on the above subject from Earle Cornwall. In it he says:

Here of late I have been reading a bound volume or two of the Baconian booklets, two years earlier *Baconiana Magazine*, and the Life of Alice Bamham and Thos. Meautys, all from curiosity concerning Bacon's life. He was surely a fascinating character. I have as yet no "*Life*" of *Bacon*.

Somewhere I have seen one of those short references to his connection with the translation and publication of King James* Holy Bible, 1611—at least the statement that he had some connection with this great work. Yet in my recent search I cannot find any reference whatever to Bacon and the Bible: if he was connected with it he should have credit.



I own a set of Encyclopaedia Americana (1941 latest ed.) which is the counterpart of the Britannica in size and number of volumes.

Under “Bacon” I find a generous four-page article by Frederick N. Robinson, Prof. of English, Harvard University; a mention of Bacon's full literary activities, but not a word on Holy Bible. Then under “Holy Bible” dozens of pages by Wm. Berry Smith and under “*King James' Version*” a record of the 47 translators, “including three or four ancient and grave divines”, who worked seven years on the project; again no word of Bacon.

May I, in reply to the inquiry, contribute a little light on the subject? Some years ago, I forget how many, I came to the conclusion that Francis Bacon was mainly, if not entirely, responsible for a threefold undertaking, (1st) the Shakespearian Plays; (2nd) the creation, in its present form of Freemasonry, and (3rd) the translation of the Holy Bible into its present well-known Authorised Version.

The three were undoubtedly intermingled. All three had very largely the same foundation, the training Bacon received from his foster-mother,

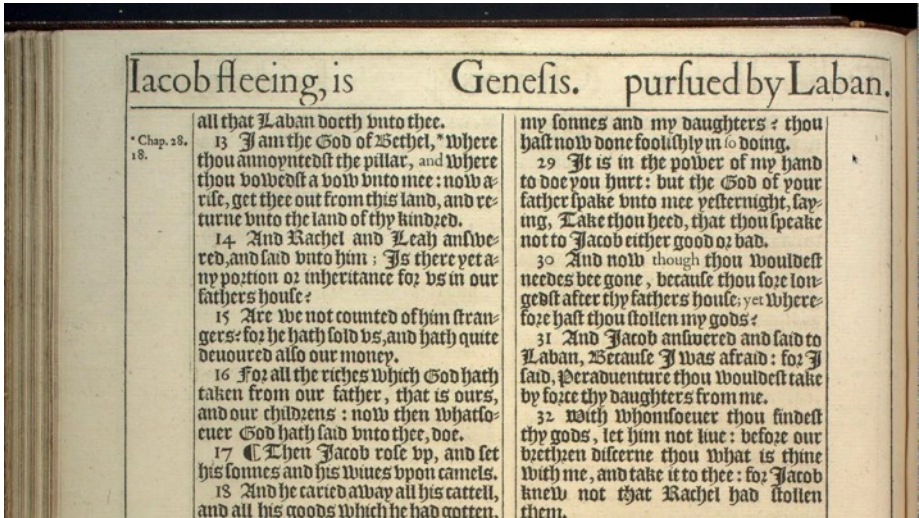
Lady Ann Bacon, who was very devoted in her religious beliefs and practise. The young Francis would unquestionably be largely influenced by Lady Ann's guidance.

Bacon evidently knew his Bible very well, and it is my belief that the whole scheme of the Authorised Version was his. He was an ardent student, not only' of the Bible but of the early manuscripts. St. Augustine,



St. Jerome, and writers of the theological works, were studied by him with industry. He has left his annotations in many copies of the Bible and in scores of theological works.

The translation must have been a work in which he took the greatest interest; in fact, it may well be he inspired it. He would follow its progress from stage to stage, and when the last stage came there was only one writer of the period capable of turning the phrases with the matchless style which is the great charm, and is so abundantly evident, in the Authorised Version and the Shakespearian plays. Whoever that stylist was, he produced a result which, on its literary merits, is without a rival.



KJV 1611 Edition

I have been able, quite recently, to clear up one point of possible doubt and at the same time to establish a claim for its certainty. It was in connection with that 46th Psalm, in which, in the Authorised Version, the 46th word from the beginning is “shake” and the 46th from the end is “spear”.

Such an arrangement—especially in the 46th Psalm—would be a most remarkable coincidence if it were not intentionally so arranged. In order to satisfy myself on the question, I sought an opportunity of comparing the wording in the Authorised Version with that in one of the earlier versions. I have now been able to satisfy myself that it was not a coincidence at all, but was plainly the result of deliberate planning.

I give below, side by side, the wording of the first three and last three verses in the “Breeches” Bible and that in the Authorised Version. In the former the 47 words up to the word “Shake” and the 44 words from “Spear” to the end of the Psalm were altered to 46 in each case in the Authorised Version.



46th Psalm

There are thus three 46's in the Psalm, but it is possible, and I hope admissible, to count a fourth 46. It is recorded that there were 47 divines entrusted by King James with the work of translation. If Francis Bacon was counted as one, though he was probably only in charge of the whole undertaking from a literary standpoint, that would leave 46 as the actual divines entrusted with the translation work, with Bacon as the final editor. If this be true, and I feel one is justified in believing it, a very interesting light is thrown on the keen working of Bacon's mind: The trick would be one in which he would take a keen delight.

Authorised Version

Verse 1) God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.
12

Verse 2) Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea. **22**

Verse 3) Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains **SHAKE**—(with the swelling thereof). **12**
46 Words down

Verse 9) (He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth, he breaketh the bow and cutteth the)—**SPEAR** in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire. **10**

Verse 10) Be still and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth. **22**

Verse 11) The Lord of Hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge.
14 46 Words up



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