

**THE GREATEST ENGLISH CLASSIC:
A STUDY OF THE KING JAMES
VERSION OF THE BIBLE AND ITS
INFLUENCE ON LIFE AND
LITERATURE**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649596881

The Greatest English Classic: A Study of the King James Version of the Bible and Its Influence on Life and Literature by Cleland Boyd McAfee

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THE GREATEST ENGLISH CLASSIC

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KING JAMES VERSION OF THE BIBLE
AND ITS INFLUENCE ON LIFE
AND LITERATURE

BY
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HARPER & BROTHERS PUBLISHERS
NEW YORK AND LONDON

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CONTENTS

LECTURE	PAGE
PREFACE	v
I. PREPARING THE WAY--THE ENGLISH BIBLE BEFORE KING JAMES	1
II. THE MAKING OF THE KING JAMES VERSION; ITS CHARACTERISTICS	44
III. THE KING JAMES VERSION AS ENGLISH LITERATURE	89
IV. THE INFLUENCE OF THE KING JAMES VERSION ON ENGLISH LITERATURE	130
V. THE KING JAMES VERSION—ITS INFLUENCE ON ENG- LISH AND AMERICAN HISTORY	195
VI. THE BIBLE IN THE LIFE OF TO-DAY	241



PREFACE

THE lectures included in this volume were prepared at the request of the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences, and were delivered in the early part of 1912, under its auspices. They were suggested by the tercentenary of the King James version of the Bible. The plan adopted led to a restatement of the history which prepared for the version, and of that which produced it. It was natural next to point out its principal characteristics as a piece of literature. Two lectures followed, noting its influence on literature and on history. The course closed with a statement and argument regarding the place of the Bible in the life of to-day.

The reception accorded the lectures at the time of their public delivery, and the discussion which ensued upon some of the points raised, encourage the hope that they may be more widely useful.

It is a pleasure to assign to Dr. Franklin W. Hooper, director of the Institute, whatever credit the work may merit. Certainly it would not have been undertaken without his kindly urgency.

CLELAND BOYD MCAFEE.

Brooklyn, New York, May, 1912.

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LECTURE I

PREPARING THE WAY—THE ENGLISH BIBLE
BEFORE KING JAMES

THERE are three great Book-religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Mohammedanism. Other religions have their sacred writings, but they do not hold them in the same regard as do these three. Buddhism and Confucianism count their books rather records of their faith than rules for it, history rather than authoritative sources of belief. The three great Book-religions yield a measure of authority to their sacred books which would be utterly foreign to the thought of other faiths.

Yet among the three named are two very distinct attitudes. To the Mohammedan the language as well as the matter of the Koran is