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William Aldis Wright (1831–1914) was a literary and biblical scholar who served first as Librarian, then Bursar, at Trinity College, Cambridge, and as secretary to the Old Testament Revision Company, published widely on Shakespeare, and was an expert in both Hebrew and sixteenth-century English. This fully updated second edition of a work begun by Jonathan Eastwood (1824–64) was first published in 1884. It draws on Wright's extensive experience in both literary and biblical study and offers a clear and detailed glossary of hundreds of obsolete and archaic words commonly used in the Authorized Version of the Bible. By drawing comparison to word usage in contemporary texts such as those of Shakespeare, Francis Bacon and Thomas More, the likely meaning and usage of each word is explained in plain English. A guide for users of a version of the Bible which is itself a cornerstone of English literature.

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# The Bible Word-Book

*A Glossary of Archaic Words and  
Phrases in the Authorised version of the  
Bible and Book of Common Prayer*

WILLIAM ALDIS WRIGHT



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Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore,  
São Paulo, Delhi, Dubai, Tokyo, Mexico City

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)

Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9781108024648](http://www.cambridge.org/9781108024648)

© in this compilation Cambridge University Press 2010

This edition first published 1884  
This digitally printed version 2010

ISBN 978-1-108-02464-8 Paperback

This book reproduces the text of the original edition. The content and language reflect the beliefs, practices and terminology of their time, and have not been updated.

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Bible and the Book of Common Prayer

By WILLIAM ALDIS WRIGHT M.A. LL.D.

FELLOW AND SENIOR BURSAR OF TRINITY COLLEGE  
CAMBRIDGE

SECOND EDITION  
REVISED AND ENLARGED

LONDON  
Macmillan and Co.

1884

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Cambridge :

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AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS.



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## PREFACE.

It is the object of the following Glossary to explain and illustrate all such words, phrases, and constructions, in the Authorised Version of the Old and New Testaments and the Apocrypha, and in the Book of Common Prayer, as are either obsolete or archaic. In books which have become so familiar, and which have so leavened our language, it is somewhat difficult to fix a standard by which to decide whether a word is partially or entirely obsolete, whether the phrase of which it is part is fallen into disuse, and whether the construction in which it is found is such as no modern writer would employ. In endeavouring to form an opinion for myself on these points, I have excluded from the comparison all such works in modern English literature as are immediately or indirectly derived from the books in question; I mean all sermons, devotional writings, and the so-called religious newspapers and periodicals. Their language is to so large an extent made up of unconscious quotation from our Authorised Version that, while they keep alive much that is valuable, they create the impression that the language has undergone far less change than has in reality befallen it. Setting aside therefore all literature of this kind, I have endeavoured, in the case of each word, or phrase, or construction, to ascertain whether it would find a place naturally in the usual prose writing of the day: I say 'naturally,' because

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I wish to exclude all conscious and intentional employment of archaisms. It is necessary, moreover, to take prose as the standard, because in all languages poetry has dominion over the words of many generations. By this subjective process I may have excluded some expressions which others would have inserted, and I may have inserted some which they would have excluded. I will only ask any reader, before pronouncing a judgement upon this point, to consider carefully the context of the passages which are in each case selected for illustration. There are of course instances in which there will be differences of opinion, but I hope I shall have succeeded in making these as few as possible.

In considering the language of our English Bible, we must bear in mind that it has become what it is by a growth of eighty-six years, from the publication of Tyndale's New Testament in 1525 to that of the Authorised Version in 1611. Further, it must be remembered that our translators founded their work upon the previous versions, retaining whatever in them could be retained, and amending what was faulty. The result was therefore of necessity a kind of mosaic, and the English of the Authorised Version represents, not the language of 1611 in its integrity, but the language which prevailed from time to time during the previous century. It is in the writings of this period, therefore, that illustrations are to be sought, and from them the examples given in the present volume are chiefly derived. All these examples, except where the contrary is expressly stated, have been gathered in the course of independent reading, and in the few instances where quotations have been borrowed they have been carefully verified.

At the end I have added, for convenience of reference, an index of the editions of books most frequently quoted. In the case of works not included in this index, as they are less frequently referred to, the date of the edition is given

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with the quotation. I may take this opportunity of mentioning a curious bibliographical fact with regard to Udal's translation of Erasmus's Paraphrase, which I have not seen elsewhere mentioned. Of the first volume of this work, printed in 1548, three editions at least were issued, all bearing the same date. Before describing the differences between them it will be as well to state that the volume contains the Paraphrase of Erasmus on the four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, that each book is preceded by the translator's dedication, and by Erasmus's preface, and that, in all the editions of 1548, each book has the folios separately numbered and a separate set of signatures. The three copies bearing the date 1548, which I have examined, are roughly distinguished as follows :

In (1) the folios are not numbered in the translator's dedication or in Erasmus's preface, but in the paraphrase alone.

In (2) the system of numbering the folios is so irregular that it can best be distinguished as agreeing neither with (1) nor (3).

In (3) the numbering of the folios includes both the translator's dedication and Erasmus's preface.

In the edition of 1551 the folios are numbered continuously throughout the volume.

As I only recently discovered these variations, I used for purposes of quotation copies of the editions marked (1) and (3) indiscriminately. All the quotations in the letters A—C are from the latter. In the rest of the volume the quotations are all from (1).

It has fallen to my lot to finish this work alone. A portion of it was published some years ago in a periodical for Sunday Schools called 'The Monthly Paper,' under the title of 'Notes on Scriptural and Liturgical Words, by the

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Rev. J. Eastwood, M.A.,' but this did not extend beyond the letter H.

Mr Eastwood is known as the author of 'The History of the Parish of Ecclesfield, Yorkshire,' and was deservedly esteemed by the late Mr Herbert Coleridge as one of the most indefatigable contributors to the English Dictionary projected by the Philological Society.

He had completed the work on the same plan, and his manuscript was then put into my hands for revision. With his consent I modified the treatment of the words, in which he aimed more especially at the instruction of Sunday School children, and endeavoured, in most instances by recasting each article, to render the work a contribution to English lexicography. Besides this, I added a large quantity of examples from my own reading, arranging them in chronological order, and more than trebled the number of words in Mr Eastwood's original list. For such etymological notes as occur in the course of the volume I am alone responsible. I would willingly have avoided speaking so much as I have been compelled to do in the first person. Had my colleague lived to see the completion of the book in which he took so much interest, it would have had the advantage of his careful revision, which now has been given only to the first few sheets. Wanting his friendly counsel, it has been my endeavour to carry out his wishes to the full, and with this end in view I have bestowed much time and labour, in the midst of many interruptions, upon the completion of what would have been the better for his superintendence.

To other labourers in the same field I have to express my obligations for the assistance I have derived from their works. I would especially mention the following:

A Short Explanation of Obsolete Words in our Version of the Bible, &c. By the Rev. H. Cotton, D.C.L. Oxf. 1832.

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Scripture and the Authorized Version of Scripture, &c.  
 By Samuel Hinds, D.D. Lond. 1845.

A Glossary to the Obsolete and Unusual Words and  
 Phrases of the Holy Scriptures, in the Authorized English  
 Version. By J. Jameson. Lond. 1850.

A Scripture and Prayer Book Glossary; being an expla-  
 nation of Obsolete Words and Phrases in the English Bible,  
 Apocrypha, and Book of Common Prayer. By the Rev.  
 John Booker, A.M. 4th ed. Dublin, 1859.

On the Authorized Version of the New Testament, &c.  
 By R. C. Trench, D.D. 2nd ed. Lond. 1859.

Motes upon Crystal: or Obsolete Words of the Author-  
 ized Version of the Holy Bible, &c., Part 1. By the Rev.  
 Kirby Trimmer, A.B. Lond. 1864.

It is my intention at some future time to extend the  
 plan of the present work to the other English Versions of  
 the Bible, so as to form a complete Dictionary of the  
 archaisms which they contain, and to illustrate a well  
 marked period in the history of the English language. For  
 this, however, I must wait for more leisure than I can at  
 present command.

WILLIAM ALDIS WRIGHT.

TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE,  
 23 Jan. 1866.

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## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

WHEN this work, which for want of a better title is still called *The Bible Word-Book*, was first issued I did not expect that eighteen years would pass before its imperfections and shortcomings were to some extent made good in a second edition. But as little did I anticipate that for nearly fourteen of those years I should be called upon to discharge the duties of a very responsible College office, and to act as Secretary to the Company appointed for the Revision of the Authorised Version of the Old Testament. In one respect this delay has been of advantage, for in the course of the Revision work my attention has been called to the language of the Authorised Version, sentence by sentence, phrase by phrase, and word by word, in such a way that I trust nothing of importance has escaped my notice. In this second edition therefore will be found many archaisms of language and usage which were not recorded in the former, and many additional illustrations which I have gathered in the course of eighteen years' reading. The quotations have been verified throughout.

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*PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.* xi

The general plan of the book is sufficiently described in the original Preface, and I have nothing to add to what is there stated. But with regard to the variations in different copies of Udal's translation of Erasmus's Paraphrase on the New Testament to which I there called attention, although I have found nothing to correct in my original statement as absolutely wrong it is so far inadequate, that while the three classes into which I roughly divided the copies I had examined remain the same, there are within these classes varieties which are not readily to be accounted for. The only explanation which occurs to me I propose as a conjecture and it must be taken for what it is worth. By the Injunctions of Edward VI., which were issued in 1547, it was ordered that a copy of the English Translation of Erasmus's Paraphrase of the Gospels should be placed in every parish church within a year after the date of the visitation which was then to be made. It was therefore necessary in a comparatively short time to produce several thousand copies, and it appears to have been more expeditious to set up the book in several forms and to print a small number of copies from each than to print a very large number from one set of type. I suppose therefore that when a sheet had been set up several copies were struck off and given out as 'copy' to different compositors, without any instructions to follow minutely the arrangement of lines and pages, and that this was done throughout. In any case such an explanation does account for the variations which I have observed, whether they were actually brought about in the way I have indicated or not. In the present edition all the quotations from Udal's Erasmus have been made from a copy in my own possession,

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which belongs to type (1) described at p. vii., but to facilitate the verification of the passages I have added in each case the chapter and verse of the books quoted.

It only remains for me now to record my thanks to those who have kindly rendered me assistance in the course of the work ; and among these I would enumerate the Rev. John Dowden, the Rev. Dr Gotch, the Rev. Professor Lumby, the Rev. Dr Moulton, the Rev. C. P. Phinn, the Rev. Professor Skeat, and the Rev. W. H. Walford,

W. A. W.

14 Dec. 1883.