

XIX.—YE AND YOU IN THE KING JAMES
VERSION.¹

In Morris's *Historical Outlines of English Accidence*, § 155, occurs this statement: ". . . in Old English *Ye* was always used as a nominative, and *you* as a dative or accusative. In the English Bible this distinction is very carefully observed, but in the dramatists of the Elizabethan period there is a very loose use of the two forms." Similarly Lounsbury:² "*Ye* in the language of Chaucer invariably denotes the nominative; *you* the objective; and this distinction will still be found observed in the Authorized Version of the Bible." Emerson:³ "This is the use in Chaucer, and in the English Bible of 1611, the language of which, however, is based on the translations of earlier times." Smith:⁴ "This distinction is preserved in the King James Version of the Bible: *Ye* in me, and *I* in you; but not in Shakespeare and later writers."⁵

These statements are all based on present-day prints of the Bible; for when we turn to the first edition in 1611, we find, for example, in the passage quoted by Professor

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² *History of the English Language*, p. 128.

³ *History of the English Language*, § 381.

⁴ *Old English Grammar*, p. 51.

⁵ Statements to the same effect are found in Abbott's *Shakespearean Grammar*, § 236, and Kaluza's *Grammatik der englischen Sprache*, § 469.

Smith from John 14. 20, You in me, and I in you. Note also the following passages from the same edition:

- Gen. 9. 4 But flesh with the life thereof, *which is* the blood thereof, shall you not eat.
- Gen. 42. 34 then shall I know that you *are* no spies, but *that* you *are* true men.
- Deut. 11. 13 if you shall hearken diligently vnto my Commandements . . .
- Deut. 12. 7 and yee shall reioyce in all that you put your hand vnto, ye and your households, . . .
- Josh. 24. 15 choose you this day whome you will serue, . . .⁶
- Job 13. 5 O that you would altogether hold your peace, . . .
- Matth. 5. 47 And if yee salute your brethren only, what do you more *then others?*
- 1 Cor. 15. 1 I declare vnto you the Gospel which I preached vnto you, which also you haue receiued, and wherein yee stand.

I find in the whole Bible about 3830 nominative *ye's* and 300 nominative *you's*, or over 7 per cent. of *you's*. The ratio of *you's* to *ye's* is in the Old Testament about 6 per cent., Apocrypha 35 per cent., and New Testament 5 per cent.⁷

⁶ The first *you* in this passage is objective.

⁷ The instances follow: Gen. 9. 4, 7; 18. 5(2), 5 marg.; 22. 5; 24. 49; 32. 19(2); 34. 10; 42. 9, 12, 34(2); 44. 23; 45. 8, 9, 13(2); 47. 24; Exod. 2. 18; 3. 18; 5. 5, 8(2), 11, 21; 8. 28; 10. 11; 12. 13, 14(2), 31; 14. 13 marg.; 16. 23; 17. 2; 30. 37; Lev. 10. 6, 7; 11. 11; 18. 24; 22. 24; Num. 10. 6, 7(2); 11. 18; 14. 41; 15. 29; 16. 3; 18. 3, 28; 34. 6, 7; Deut. 1. 10, 17(2), 19, 43, 43 marg.; 4. 2, 26; 5. 32, 33; 6. 17; 9. 23; 11. 2, 13; 12. 3(2), 7; 13. 3, 4; 20. 3; 27. 2; 29. 6; Josh. 2. 10(2); 4. 3(2), 6; 6. 18; 10. 19; 18. 3; 22. 24; 23. 8 marg.; 24. 6, 15; Judg. 2. 2; 8. 24; 9. 7; 14. 12; 21. 22; Ruth 1. 9, 11; 1 Sam. 15. 32; 17. 8; 21. 14; 25. 13; 27. 10 marg.; 2 Sam. 13. 28 marg.; 21. 4; 1 Kings 9. 6(2); 12. 6; 2 Kings 2. 3, 5; 1 Chron. 15. 12; 16. 9; 2 Chron. 13. 5, 12; 20. 20; 23. 7; 29. 11; Ezra 4. 3; Neh. 2. 20; 5. 7, 8; Job 6. 27; 12. 3, 3 marg.; 13. 5, 7; 17. 10; 18. 2; 19. 3(2); 32. 11; Ps. 14. 6; 58. 2(2); 115. 15; Prov. 4. 2; Isa. 50. 1; 58. 3; 61. 6, 7; 62. 10; 65. 18;

I have seen no full discussion of the disappearance of these nominative *you*'s from modern Bibles. Scrivener⁸ notes, “Other variations spring from grammatical inflections common in the older stages of our language, which have been gradually withdrawn from later Bibles, wholly or in part, chiefly by those painful modernizers, Dr. Paris (1762) and Dr. Blayney (1769).” Further, “The several editors, especially those of 1762 and 1769, carried out to the full at least two things on which they had set their minds: they got rid of the quaint old *moe* for *more*, and in 364⁹ places they have altered the nominative plural *you* into *ye*, besides that Blayney makes the opposite change in *Build you* Num.

Jer. 3. 20; 7. 5; 17. 27; 23. 38; 33. 20; 42. 20 marg.; 44. 3, 23; Mal. 1. 13 marg.; 1 Esdr. 4. 22; 5. 69; 6. 4, 11; 8. 58, 85; 2 Esdr. 1. 14, 15, 17(2), 22, 26, 31; 14. 33, 34; 16. 63; Tob. 7. 3; 12. 19; 13. 6; Jud. 1. 10(2), 12; 2. 24; 7. 24(2); 8. 11, 12, 13, 14(2), 33(2), 34; 10. 9; 14. 2(2), 4, 5; Esth. 16. 22; Wisd. 6. 2, 4; Ecclus. 41. 8, 9(3); 43. 30(4), 51. 23, 24(2), Baruch 4. 6, 27; 6. 23, 72; Bel. 1. 27, 27 marg.; 1 Mac. 2. 33(2), 37, 64(2); 4. 18; 5. 19; 10. 26, 27; 11. 31; 12. 7, 10, 22; 15. 28, 31; 2 Mac. 7. 22, 23; 11. 19, 36; 14. 33; Matth. 5. 47; 15. 3; 21. 28; 24. 44; 27. 65; Mk. 4. 13, 24, 40; 9. 50; 11. 26; 14. 6; Lk. 11. 41, 41 marg.; 12. 5; 13. 25, 27; 22. 67, 68; Jno. 9. 27; 14. 20, 24; 15. 16; Acts 5. 28; 10. 37; 13. 41; 20.34; Rom. 1. 11; 13. 6; 14. 1; 1 Cor. 4. 15; 6. 8; 7. 5, 35; 9. 1; 10. 13; 11. 2, 17; 14. 9, 18; 15. 1, 58; 16. 3; 2 Cor. 1. 7, 11, 13(2), 14, 15; 2. 4, 8; 5. 12; 7. 3, 15; 8. 11, 13; 9. 4; 11. 1, 1 marg., 7; 12. 19; Gal. 1. 6; 3. 1; 4. 15, 17; 5. 10; Eph. 5. 22; Philip. 1. 7 marg.; Col. 2. 12; 3. 8; 4. 6; 1 Thes. 2, 11; Jas. 2. 16; 1 Pet. 4. 4, 2 Pet. 1. 4, 15; 1 Jno. 2. 13; 4. 3.

In counting the *ye*'s I have omitted certain stereotyped phrases in the Psalms and The Song of the Three Children, such as “Praise ye the Lord,” in which *you* never occurs.

⁸ F. H. A. Scrivener, *The Authorized Edition of the English Bible* (1611), *Its Subsequent Reprints and Modern Representatives*; Cambridge Univ. Press, 1884, pp. 101 f. (A reprint of the introduction to the *Cambridge Paragraph Bible*, 1873.)

⁹ I am unable to find so many.