

# The Bible Version Question/Answer Database



David W. Cloud

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This book is one of two companion volumes for *Faith vs. the Modern Bible Versions: A Course on Bible Texts and Versions and a 10-Fold Defense of the King James Bible*. The other companion volume is *The Modern Bible Version Hall of Shame*. It is suggested that the student first read *Faith vs. the Modern Bible Versions*, which gives a background for understanding the Bible version issue, before studying the companion volumes.

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# INTRODUCTORY AND GENERAL QUESTIONS

## WHAT IS “KING JAMES ONLY”? DON’T “KING JAMES ONLY” PEOPLE BELIEVE THAT GOD’S WORD IS ONLY IN ENGLISH THAT WE SHOULD NOT STUDY GREEK AND HEBREW?

### *ANSWER:*

The term “King James Only” was invented by those who oppose the defense of the King James Bible and its underlying Hebrew and Greek texts. It was intended to be a term of approbation, and it is usually defined in terms of the extremism.

I have been labeled “King James Only” because of my writings on the subject of Bible texts and versions and my defense of the King James Bible. To set the record straight, let me explain what I believe. I know from decades of experience and extensive travels that this is also what a large number of other King James Bible defenders believe.

If “King James Only” defines one who believes that God has given infallible Scripture in the original Greek and Hebrew writings and that He has preserved that in the Hebrew Masoretic and Greek Received Text underlying the King James Bible and other Reformation Bibles and that we have an accurate translation of it in the English language in the Authorized Version, call me “King James Only.”

If “King James Only” defines one who believes modern textual criticism is heresy, call me “King James Only.” I have spent hundreds of dollars to obtain the writings of the men who have been at the forefront of developing the theories underlying modern textual criticism, and I have read them. They are not dependable. They refuse to approach the Bible text from a position of faith in divine preservation. Most of them are unbelievers, and I refuse to lean upon their scholarship. I am convinced they do not have the spiritual discernment necessary to know where the inspired, preserved Word of God is located today.

If “King James Only” defines one who believes that God has preserved the Scripture in its common use among apostolic churches through the fulfillment of the Great Commission and that He guided the Reformation editors and translators in their choice of the Received Text and that we don’t have to start all over today in an to attempt to find the preserved text of Scripture, call me “King James Only.” The theories of modern textual criticism, on the other hand, all revolve around the idea that the pure text of Scripture was not preserved in the Reformation text but that the Reformation editors, because of their alleged ignorance and or lack of resources, rejected the pure text and chose, instead, an inferior text. In fact, modern textual criticism is predicated upon the theory that the best text of the New Testament (the Egyptian or Alexandrian) was rejected in the earliest centuries and was replaced with a corrupt recension that was created through the

conflation of various manuscript readings (the Byzantine or Traditional text) and that the corrupt text became the dominant text throughout most of church history (for 1,500 years) until the best text was rediscovered in the 19th century. You are free to accept such views if it suits you. I, for one, believe this is absolute nonsense, and if that is “King James Only,” count me in.

Similarly, if “King James Only” defines one who rejects the theory that the “preserved” Word of God was hidden away in the Pope’s library and in a weird Greek Orthodox monastery at the foot of Mt. Sinai (a monastery which has a room full of the skulls of dead monks) for hundreds of years, call me “King James Only.”

If “King James Only” defines one who believes it is important to have one biblical standard in a language as important as English and who believes that the multiplicity of competing versions has created confusion and has weakened the authority of the Word of God in this century, call me “King James Only.”

### *ON THE OTHER HAND*

If “King James Only” defines one who believes that the KJV was *given by* inspiration, I am not “King James Only. The King James Bible is the product of preservation, not inspiration. The term “inspiration” refers to the original giving of the Scripture through holy men of old (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:20-21). At the same time, I agree with the *Pulpit Commentary* when it says, “We must guard against such narrow, mechanical views of inspiration as would confine it to the Hebrew and Greek words in which it was written, so that one who reads a good translation would not have ‘the words of the Lord.’” To say that the King James Bible is the inspired Word of God in the English language because it is an accurate translation of the preserved Hebrew and Greek is not the same as saying that it was *given by inspiration*.

If “King James Only” defines one who believes the English KJV is superior to the Hebrew and Greek texts upon which it was based, I am *not* “King James Only.” In fact, I believe such an idea is pure nonsense, as it would mean the preserved Word of God did not exist before 1611.

If “King James Only” defines one who believes the English Authorized Version is advanced revelation over the Hebrew and Greek text that God gave through inspiration to holy men of old, I am *not* “King James Only.”

If “King James Only” defines one who believes that we do not need to study Greek and Hebrew today or that it is not proper to use lexicons and dictionaries, I am *not* “King James Only.” God’s people should learn Greek and Hebrew if possible and use (with much caution and wisdom) study tools. When the Bible says that “holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,” we know that the words they spake were Hebrew and Greek words. I encouraged my youngest son to begin studying Greek in high school, and he is scheduled to have four years of Greek and two of Hebrew when he graduates from Bible College. But foundational to the study of the biblical languages is a thorough understanding of the textual issue. We must study the



*right* Greek and Hebrew, and we must also be careful of the original language study tools, because many of them were produced from a rationalistic perspective and with great bias against the Received Text.

If “King James Only” defines one who believes the preserved Word of God is available only in English, I am not “King James Only.” The Masoretic Hebrew Old Testament and Greek Received New Testament translated properly into any language is the preserved Word of God in that language, whether it is German, Spanish, French, Korean, or Nepali. There is a list of Received-text based translations in the “Directory of Foreign Language Literature” at the Way of Life web site. (See the Apostasy Database.)

If “King James Only” defines one who believes that translations in other languages should be based on English rather than (when possible) Greek and Hebrew, I am *not* “King James Only.” (I also believe that a good translation can be made directly from the King James Bible when necessary if it is done by men who are capable in the use of dictionaries so that they understand the somewhat antiquated language of the KJV properly.)

If “King James Only” defines one who believes that a person can only be saved through the King James Bible, I am *not* “King James Only.” It is the Gospel that is the power of God unto salvation (Rom. 1:16), and even a Bible that is textually corrupt contains the Gospel.

If “King James Only” defines one who believes that the King James Bible’s antiquated language is holy or who believes the KJV could never again be updated, I am *not* “King James Only.” I doubt the KJV will ever be replaced in this apostate age, but to say that it is wrong to update the language again after the fashion of the several updates it has undergone since 1611 is not reasonable, in my estimation. Having dealt constantly with people who speak English as a 2nd or 3rd language, I am very sympathetic to the very real antiquation problem in the King James Bible. At the same time, I am not going to trade an excellent Bible with a few problems due to old language for a Bible filled with error due to a corrupt text and/or a corrupt translation methodology.

If “King James Only” defines one who believes he has the authority to call those who disagree with him silly asses, morons, and jacklegs, and to treat them as if they were the scum of the earth because they refuse to follow his peculiar views, I am *not* “King James Only.”

## **HOW IMPORTANT IS THE BIBLE VERSION ISSUE? IS IT WORTH DIVISION AND TROUBLE?**

### **ANSWER:**

1. The Bible is the foundation for everything in the Christian life and ministry (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Thus, this is a foundational issue. If the child of God is not willing to take a strong stand for the Word of God, what will he stand for? When John Burgon wrote against the Westcott-Hort

theories of textual criticism at the end of the 19th century, he was charged with causing unnecessary division and with being too militant on the issue. He replied, "If, therefore, any do complain that I have sometimes hit my opponents rather hard, I take leave to point out that when the words of Inspiration are seriously imperiled, as now they are, it is scarcely possible for one who is determined effectually to preserve the Deposit in its integrity, to hit either too straight or too hard" (Burgon, *The Revision Revised*). I am convinced that Burgon was correct in this.

2. God is concerned about His Word, having exalted it highly (Ps. 138:2). We are not left to wonder what God thinks about the issue of the Scripture. This Psalm tells us that God has magnified His word above all His name, and that is an amazing statement. Consider how high and holy God's name is, the name of Jehovah; the name of Jesus Christ! And yet God has exalted His Word above that. It is impossible to be too zealous for the Bible. And it is not merely the Scripture as an abstract concept that we are to be zealous for, it is the Hebrew Old Testament and the Greek New Testament that has been passed down to us and is translated into our common languages. Those who fight only for an "inspired original" are fighting a sham battle because there are no originals today, only copies and translations.

3. The man who has a true conviction about the textual issue is motivated by his very conviction to take a stand. He believes the preserved Scripture is found in an exact text and translations thereof and he must therefore take a stand for it as the eternal Word of God. It is impossible for him not to be dogmatic and strident on the issue. On the other hand, the man who accepts the modern texts and versions has no such conviction. To him, the preserved Scripture is not found in any one text or version but is scattered mystically throughout the whole and it is his prerogative to pick and choose as he sees fit. Such a position is far removed from textual dogmatism, and the man who holds this position finds it difficult to understand those who are dogmatic and unbending. He wonders why the TR-KJV defender cannot treat the issue as casually as he treats it, but this is not possible because of the very nature of the KJV defender's convictions.

For the TR-KJV defender, the textual issue is deeply heartfelt. The late evangelist Lester Roloff likened the Bible to his mother (1 Peter 1:23) and said that he must be as zealous and earnest in his defense of the Bible as he would be of his mother. If someone threatened to cut off "just a few unnecessary pieces" of his mother, he would go immediately to her defense. Likewise, he refused to keep silent when textual critics and modern Bible translators are cutting "a few unnecessary pieces" out of the Bible. In my experience, those who support the modern Greek texts and versions do not understand this attitude. They approach the issue in a different fashion, more as an exercise in scholarship.

4. Further, it is not those who are defending the Hebrew Masoretic and the Greek Received Text and the English King James Bible and other translations thereof that are causing the division. These are merely standing in the old paths (Jer. 6:16). The division is being caused by those who are introducing the new, the "modern" things.

## **CAN THE COMMON CHRISTIAN UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE VERSION ISSUE?**

“The situation [with Bible versions] is somewhat complex, and many people do not understand it as a result of that complexity” (James Boice, Sept. 13, 1985, letter to missionary doctor Tom Hale of Nepal).

### **ANSWER:**

1. While it is true that there are complexities in the realm of Bible texts and versions, there is also a basic simplicity to the truth. God has made the truth simple enough for ordinary people (Mat. 11:25; 2 Cor. 11:3; 1 Cor. 1:26-29). There are four things necessary for a person to know the truth: The new birth (1 Cor. 2:14-15), the anointing of the Holy Spirit (1 Jn. 2:20, 27), diligent study of God’s Word (2 Tim. 2:15; Jn. 8:31-32), and obedience (John 7:17). This is sufficient, for the Scripture itself is able to make the man of God perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

2. God’s standards for church leaders do not require high scholarship (1 Tim. 3; Titus 1). The early church leaders were looked upon as “unlearned and ignorant men” (Acts 4:13). Therefore the foundational issue of Bible texts and versions must be simple enough for common believing men to understand.

## **SHOULDN’T THE BIBLE BE TRANSLATED INTO SIMPLE LANGUAGE THAT EVERYONE CAN UNDERSTAND?**

### **ANSWER:**

1. The Bible should first and foremost be translated accurately. Ease of understanding is a secondary consideration.

“To put it bluntly, *what good is readability if a translation does not accurately render what the Bible actually says?* If a translation gains readability by departing from the original, readability is harmful. It is, after all, the truth *of the Bible* that we want. ... The only legitimate appeal to readability comes *within* the confines of a translation’s having been truthful to the language of the original. ... An effective piece of writing needs to be answerable to the demands of what it is designed to do. *Within those demands*, it must be as readable as possible. Readability in an English Bible translation should not be defined in terms of being the simplest English prose that we can produce. It should always be defined in terms of maximum readability *within the parameters of the true nature of the biblical text as it stands in the original*” (Leland Ryken, *The Word of God in English*, 2002, pp. 91, 92).

2. The Bible’s Hebrew and Greek text is not always simple; at times it is extremely complex and a good translation into another language will reflect this.

“... the Bible is not, on balance, a simple and easy book. It is frequently difficult, complex, and sophisticated. If it were not, it would not have occasioned so many learned commentaries and books. Simplifying this complexity for the sake of readability does not increase understanding; instead of *clarifying* the original text, it *obscures* it” (Ryken, *The Word of God in English*, p. 93).

3. Not only will a good Bible translation be accurate, it will also be majestic and even somewhat archaic-sounding, because of the nature of the Book.

“I believe that it is correct for an English translation to preserve an appropriate archaic flavor as a way of preserving the distance between us and the biblical world. Joseph Wood Krutch used an evocative formula in connection with the King James Bible when he spoke of ‘an appropriate flavor of a past time’” (Ryken, *The Word of God in English*, p. 182).

“We are in real danger of losing, in an age of flat prose, an essential and invaluable capacity of the language, fully realized once in the English Bible ... the capacity to express by tone and overtone, by rhythm, and by beauty and force of vocabulary, the religious, the spiritual, the ethical cravings of man” (Henry Canby, “A Sermon on Style,” in *Literary Style of the Old Bible and the New*, ed. D.G. Kehl, 1970, p. 427; quoted by Ryken, p. 270).

“Tone is the literary term that refers to such things as the writer’s attitude toward his or her subject matter, the suitability of style for the content, and the correctness of effect on a reader. ... From time to time I encounter the sentiment from dynamic equivalency advocates that the Bible ‘should not sound like the Bible.’ Billy Graham endorsed *The Living Letters* by saying that ‘it is thrilling to read the Word ... [in] a style that reads much like today’s newspaper.’ I disagree with these verdicts. A SACRED BOOK SHOULD SOUND LIKE A SACRED BOOK, NOT LIKE THE DAILY NEWSPAPER. IT SHOULD COMMAND ATTENTION AND RESPECT, AND TO DO SO IT CANNOT BE EXPRESSED IN THE IDIOM OF THE TRUCK STOP. The failure of modern colloquial translations is frequently a failure of tone” (Ryken, *The Word of God in English*, pp. 278, 279, 280, emphasis added).

4. The Bible translator’s job should never be confused with that of the Bible teacher. The translator’s job is to faithfully transmit the words and message from the original into the receptor language as literally as possible. In so doing he should obviously attempt to make the translation as plain for the readers AS POSSIBLE while being utterly faithful to the original words and form, but the translator is not free to simplify that which God has not simplified. Entire and strict faithfulness to the original text should be the very chiefest concern of the Bible translator. “Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar” (Prov. 30:5-6). It is job of the evangelist and the teacher, then, to explain the Bible’s words to the people. This can be done with marginal notes in the Bible itself as well as by the publication of dictionaries and commentaries that supplement the Bible translation.

5. The Bible should not be brought down to the common level of the people; the people should be educated up to the level of the Bible.

“Previous generations did not find the King James Bible, with its theological heaviness, beyond their comprehension. Nor do readers and congregations who continue to use the King James translation find it incomprehensible. Neither of my parents finished grade school, and they learned to understand the King James Bible from their reading of it and the preaching they heard based on it. We do not need to assume a theologically inept readership for the Bible. Furthermore, if modern readers are less adept at theology than they can and should be, it is the task of the church to educate them, not to give them Bible translations that will permanently deprive them of the theological content that is really present in the Bible” (Ryken, *The Word of God in English*, p. 109).

## **WAS KING “JAMES ONLYISM” INVENTED BY A SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST?**

Some fundamentalists who are promoting modern textual criticism and who are particularly vicious toward the defense of the King James Bible, such as Bob Ross, Gary Hudson, Doug Kutilek, and the editor of “From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man,” are making the amazing accusation that the modern defense of the King James Bible can be traced to Benjamin Wilkinson, a Seventh-day Adventist professor. They claim that Wilkinson authored the view that the Traditional Text of the Protestant Reformation is the preserved Word of God that can be traced through history, and that J.J. Ray and David Otis Fuller picked up on Wilkinson’s teaching and passed it along to the contemporary “KJV Only” crowd.

It is true that in his 1930 book, “Our Authorized Bible Vindicated,” Wilkinson defended the text of the King James Bible and attempted to trace the primacy of the Traditional Text among Bible believers through the centuries. And it is true that some of Wilkinson’s writings were republished in David Otis Fuller’s 1970 book, *Which Bible*. That much is fact. Whether Fuller was right or wrong in reprinting some of Wilkinson’s writings is something each reader will have to decide. I, for one, believe it was a mistake. I have obtained almost every book referenced by Wilkinson with the objective of checking his statements. And my conclusion so far is that while he did some good research and published some important facts, he also went out on a limb in some cases and made some statements that cannot be substantiated and others that are contrary to the evidence. Some of his history, in fact, is strongly influenced by his devotion to Seventh-day Adventist “prophets” Ellen G. White. For example, Wilkinson got the idea that the Waldensian Bible is “preserved uncorrupted” from Ellen White’s *Great Controversy*, which he calls “the Spirit of Prophecy.” This is from Wilkinson’s *Answers to Objections* -- <http://www.temcat.com/Answers2Objections/Answers2-3.htm>.

At the same time, to claim that David Otis Fuller’s views on the Bible version issue were derived from Wilkinson and to make Wilkinson the father of King James Bible defense is nonsense.

### **ANSWER:**

**1. The defense of the King James Bible pre-dated Benjamin Wilkinson.** We have documented this extensively in our book *For Love of the Bible: The Defense of the KJV and the*

*Received Text from 1800 to Present.* Consider a few examples of men and institutions that stood for the King James Bible before Benjamin Wilkinson on the same basis that I and many other KJV defenders stand for it today.

John Jebb (1775-1833)

- a. Jebb, bishop of Limerick, stated: “Let individuals give new versions ... but in days of epidemic quackery, let our authorized version be kept inviolate, and guarded as the apple of our eye” (John Jebb, 1829, *Life of John Jebb*, ii, p. 454; cited by Samuel Hemphill, *A History of the Revised Version of the New Testament*, pp. 21, 22).
- b. Dr. Jebb continued to oppose the revision of the Authorized Bible. During the discussion which surrounded the proposal for revision in May 1870, in the Lower House of the Province of Canterbury, Jebb gave his opinion that it was “*a fatal thing that a version, of which we have been now in possession for more than 250 years, should be subject to the criticism of this very hasty and not very orthodox age*” (John Stoughton, *Our English Bible*, p. 288).

Henry John Todd (1765-1845)

- a. Henry Todd was chaplain to the king of England and keeper of the Archbishop of Canterbury’s records at Lambeth Palace. In 1819 Todd published *A Vindication of Our Authorized Translation and Translators of the Bible*. This work was occasioned by the clamor of some who wanted to correct the Received Greek New Testament and the King James Bible on the basis of modern textual criticism. This clamoring gradually increased among a relatively small segment of influential scholars through the 19th century and resulted, ultimately, in the Westcott-Hort Greek New Testament and the English Revised Version of 1881.
- b. Todd understood that modern textual criticism was intimately associated with theological heresy. I searched for Todd’s treatise for five years before locating it in the British Library and having a copy made for my personal library. Consider the following important excerpt: “For when WE SEE MEN OF THE MOST LATITUDINARIAN PRINCIPLES UNIFORMLY PRESSING FORWARD THIS DANGEROUS PROPOSAL; when we see the most unbounded panegyrics [praise] bestowed on THOSE, WHO HAVE CONVERTED THE MOSAIC HISTORY INTO ALLEGORY, AND THE NEW TESTAMENT INTO SOCINIANISM; when we see these attempts studiously fostered, and applauded, by the advocates for this projected [Bible] revision; WE MUST CONJECTURE, THAT SOMETHING MORE IS MEANT THAN A CORRECTION OF MISTAKES, OR AN IMPROVEMENT OF DICTION. Those doctrines, the demolition of which we know to be, in late instances, the grand object of such innovators when they propose alterations in articles of faith, or correction of liturgical forms, are surely in still greater danger when attempted, by the same men, under the distant approaches of a

revision of our English Bible (Todd, *A Vindication of Our Authorized Translation and Translators of the Bible*, 1819, pp. 79, 80).

- c. Todd represented the view of many 19th century men who understood that the critical Greek New Testament was a doctrinal issue.

John Dowling (1807-78)

- a. Dowling, who pastored Baptist churches in Rhode Island (Providence) and New York (Broadway Baptist Church, New York City), was the author of the influential *History of Romanism*.
- b. In 1843 Dowling published a defense of the KJV in “*The Burning of the Bibles, Defence of the Protestant Version of the Scriptures Against the Attacks of Popish Apologists for the Champlain Bible Burners* (Philadelphia: Nathan Moore, 1843). This was occasioned by the burning of hundreds of King James Bibles by Jesuit priests in Carbo, New York (near Champlain) in October 1842 and a subsequent newspaper article by a Roman Catholic priest named John Corry in which the accuracy and authority of the King James Bible was attacked. Dowling made the following defense of the KJV: “The Bible which Protestants now use, was translated by order of King James. It was published in A.D. 1611. It is perhaps, the most accurate that has been made, in any language. It is the joint labour of forty seven of the most learned oriental scholars in Europe; men of pure piety and christian honour. They were divided into six companies: each man had his share assigned to him: each company examined each translation made by individuals: each part of the translated Bible was examined, at least, fourteen times: and, was finally, adopted by the companies in full assembly. ... In this, have the defects, and errors of preceding translations, been carefully corrected” (Dowling, pp. 10, 11).
- c. Dowling quoted from seven authorities in praise of the King James Bible, such as John Selden, who said, “The English translation of the Bible is the best translation in the world,” and J.W. Whitaker, who said, “It may be compared with any translation in the world without fear of inferiority; it has not shrunk from the most vigorous examination; it challenges investigation, and in spite of numerous attempts to supersede it, it has hitherto remained unrivalled in the affection of the country.” Dowling gave his own opinion that “as a whole, I have never yet seen a version which I would be willing to substitute for that as the commonly received version of the mass of the people” (p. 62).
- d. In 1850 John Dowling published *The Old-Fashioned Bible, or Ten Reasons against the Proposed Baptist Version of the New Testament* (New York: Edward H. Fletcher, 1850). It was an edited version of a message he had delivered at Hope Chapel, Broadway, March 31, 1850, and again at First Baptist Church, Brooklyn, pastored by J. L. Hodge. Dowling used the strongest terminology to describe his concern over the new version of the English Bible that had been published by the American and Foreign Bible Society and he exalted the

King James Bible in the highest manner: “The fact is that the common version which it is proposed to amend, is, taken as a whole, a wonderful translation, and although it may be conceded that it is not perfect--for what human performance is so?--yet it is exceedingly doubtful, whether a translation has ever been made from any ancient book, Greek, Latin, or Oriental--which in point of faithfulness to its original can be compared with this, or which has fewer errors in proportion to the entire amount of its contents. ... TO ATTEMPT TO SUPPLANT IT BY A ‘NEW VERSION,’ OR TO INTRODUCE ANY MATERIAL ALTERATIONS, WOULD BE LIKE ‘GILDING REFINED GOLD’... It is sufficient to say that the hundred thousand of New York Baptists, and the million of American Baptists, have been made so chiefly by means of the good old English Bible. ... In conclusion, then, I say, brethren, sisters and fathers, cling to your old-fashioned Bible!” (*The Old-Fashioned Bible, or Ten Reasons against the Proposed Baptist Version of the New Testament*, 1850, pp. 11, 12, 13, 27, 36).

### The Trinitarian Bible Society of England (TBS)

- a. The TBS was formed in 1831 from a conflict within the British and Foreign Bible Society (BFBS) over the doctrine of the Trinity and the deity of Jesus Christ.
- b. With the publication of the English Revised Version New Testament and the Westcott-Hort Greek text of 1881, the TBS began to take an active position on texts and versions. A number of articles were published in the TBS *Quarterly Record* at the turn of the century critiquing the ERV and supporting the Received Text. Some of these drew heavily upon John Burgon’s *The Revision Revised*, as well as the research of F.C. Cook and Frederic Scrivener. The Trinitarian Bible Society has continued to stand for the Received Text and the King James Bible. Their published writings have promoted all of the major points commonly given in defense of the KJV. Consider some examples:
  - (1) In 1904 the British & Foreign Bible Society issued an edition of the critical Greek text prepared by Eberhard Nestle and based upon the work of Tischendorf, Westcott and Hort, and Weiss. That same year the Annual Report of the Trinitarian Bible Society made this plain statement in contradiction to the confusion being promoted by their liberal counterparts: “There is a great shaking going on all around us; the foundations are being displaced; ancient landmarks are being removed; institutions are being assailed; confusion is written on all things ecclesiastical and political. There is only one thing that can sustain us in times like these, and that is living faith in the living God. It is the design of the enemy to quench the lamp of Inspiration, to get rid of the supernatural and miraculous in the Word of God; to break down its authority and integrity by minimising differences of translations; for, IF THE BIBLE IS NOT THE WORD OF GOD, BUT ONLY ‘CONTAINS’ IT, THEN ONE VERSION CAN CONTAIN IT, OR AS MUCH OF IT, AS ANOTHER. IF THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS ‘THE BIBLE,’ THEN “A BIBLE’ OR ANY BIBLE WILL DO. The enemy cares not by what agency he gains his great end of making



the Word of God of none effect. The enemy will use any instrument to accomplish his purposes; and the greater and the better the agent, the more effectually will he obtain his ends” (*Holding Fast the Faithful Word*, p. 15).

- (2) “The architects and advocates of the modern English translations of the Holy Scriptures often assure us that their numerous alterations, omissions and additions do not affect any vital doctrine. While this may be true of hundreds of minute variations there is nevertheless *a substantial number of important doctrinal passages which the modern versions present in an altered and invariably weakened form*” (*God Was Manifest in the Flesh*, TBS Article No. 10).
- (3) “For too long the ‘science’ of Textual Criticism has been in bondage to the authority of a small class of ancient manuscripts, with the Sinai and Vatican copies at their head, which are in thousands of instances at variance with the Greek Text preserved in the great majority of the documents now available for ascertaining the true text. ... The result has been that *even in the ‘evangelical’ seminaries generations of theological students have been encouraged to accept without question theories which involve the rejection of the historical text and the adoption of an abbreviated and defective text cast in the mold of the Vatican and Sinai copies*” (*Many Things*, TBS Article No. 33).
- (4) “No evangelical Christian, learned or unlearned, would wish to follow [modernistic] writers along the perilous paths of infidelity in which they strode with such presumption. There is another danger, no less serious, in that Textual Criticism, the evaluation of the actual manuscripts in the ancient languages, the preparation of printed editions of the Hebrew and Greek Text, and the modern translations now being made in English and many other languages, are very largely conducted under the direction or influence of scholars who by their adoption of these erroneous theories have betrayed the unreliability of their judgment in these vital matters. WE MUST NOT PERMIT OUR JUDGMENT TO BE OVERAWED BY GREAT NAMES IN THE REALM OF BIBLICAL ‘SCHOLARSHIP’ WHEN IT IS SO CLEARLY EVIDENT THAT THE DISTINGUISHED SCHOLARS OF THE PRESENT CENTURY ARE MERELY REPRODUCING THE CASE PRESENTED BY RATIONALISTS DURING THE LAST TWO HUNDRED YEARS. Nor should we fail to recognise that scholarship of this kind has degenerated into a skeptical crusade against the Bible, tending to lower it to the level of an ordinary book of merely human composition” (*If the Foundations Be Destroyed*, TBS Article No. 14).

#### Fundamentalist leader William Aberhart (1878-1943)

- a. Aberhart was both a Christian leader and a greatly beloved political leader. He was Premier of Alberta from 1935-43. In the late 1920s, Aberhart separated from the Regular Baptists

over issues such as Bible inspiration and the interpretation of prophecy. In 1924 he established the Calgary Prophetic Bible Institute. The first student enrolled in this Bible Institute was Ernest Charles Manning, who eventually became the premier of Alberta from 1943 until 1968. Aberhart also founded the 1,250-seat Bible Institute Baptist Church, which often featured the preaching of well-known fundamentalist leaders such as William B. Riley and Harry Rimmer.

- b. Aberhart trained his people and his students to have confidence in the divine preservation of the Bible. He defended the King James Bible as the preserved Word of God.
- c. A summary of Aberhart's teaching was given to me personally by Pastor Mark Buch (1910-1995), who was educated by Aberhart in the 1930s. Buch was the founder and pastor of the People's Fellowship Tabernacle in Vancouver, British Columbia. This church was a stronghold for biblical fundamentalism in western Canada from the time it was founded in 1939. Buch knew and preached with many of the well-known fundamentalist leaders of the last century, including J. Frank Norris, G. Beauchamp Vick, and Bob Jones Sr. Buch took the second year apologetics course Aberhart taught on the subject of inspiration and preservation at the Prophetic Bible Institute. Note how Pastor Buch described Aberhart's position on Bible preservation: "Mr. Aberhart was one of the greatest Bible teachers in Canada. He was the first person I came in contact with WHO KNEW THE TRUE STORY OF THE DIVINE INSPIRATION AND PRESERVATION OF GOD'S HOLY WORD. He explained how it came down from the first apostolic faultless autograph, its safe keeping through the Byzantine church, the majority reformation copy by Erasmus of Rotterdam, William Tyndale's translation, the Authorized committee of mental and spiritual giants, and the resultant glorious treasure—the Authorized Version" (Mark Buch, *In Defence of the Authorized Version*, People's Fellowship Tabernacle, Vancouver, British Columbia, p. 25).
- d. During my personal interviews with Pastor Buch, he gave me a copy of one of Aberhart's booklets on the subject of Bible versions. It was titled *The Latest of Modern Movements: Or What about the Revised Version of the Bible?* Published in 1924 or 1925, it was printed and distributed by the thousands. In the title of his booklet, Aberhart was referring to the English Revised Version of 1885. He also mentioned Darby's Version, Russell's Diaglot, Moulton's Bible, the American Revised Version, 20th Century in Modern Speech, Moffatt's Translation, Goodspeed's New Testament, and Kent's Shorter Bible. HE WARNED THAT MODERN TEXTUAL CRITICISM AND THE MULTIPLICITY OF MODERN VERSIONS WAS WEAKENING THE AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE.
- e. The position William Aberhart held on the Bible version issue in the 1920s is exactly the position that David Otis Fuller taught, and ABERHART WAS WRITING AND TEACHING THIS YEARS BEFORE THE PUBLICATION OF WILKINSON'S BOOK. In the course of my research, I looked into the sources of Aberhart's position. One of his sources was the writings of John William Burgon, whose book *Revision Revised* was first

published in 1883 and was reprinted many times. Mark Buch testified to me that Aberhard used Burgon's material in his Bible institute classes.

### Fundamentalist leader Philip Mauro (1859-1952)

- a. Mauro was a famous patent lawyer who argued before the bar of the United States Supreme Court. He wrote the legal brief that was used by William Jennings Bryan at the famous "Scopes Trial" to defend the Tennessee law prohibiting the teaching of evolution in public schools. Converted in 1903, at age 45, Mauro became a bold witness for Jesus Christ. He testified of his faith to Thomas Edison, the famous inventor. Mauro was aboard the *Carpathian* when it rescued survivors from the ill-fated *Titanic* in 1912. He wrote many books on various themes, including *The Truth about Evolution*, *The Progress of the Apostasy*, *The Seventy Weeks and the Great Tribulation*, *The Wonders of Bible Chronology*, and *Speaking in Tongues*. Mauro also wrote articles for *The Fundamentals*, the books that gave the fundamentalist movement its name in the 1920s.
- b. Mauro's position on the Bible version issue was no secret. In 1924 he published *Which Version? Authorized or Revised?* This was several years before the Adventist Benjamin Wilkinson published his book on this subject. Like Aberhart, Mauro leaned heavily upon the research of John Burgon. Note the following statement: "In view also of the leading part the English speaking peoples were to play in shaping the destinies of mankind, we are justified in believing that it was through a providential ordering that the preparation of that Version was not in anywise affected by higher critical theories in general, or specifically by the two ancient Codices [Vaticanus and Sinaiticus] we have been discussing" (Mauro, *Which Version?*).

Thus, it is obvious that the defense of the King James Bible did not begin with the Adventist Benjamin Wilkinson in the 1930s. In the book *For Love of the Bible* I have given dozens of other examples of men and organizations that stood for the KJV prior to then. Of course, this was not a Ruckmanite defense of the KJV. These men did not claim that the KJV was given by inspiration or that it is "advanced revelation" or that it is better than the Hebrew and Greek or that it was perfect in every detail. Such claims began with Peter Ruckman in the 1970s, and even Benjamin Wilkinson and David Otis Fuller did not hold to them.

To say that Ruckmanism did not begin until the 1970s is a true statement, but it is a gross error to paint the overall defense of the King James Bible with the narrow brush of Ruckmanism or to claim that a reasoned defense of the KJV (based on its superior Greek text, its superior English, etc.) began in the 1930s and is based on the writings of a Seventh-day Adventist.

**2. To say that D.O. Fuller was brainwashed by any one certain man or book is to ignore the facts.**

- a. While it is true that David Otis Fuller published some of Wilkinson's writings, he also published the writings of a wide variety of men on the Bible version issue, and to focus on Wilkinson as the basis for Fuller's views is something that is done for the sole purpose of demagoguing Fuller and other defenders of the KJV.
- b. By his enemies, Dr. Fuller is made out to be some sort of scheming madman, and an ignorant one at that! But consider the facts: He obtained the Master of Divinity degree at Princeton University and was honored with a Doctor of Divinity degree by Dallas Theological Seminary. He pastored the prominent Wealthy Street Baptist Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan, for 40 years (1934-74). While there, he founded the Grand Rapids Baptist Institute, which later became the Grand Rapids Baptist Bible College. Fuller co-founded the Children's Bible Hour radio program in 1942 and for 33 years was its chairman. For 52 years Fuller was on the board of the Association of Baptists for World Evangelism. He was on the Council of 14 in the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches. Fuller published between fifteen to twenty books.
- c. When he first began investigating the Bible version issue for himself in the 1970s, Fuller came across not only Wilkinson's work, but also the following, among others:
  - (1) Philip Mauro's *Which Version?* from 1924.
  - (2) John Burgon's *The Revision Revised*. Fuller was so industrious in his zeal to search out the facts on this issue that he sought out John Burgon's unpublished works in the British Museum. "It was the privilege of this compiler, after struggling through several rounds of red tape, to see for myself three of the sixteen folio volumes Burgon had written in his own hand, a compilation of eighty-seven thousand quotations from the early Church Fathers. I make bold to say there is no other collection like this in existence" (Fuller, *Counterfeit or Genuine*, introduction, p. 11).
  - (3) Alfred Martin's doctoral dissertation against the Westcott-Hort Text (*A Critical Examination of the Westcott-Hort Textual Theory*). Martin was Vice President of Moody Bible Institute and defended the Received Text against the critical text in his doctoral dissertation to the faculty of Dallas Theological Seminary graduate school in May 1951. Martin corresponded with Fuller on the Bible text issue and allowed Fuller to publish a condensation of his dissertation in *Which Bible*.
  - (4) Donald Brake's dissertation to the faculty of the Department of Systematic Theology at Dallas Theological Seminary in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Theology Degree, *The Preservation of the Scriptures*, May 1970.
  - (5) Wilbur Pickering's thesis presented to the faculty of the Department of New Testament Literature and Exegesis at the Dallas Theological Seminary in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Theology Degree, *An Evaluation of the Contribution of John William Burgon to New Testament Textual Criticism*, May 1968.

- (6) Writings on the Bible version issue by Joseph Philpot
  - (7) Writings on the Bible version issue by Samuel Zwemer
  - (8) Writings on the Bible version issue by Herman Hoskier
  - (9) Writings on the Bible version issue by Edward F. Hills
  - (10) Writings on the Bible version issue by Terence Brown, editorial secretary of the Trinitarian Bible Society
- d. Altogether D.O. Fuller edited three major volumes totaling 900 pages on the Bible version issue: *Which Bible?* (1970), *True or False?* (1973), and *Counterfeit or Genuine?* (1975). These volumes are evidence of Dr. Fuller’s diligent research on the subject of texts and versions.
- e. Dr. Fuller did not claim that the King James Bible was given by inspiration or that it could not be improved or changed. He claimed simply that it is the only reliable English translation of the preserved Greek and Hebrew text of Scripture. He did not believe the KJV has errors, but he differentiated plainly between improvements and errors. “We do not say that the KJV does not permit of changes. There are a number that could be AND SHOULD BE made, but there is a vast difference between a change and an error” (D.O. Fuller, *Is the King James Version Nearest to the Original Autographs?*, nd., p. 1). “The compiler of this book, and the able writers whom he quotes, all contend that the Bible is the inspired, inerrant and authoritative word of God and that there has been a gracious exercise of the divine providence in its preservation and transmission. They are also deeply convinced that the inspired text is more faithfully represented by the Majority Text--sometimes called the Byzantine Text, the Received Text or the Traditional Text--than by the modern critical editions which attach too much weight to the Codex Vaticanus, Codex Sinaiticus and their allies. For this reason the reader is encouraged to maintain confidence in THE KING JAMES VERSION AS A FAITHFUL TRANSLATION BASED UPON A RELIABLE TEXT” (D.O. Fuller, *Which Bible?* pp. 5, 6).
- f. An honest evaluation of Fuller’s *Which Bible?* was given by Dr. John Holliday in the *Gospel Witness*: “WHICH BIBLE? is not a repudiation of scholarship. It is not an argument for the inerrancy of a translation. It is not a defense of out-dated forms of speech. It is an exposure of the presence of enemies in the field of Bible translation. It is a warning against adulterated versions of the Scriptures, particularly versions which show evidence of having been deliberately corrupted in order to destroy belief in vital Biblical truths. It is a long-overdue defense of the worth of the old Authorized Version ... A DEFENSE THAT IS GROUNDED UPON THE TRUSTWORTHINESS OF ITS UNDERLYING TEXT AND THE FAITHFULNESS OF THE TRANSLATION.”
- g. Fuller did not gain anything, from an earthly perspective, for his stand for the King James Bible. He was a highly respected pastor and Christian leader BEFORE he published *Which Bible*. He certainly did not gain in prestige or influence, generally speaking, from his stand

for the KJV. Rather, he was mocked, ridiculed, slandered, and ostracized, even by many of his own fundamentalist and Baptist brethren. He made no personal financial gain from the sell of his books, having turned all of the profit back into the Which Bible Society ministry.

**3. It is hypocritical for the defender of modern textual criticism to make a large issue of using the writings of a Seventh-day Adventist.** This is true for the simple reason that textual criticism is founded upon the writings of hundreds of men at least as unsound in the faith as Benjamin Wilkinson. The influential names in the field of textual criticism include **UNITARIANS** such as Johann Wettstein, Edward Harwood, George Vance Smith, Ezra Abbot, Joseph Thayer, and Caspar Gregory; **RATIONALISTS** such as Johann Semler, Johann Griesbach, Bernhard Weiss, William Sanday, William Robertson Smith, Samuel Driver, Eberhard Nestle, James Rendel Harris, Hermann von Soden, Frederick Conybeare, Fredric Kenyon, Francis Burkitt, Henry Wheeler Robinson, Kirsopp Lake, Gerhard Kittel, Edgar Goodspeed, James Moffatt, Kenneth Clark, Ernest Colwell, Gunther Zuntz, J.B. Phillips, William Barclay, Theodore Skeat, George Kilpatrick, F.F. Bruce, George Ladd, J.K. Elliott, Eldon Epp, Brevard Childs, Bart Ehrman, C.H. Dodd, Barclay Newman, Arthur Voobus, Eugene Nida, Jan de Waard, Kurt Aland, Barbara Aland, Matthew Black, Allen Wikgren, Bruce Metzger, and Johannes Karavidopoulos; and **ROMAN CATHOLICS** such as Richard Simon, Alexander Geddes, Johann Hug, and Carlo Martini. For documentation of the theological position of these and many other men in the field of modern textual criticism see “The Modern Bible Version’s Hall of Shame,” available from Way of Life Literature, Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org.

### **IS IT TRUE THAT THERE ARE NO SIGNIFICANT DOCTRINAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE MODERN VERSIONS AND THE KJV?**

According to defenders of the modern versions, doctrine is unaffected by the differences between the Critical Greek Text and the Received Greek Text underlying the old Protestant versions. Consider the following statements:

“NO DOCTRINE IS AFFECTED, and very often not even the translation is affected” (H.S. Miller, *General Biblical Introduction*).

“And NO MAJOR DOCTRINE OF SCRIPTURE IS AFFECTED by a variant reading” (Robert L. Thomas, “The King James Controversy,” *Masterpiece Magazine*, Jan.-Feb., 1990; this is John Macarthur’s publication).

“The KJV’s text is but one example of one ‘stream’ within a larger river. It doesn’t matter what translation you use, **THAT TRUTH REMAINS TRUE ALL THE SAME**” (James White, *The King James Only Controversy*, p. 120).

“... the rare parts about which there is still uncertainty do not affect in any way any doctrine” (Robert Sumner, *Bible Translations*, 1979).

“Important differences of textual readings are relatively few and ALMOST NONE WOULD AFFECT ANY MAJOR CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE” (Ernest Pickering, *Questions and Answers about Bible Translations*, nd).

**ANSWER:**

**1. The allegation that the Bible version issue is not a doctrinal one IS COMMONLY ACCOMPANIED BY A DISTORTION OF THE ACTUAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TEXTS AND VERSIONS.**

Note the following statements:

By a Textual Critic: “Only about 400 affect the sense; and of these 400 only about 50 are of real significance for one reason or another, and NOT ONE OF THESE 50 AFFECT AN ARTICLE OF FAITH or a precept of duty which is not abundantly sustained by other and undoubted passages, or by the whole tenor of Scripture teaching” (Philip Schaff, *Companion to the Greek Testament and English Version*).

By a Fundamentalist: “[The variants between the modern texts and the Received Text amount to] less than one page of my entire Testament” [and the believer should have] “no concern” (*From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man*, 1999, pp. 97, 183).

**REPLY:**

- a. Actually the differences affect seven percent of the New Testament. “The fact of the matter is that the Critical Text of Westcott-Hort differs from the TR, mostly by deletions, in 9,970 words out of 140,521, giving a total of 7% difference. In the 480-page edition of the Trinitarian Bible Society *Textus Receptus* this would amount to almost 34 pages, the equivalent of the final two books of the New Testament, Jude and Revelation” (Thomas Strouse, *Review of “From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man,”* November 2000).
- b. Jack Moorman made an extensive study of the differences between the modern critical text and the Received Text and published his conclusions in *Early Manuscripts and the Authorized Version--A Closer Look*.
  - (1) Moorman found that there are 2,886 words omitted in the Nestle/Aland text. This is equivalent to omitting the entire books of 1 and 2 Peter from the New Testament.
  - (2) Moorman also examines 356 doctrinal passages that are significantly affected by these changes.

- c. There are 230 entire or partial verses (45 entire and 185 partial) omitted or questioned in the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament (by the count of Everett Fowler, *Evaluating Versions of the New Testament*, available from Bible for Today, Collingswood, NJ). These omissions alone account for far more significant differences than admitted by Schaff. In the New International Version, for example, there are 17 verses omitted outright--Mt. 17:21; 18:11; 23:14; Mk. 7:16; 9:44; 9:46; 11:26; 15:28; Luke 17:36; 23:17; Jn. 5:4; Acts 8:37; 15:34; 24:7; 28:29; Rom. 16:24; and 1 Jn. 5:7. Further, Mark 16:9-20 is separated from the rest of the chapter with a note that says, "The two most reliable early manuscripts do not have Mk. 16:9-20," and John 7:53--8:11 is separated from the rest of the text with this footnote: "The earliest and most reliable manuscripts do not have Jn. 7:53--8:11." Hence, another 24 verses are effectively removed from the Bible. The NIV questions four other verses with footnotes--Matthew 12:47; 21:44; Luke 22:43; 22:44. Thus 45 entire verses are either omitted or questioned.

Thus, the actual difference between the texts is commonly misstated and seriously downplayed.

## **2. The allegation that the Bible version issue is not a doctrinal issue *IS A POSITION THAT IS CONTRADICTORY AND DUPLICITOUS.***

- a. On the one hand the defenders of the modern versions want us to believe that the differences between the texts and versions are largely insignificant and have no bearing on doctrine. On the other hand those who are candid and forthright admit that they believe that the Received Text is corrupt and that the differences between it and the modern critical Greek text are so highly significant that the Received Text and the KJV must be rejected and the sooner the better! Consider some examples of this:

- (1) The Preface to the Revised Standard Version makes this claim about the King James Bible and its underlying Greek text: "The King James Version has GRAVE DEFECTS. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the development of Biblical studies and the discovery of many manuscripts more ancient than those upon which the King James Version was based, made it manifest that THESE DEFECTS ARE SO MANY AND SO SERIOUS as to call for revision of the English translation."
- (2) Frederic Kenyon described the manuscripts representing the Received Text as the "LEAST TRUSTWORTHY that existed" and "FULL OF INACCURACIES" (Frederic Kenyon, *Our Bible and Ancient Manuscripts*, p. 104).
- (3) Bruce Metzger calls the TR "CORRUPT" (Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, 1968, p. 106). He further calls it "DEBASED" and



“DISFIGURED” (Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 1975, pp. xxi, xxiii).

(4) Barbara Aland calls the TR “FLAWED, preserving the text of the New Testament in a form FULL OF ERRORS” (Barbara Aland, “A Century of New Testament Textual Criticism 1898-1998,” <http://www.bibleresourcecenter.org/vsItemDisplay.dsp&objectID=BF4714BC-53F6-48EB-94FEA6BF73FD88A5&method=display>).

b. The contradiction and duplicity is obvious. If the differences between the Received Text and the Critical Text are truly insignificant and do not affect doctrine, as the modern version defenders say out of one side of their mouths, then let’s stay with the Received Text because it bears the stamp of divine preservation. It came to us through the fires of persecution; it represents the traditional text that was used by the churches through the centuries; it can be traced to Antioch rather than to Egypt; and it is not the product of modernistic and Unitarian scholarship.

### **3. The allegation that the Bible version issue is not a doctrinal issue *IS A DANGEROUS HALF-TRUTH.***

a. To say that there is general doctrinal agreement between the texts and versions *is indeed PART of the truth.* We can rejoice in the fact that there is basic doctrinal agreement between the different Greek texts and versions. This shows that God has overruled the wicked plan of devils and men and has maintained essential doctrine even in texts that are not perfectly pure. Taken overall, there is enough sound doctrine in most texts or versions to win souls and build churches.

(1) Many of the textual differences are indeed quite insignificant and in these cases one would not lose much if he accepted any of the various positions. I personally believe that we need to follow the Masoretic Hebrew and the Greek Received texts in all cases, but in instances such as the following, the choice does not have great theological significance.

(a) For example, 3 John 14 in the Received Text says, “Peace be to thee. Our friends salute thee. Greet the friends by name.” The critical text puts this in verse 15.

(b) Another example is Paul’s doxology to the book of Romans. In the Received Text and the Latin Vulgate and in some Greek manuscripts, Paul’s doxology is found in Romans 16:25-27, whereas in the majority of Greek manuscripts it is found at the end of chapter 14.

(2) Taken overall, there is enough sound doctrine in most texts or versions to win souls and build churches.

- (a) Consider, for example, the Latin Vulgate that was adopted by the Roman Catholic Church and translated into many languages (including English in 1380 by John Wycliffe and his associates). This text represented somewhat of a middle ground between the Traditional Text preserved in the Greek Orthodox churches and the Alexandrian Text represented by the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus, though it is much closer to the Received Text than to the Alexandrian. It preserved disputed passages such as Mark 16:9-20; John 9:1-7; Acts 8:37; and 1 John 5:7; but it contained some corruptions such as the omission of “God” in 1 Tim. 3:16. The Latin Vulgate preserved general doctrine and it could be used to preach the gospel and build churches, and it was so used by many Waldenses, pre-reformation Anabaptists, Lollards, and others. But because it contained some textual corruption and error, it was not the sharpest Sword that it could have been. And when the Bible was brought out of the Dark Ages by the Spirit of God, it was the pure Received Text containing all of the apostolic readings that received His divine stamp of approval and that went to the ends of the earth during the great spiritual revivals and missionary movements of the 16th to the 19th centuries.
- (b) This is true in regard to the modern translations of the Bible in various languages that are based on the critical Greek text. These versions contain enough sound doctrine to win souls and establish churches, but they are not as strong and powerful as they should be and these same Bibles can become a hindrance to the purity and spiritual power of the churches. When we arrived in Nepal in 1979 to start a Baptist church we were confronted with the problem that the standard Nepali Bible was translated from the English Revised Version and therefore contained the textual corruptions we have discussed in this course. We had no alternative at first, so that is the Bible we used, and by God’s grace souls were saved and a church was established. At the same time, we were never satisfied with this Bible; we were always frustrated at its weakness; and we prayed continually that the Lord would raise up laborers who could produce a better translation based on the preserved Hebrew and Greek texts. Our prayers were answered and in the early 1990s a Nepali New Testament based on the King James Bible and its underlying Greek text was published for the first time and the Nepali believers have a much sharper sword.
- (c) The same is true with modern versions in English. I can show someone the Gospel of the grace of Christ with most Bible translations, even a Roman Catholic one. I can teach the doctrine of the Atonement and defend the deity of Christ and the personality of the Holy Spirit from the New American Standard Bible or the New International Version (though not as effectively as from the KJV). This shows the marvelous hand of God to confound the efforts of the devil, but this does not mean that the changes made in these and other new translations are not of great theological significance and it does not

mean that we should accept all texts and versions just because there is vague doctrinal agreement in the whole.

- b. Thus, to say that there is general doctrinal agreement between the texts and versions is part of the truth, but it is not the whole truth because it does not follow that the differences are insignificant and harmless. We will demonstrate this conclusively as this study progresses. A half-truth, my friends, can be a whole lie! We must hasten to add that many defenders of the modern versions, probably most, simply do not know the whole truth, having been taught or having read only a lopsided view of the textual issue. And, in many cases, they are afraid to look closely at the position of John Burgon or Edward Miller or Edward Hills or David Otis Fuller or Donald Waite or Thomas Strouse because they hesitate to be identified with a position that is widely ridiculed and that can result in social and spiritual ostracism.

**4. The allegation that the Bible version issue is not a doctrinal issue *DOES NOT ADDRESS THE REAL HEART OF THE ISSUE, WHICH IS VERBAL INSPIRATION.*** General doctrine is not sufficient when one is discussing the Bible.

- a. We believe in verbal inspiration rather than thought inspiration (Deut. 8:3; Matt. 4:4; Lk. 4:4; 1 Cor. 2:13). The Bible is the Word of God because the Bible is written in the **WORDS** of God. In this light, the idea that thousands of omissions and changes are of little significance because they (allegedly) do not affect the basic doctrines of the Bible is invalid. It's not just basic doctrine that we need.

Exodus 24:4--"And Moses wrote **ALL THE WORDS** of the Lord..."

Deuteronomy 6:6--"And **THESE WORDS**, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart."

Deuteronomy 12:28--"Observe and hear **ALL THESE WORDS** which I command thee, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee for ever..."

Deuteronomy 17:18,19--"...he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites: And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep **ALL THE WORDS** of this law and these statutes, to do them."

Deuteronomy 18:18--"I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my **WORDS** in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them **ALL** that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my **WORDS** which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him."

Deuteronomy 27:2,3--“And it shall be on the day when ye shall pass over Jordan unto the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, that thou shalt set thee up great stones, and plaister them with plaister: And thou shalt write upon them **ALL THE WORDS** of this law...”

Deuteronomy 32:1--“Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, **THE WORDS** of my mouth.”

Deuteronomy 32:45,46--“And Moses made an end of speaking **ALL THESE WORDS** to all Israel: And he said unto them, Set your hearts unto **ALL THE WORDS** which I testify among you this day, which ye shall command your children to observe to do, **ALL THE WORDS** of this law.”

Joshua 8:34,35--“And afterward he read **ALL THE WORDS** of the law, the blessings and cursings, according to all that is written in the book of the law. there was not **A WORD** of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua read not before all the congregation.”

Joshua 24:26--“And Joshua wrote these **WORDS** in the book of the law of God...”

I Samuel 8:10--“And Samuel told **ALL THE WORDS** of the Lord unto the people that asked of him a king.”

Psalms 12:6--“The **WORDS** of the Lord are pure **WORDS**: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.”

Proverbs 30:6,7--“**EVERY WORD** of God is pure ... Add thou not unto his **WORDS**, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.”

Jeremiah 1:9--“Then the Lord put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the Lord said unto me, Behold, I have put my **WORDS** in thy mouth.”

Jeremiah 7:27--“Therefore thou shalt speak **ALL THESE WORDS** unto them...”

Jeremiah 23:9--“Mine heart within me is broken because of the prophets; all my bones shake; I am like a drunken man, and like a man whom wine hath overcome, because of the Lord, and because of **THE WORDS** of his holiness.”

Jeremiah 23:36--“...ye have perverted **THE WORDS** of the living God, of the Lord of hosts our God.”

Jeremiah 30:2--“Thus speaketh the Lord God of Israel, saying, Write thee **ALL THE WORDS** that I have spoken unto thee in a book.”

Ezekiel 3:10--“Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, **ALL MY WORDS** that I shall speak unto thee receive in thine heart, and hear with thine ears.”

Luke 4:4--“And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by **EVERY WORD OF GOD.**” (See also Matthew 4:4.)

John 8:47--“He that is of God heareth God’s **WORDS**: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.”

1 Corinthians 2:13--“Which things also we speak, not in **THE WORDS** which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth...”

1 Timothy 4:6--“...nourished up in **THE WORDS** of faith and of good doctrine...”

2 Peter 3:2--“That ye may be mindful of **THE WORDS** which were spoken before by the holy prophets and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour.”

Jude 17--“But, beloved, remember ye **THE WORDS** which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Revelation 1:3--“Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear **THE WORDS** of this prophecy...”

Revelation 22:18, 19--“For I testify unto every man that heareth **THE WORDS** of the prophecy of this book ... And if any man shall take away from **THE WORDS** of the book of this prophecy...”

b. The omission even of single words is frequently a significant doctrinal issue. Consider one example:

COLOSSIANS 2:18

KJV: “Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath NOT seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind.”

ASV: “Let no man rob you of your prize by a voluntary humility and worshipping of the angels, dwelling in the things which he hath seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind.”

NIV: “Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you for the prize. Such a person goes into great detail about what he has seen, and his unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions.”

There is only one word omitted in the critical Greek text in this verse and that is the

word “not”; and this omission is reflected in the modern English translations. To remove this one word changes the teaching and interpretation of the verse dramatically. According to the Traditional Text, these Gnostic heretics were intruding into things they had not seen. The meaning of this is not difficult to perceive. They were dealing with spiritual matters that they did not understand and were boldly describing the unseen spirit world even though they could not see it and actually knew nothing about it. On the other hand, the ASV says that the Gnostic heretic was “dwelling in the things which he hath seen.” What does that mean? It is impossible to know, and the change further seems to confirm that these heretics had actually seen something. Yet only one word is changed. In fact, Bible doctrine often hinges on only one word.

- c. To go further, the omission even of single letters can create significant doctrinal issues. Consider the following well-known verse that has given such great comfort to so many:

LUKE 2:14

KJV “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”

ASV “Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men in whom he is well pleased.”

NIV: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.”

The KJV, following the Greek Received Text, extends God’s peace and good will toward mankind in general because of the coming of the Christ into the world to die for man’s sins. This is the “Good News” of Jesus Christ, that “God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that WHOSOEVER believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life.” On the other hand, the modern versions, following the critical Greek text, extend God’s peace only to a select group of men, those in whom he is well pleased or those on whom his favor rests. In one case (the ASV), we have the basis for works salvation, and in the other (the NIV) we have the basis for Calvinistic sovereign election. That there is a significant doctrinal issue here cannot be questioned, and *the difference lies in only one letter in the Greek, the sigma or letter s (eudoxia vs. eudoxias).*

- d. In light of the doctrine of verbal inspiration, we need to ask some questions as it relates to the Bible text and version issue today.

- (1) How can we logically stand for a doctrine of verbal inspiration if we believe that the verbally inspired “original” text is somehow represented today only by a mass of contradictory texts and versions?
- (2) Of what benefit is the doctrine of verbal inspiration if it applies only to the autographs and if we do not hold to a doctrine of preservation that results in one authoritative Bible today? Were there many editions and varieties of the inspired

autographs? This is what the modernistic textual critics hold, but how can a believer accept such a thing?

- (3) How is the doctrine of verbal inspiration upheld when one believes that God has allowed the textual situation to deteriorate to the place where we cannot know exactly what the verbally inspired text is in hundreds of places? The United Bible Societies Greek New Testament evaluates its own readings by the letters A, B, C, and D, representing various degrees of uncertainty. "A" represents "that the text is (allegedly) certain," B "that it is almost certain," C "that the Committee had difficulty in deciding," and D "that the Committee had great difficulty in arriving at a decision." Even assuming that the "A" readings are truly "certain" (and the editors themselves in other places admit they are not; for example, Kurt and Barbara Aland, referring to the UBS Greek New Testament, admit that "the new text itself is not a static entity ... every change in it is open to challenge" --*The Text of the New Testament*, p. 35), there are literally hundreds of B and C readings in the UBS text. In fact, in the first edition of the UBS Greek NT only 9% of the ratings (136) were "A," whereas 34% (486) were B, 49% (702) were C, and 8% (122) were D (Kent D. Clark, "Textual Certainty in the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament," *Novum Testamentum* XLIV, 2, 2002). In the 3rd edition of the UBS Greek NT, 9% (126) were A, 33% (475) were B, 48% (700) were C, and 10% (144) were D. Mysteriously, between the 3rd and the 4th editions, the committee became much more confident in its work, so that in the 4th edition, 36% (514) are A, 38% (541) are B, 26% (367) are C, and only 1% (9) are D. When the ratings are converted to numbers (A=4, B=3, C=3, and D=1), the mean ranking increases from 2.4 in the 3rd edition to 3.0 in the 4th edition. In two instances, a D rating was raised three levels to become an A (Lk. 19:25 and Acts 2:44); and 84 times a D rating became a B or a C rating became an A. Further, 300 rated readings were dropped from the apparatus, and 59% (178) of these were C and D readings. Kent D. Clark observes, "IT WOULD APPEAR AS THOUGH THE EDITORIAL COMMITTEE ALTERED THE LETTERATED VARIANTS IN ORDER THAT THE PERCEIVED QUALITY OF TEXT PRESENT IN THIS LATEST EDITION MIGHT REFLECT AN OVERALL UPGRADE AND NEW OPTIMISM. ... Those variants that denote a higher degree of certainty (i.e. A and B ratings) have more representation in the UBSGNT4 text, while those that denote a lower degree of certainty (i.e. C and D ratings) have less representation. Similarly, those variants that denote a higher degree of certainty are preserved in the UBSGNT4 text, while those that denote a lower degree of certainty are more readily omitted" (Clark, *Ibid.*). Bruce Metzger further admits that the UBS editors "have attached a high degree of probability to readings which others consider much more doubtful or would even reject altogether" (Metzger quoted by J.M. Ross, "The United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament," *Journal of Biblical Languages*, 95, 1976, pp. 117-18). Also, the letter rating often contradicts what is stated in the editors' notes. For example, a variant

cited in Mk. 1:41 has a B rating, which supposedly indicates that “the text is almost certain,” but the note says, “It is difficult to come to a firm decision concerning the original text.” Clark lists several examples of this type of discrepancy between the letter ratings and the commentary. The issue of the UBSGNT ratings is very suspicious; but even with the increased certainty of the UBSGNT committee the majority of ratings are still B, C, and D. How does all of this uncertainty and confusion support the doctrine of the inerrancy of the biblical text?

e. When we talk about verbal inspiration and the necessity of having all of God’s words, the question arises in regard to how this is affected by the translation of the Bible into other languages. In 1985 Thomas Hale, a missionary medical doctor in Nepal, wrote to me and said: “I cannot concern myself with figures [such as 5,000 word differences between the Textus Receptus and Westcott-Hort text]. If I concerned myself with those, I would have to insist that we should never have translated the Bible out of the original Greek and Hebrew.” Following are some thoughts about this statement:

- (1) When we “count” words, it is the Hebrew and Greek that we are talking about, not a translation into other languages. The translation of the Bible into secondary languages such as English or Nepali does not overthrow the importance of having all of the words of God in the underlying Hebrew and Greek foundation. When we talk about the importance of having all of the words of God, we are first of all talking about the words that God gave in the “original” Hebrew and Greek text and preserved for us in the Masoretic Hebrew and the Greek Received texts.
- (2) We understand that the translation of the Scriptures requires certain changes in words and sentence structure because of the nature of human language. For example, Hebrews 1:3 contains 28 words in the Greek Received Text. When translated, this verse has 42 words in English (KJV), 43 words in German (Luther 1912), and 29 words in Nepali (Trinitarian Bible Society edition).
- (3) What we want in a good version is not a verbal translation in the sense of a mechanical word-for-word interlinear but *verbal accuracy* in the sense of the translator taking every word of the original into account. We know that the translation will not have exactly the same number and order of words as the original.
- (4) But if we are not careful about every word of the underlying Hebrew and Greek texts, the foundation of Scripture will be weakened and the resulting translations will be corrupted. For example, if the words “dia heautou” (“by himself”) are missing in the Greek in Hebrews 1:3, as they are in the critical Greek text, no subsequent translation can be pure regardless of how precisely it is translated. This is why even literal modern versions such as the New American Standard are corrupt in this verse. We must have word for word purity in the Hebrew and Greek texts. This is the foundational battleground.



f. In light of the doctrine of verbal inspiration, the attitude of the modern version defenders toward God's words is atrocious. When they hear that the Nestle/Aland critical Greek text differs from the Greek Received Text in 5,604 places and that 2,886 words are omitted, they almost yawn! The words of the Bible appear to mean very little to them. They run immediately to the mythical allegation that doctrine is not affected and/or they warn about "bibliolatry."

- (1) Contrast this modern textual criticism attitude with the heart of the Psalmist: Psalm 12:6
- (2) Contrast this modern textual criticism attitude with the writer of Proverbs: Prov. 30:5-6
- (3) Contrast this modern textual criticism attitude with the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ: Matthew 4:4; 5:18
- (4) Contrast this modern textual criticism attitude with the teaching of the Apostles: Revelation 22:18-19
- (5) Contrast this modern textual criticism attitude with the attitude of the Jews of old: "The Jews cherished the highest awe and veneration for their sacred writings which they regarded as the 'Oracles of God.' They maintained that God has more care of the letters and syllables of the Law than of the stars of heaven, and that upon each tittle of it, mountains of doctrine hung. For this reason every individual letter was numbered by them and account kept of how often it occurred. In the transcription of an authorized synagogue manuscript, rules were enforced of the minutest character" (Herbert Miller, *General Biblical Introduction*).
- (6) Contrast this modern textual criticism attitude with that of the Protestant denominations of old:
  - (a) "All our hopes for eternity, the very foundation of our faith, our nearest and dearest consolation, are taken away from us if one line of that sacred book, that Bible, be declared unfaithful or untrustworthy" (Convocation of bishops, Church of England, 1863).
  - (b) "Oh, but it is only one word [they say]. Yes, but one word of Scripture of which it is said 'Thou hast magnified Thy Word above all Thy Name!' 'Only one word!' But that word is 'God.' Better the whole living church of God should perish than that that one word should perish. 'If any man take away from the words of the book of this prophecy God shall take away his part.' Let criticism pause. The principle at stake is solemn" (George Sayles Bishop, 1885, referring to the omission of "God" in 1 Timothy 3:16; Bishop was pastor of the Reformed Church of Orange, New Jersey).

g. The careless attitude toward the Words of God leads farther and farther from the truth.

- (1) D.A. Carson is an example of this. He has written a book defending the modern critical text and the modern versions against the Received Text and the King James Bible (Carson, *The King James Version Debate: A Plea for Realism*, 1979). This book has influenced many fundamentalists. It is sold in the bookstores of many fundamentalist Bible colleges and seminaries.
- (2) Yet Carson has come to the position that form criticism of the Gospels is an authentic endeavor and that in the Gospels we do not have the actual words of Jesus but only a semblance of what Jesus said. “But their failure to preserve the *ipsissima verba Jesu* (the authentic WORDS of Jesus) does not mean that they have tampered with the *ipsissima vox Jesu* (the authentic VOICE of Jesus)” (D.A. Carson, Douglas Moo, Leon Morris, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 1992, p. 44).
- (3) I do not believe this for a moment. Though I cannot answer every problem that arises when attempting to compare passages in the four Gospels, the solution for a Bible believer is not to give up the doctrine of verbal inspiration or to think that the Gospels do not give us the “authentic words of Jesus.” The solution is to base one’s position of the Gospels solidly upon the doctrine of verbal inspiration and if one cannot answer every problem associated with that position, so be it! (By the way, I have answered many of these problems in the book *Things Hard to Be Understood: A Handbook of Biblical Difficulties*.)
- (4) The reason that modern textual criticism leads to skepticism is because it is not grounded on the principle of faith. This was understood by Edward F. Hills, who had a doctorate in textual criticism from Harvard. “... the logic of naturalistic textual criticism leads to complete modernism, to a naturalistic view not only of the biblical text but also of the Bible as a whole and of the Christian faith. For if it is right to ignore the providential preservation of the Scriptures in the study of the New Testament text, why isn’t it right to go farther in the same direction? Why isn’t it right to ignore other divine aspects of the Bible? Why isn’t it right to ignore the divine inspiration of the Scriptures when discussing the authenticity of the Gospel of John or the Synoptic problem or the authorship of the Pentateuch? ... Impelled by this remorseless logic, many an erstwhile conservative Bible student has become entirely modernistic in his thinking. But he does not acknowledge that he has departed from the Christian faith. For from his point of view he has not. HE HAS MERELY TRAVELED FARTHER DOWN THE SAME PATH WHICH HE BEGAN TO TREAD WHEN FIRST HE STUDIED NATURALISTIC TEXTUAL CRITICISM of the Westcott and Hort type, perhaps at some conservative theological seminary. From his point of view his orthodox former professors are curiously inconsistent. They use the naturalistic method in the area of New

Testament textual criticism and then drop it most illogically, like something too hot to handle, when they come to other departments of biblical study” (Edward F. Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, 4th edition, p. 83).

**5. The allegation that the Bible version issue is not a doctrinal issue IGNORES THE FACT THAT THE CHANGES AND OMISSIONS IN THE CRITICAL GREEK NEW TESTAMENT PRODUCE A HARsher, COARser TEXT. This is a doctrinal issue, because it strikes at the heart of the doctrine of inspiration.**

- a. The harsher nature of the Alexandrian Text is acknowledged by Westcott and Hort and other textual critics, such as Bruce Metzger. They characterize the Received Text as full, lucid, complete, smooth, attractive; whereas they admit that their preferred Alexandrian Text is less elegant, less harmonious, verbally dissident (characterized by difficulties and contradictions), and that it contains large numbers of omissions of pronouns, conjunctions, expletives, and “supplied links of all kinds.” Consider this statement by Bruce Metzger: “Since scribes would frequently bring divergent passages into harmony with one another, in parallel passages. ... that reading which involves VERBAL DISSIDENCE is usually to be preferred to one which is verbally concordant. Scribes would sometimes: a) replace an unfamiliar word with a more familiar synonym. b) alter a less refined grammatical form or less elegant expression in accord with contemporary atticing preferences; or c) add pronouns, conjunctions, and expletives TO MAKE A SMOOTHER TEXT” (Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*).
  - (1) For example, when Alexandrian manuscripts say in Matt. 1:7, 10, that Amos and Asaph were kings of Israel, as the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus do, modern textual critics assume this was the original reading, even though it is an obvious mistake, and that later this “verbal dissidence” was “harmonized” and corrected by the alleged “editors” of the Traditional Text.
  - (2) And when “yet” is omitted in John 7:8 in the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, thus creating an error in the text and causing the Lord Jesus to tell a lie, many modern textual critics assume this was the original reading which was later “smoothed out” and corrected by “editors” of the Traditional Text.
- b. John Burgon described the Alexandrian Text in these words: “More serious in its consequence, however, than any other source of mischief which can be named, is the process of Mutilation, to which, from the beginning, the Text of Scripture has been subjected. By the ‘Mutilation’ of Scripture we do but mean the intentional Omission (from whatever cause proceeding) of genuine portions. And the causes of it have been numerous as well as diverse. Often indeed, there seems to have been at work nothing else but *a strange passion for getting rid of whatever portions of the inspired Text have seemed to anybody superfluous*,--or at all events, to have appeared capable of being removed without

manifest injury to the sense. But the estimate of the tasteless second-century Critic will never be that of the well-informed Reader, furnished with the ordinary instincts of piety and reverence. This barbarous mutilation of the Gospel, by *the unceremonious excision of a multitude of little words*, is often attended by no worse consequence than that thereby *an extraordinary baldness is imparted to the Evangelical narrative*. The removal of so many of the coupling-hooks is apt to cause the curtains of the Tabernacle to hang wondrous ungracefully; but often that is all” (Burgon, *The Revision Revised*).

- c. We are convinced that the eternal word of God is *not* characterized by “verbal dissidence” or a lack of elegance and harmony.

## **6. The allegation that the Bible version issue is not a doctrinal issue *IGNORES THE FACT THAT MEN OF GOD AND HERETICS ALIKE RECOGNIZED THE DOCTRINAL ISSUE IN THE 19TH CENTURY.***

- a. Men of God clearly recognized the doctrinal issue associated with modern textual criticism. We have documented this extensively in the book *For Love of the Bible*. Some of the men we have quoted in that book who saw the textual and versional issue as doctrinal are Henry Todd, John Jebb, Frederick Nolan, Alexander McCaul, Solomon Malan, John Cumming, Anthony Cooper (Lord Shaftesbury), Joseph Philpot, Robert Dabney, George Marsh, Robert Breckinridge, John Burgon, and Edward Miller. Consider a few examples:

- (1) Frederick Nolan (1784-1864) published *An Inquiry into the Integrity of the Greek Vulgate or Received Text of the New Testament* in 1815 and defended the Greek Received Text against the critical text. Nolan traced the history of the doctrinal corruptions that were introduced into the text of various manuscripts during the first four centuries after Christ. “The works of those early writers lie under the positive imputation of being corrupted. The copies of Clement and Origen were corrupted in their life time; the manuscripts from which Tertullian’s works have been printed are notoriously faulty; and the copies of Cyprian demonstrate their own corruption, by their disagreement among themselves, and their agreement with different texts and revisals of Scripture. It is likewise indisputable, that these fathers not only followed each other, adopting the arguments and quotations of one another; but that they quoted from the heterodox as well as the orthodox. They were thus likely to transmit from one to another erroneous quotations, originally adopted from sources not more pure than heretical revisals of Scripture. ... New revisals of Scripture were thus formed, which were interpolated with the peculiar readings of scholiasts and fathers. Nor did this systematic corruption terminate here; but when new texts were thus formed, they became the standard by which the later copies of the early writers were in succession corrected” (*An Inquiry into the Integrity of the Greek Vulgate*, pp. 326 -332). Nolan associates this textual corruption with the manuscripts that are preferred by modern textual critics, such as the Vaticanus. Nolan looked upon the

textual issue as a doctrinal issue and was convinced that the omissions and changes introduced by modern textual criticism was an attack upon sound doctrine that could be traced to the early centuries following the apostles.

- (2) Joseph Charles Philpot (1802-69), editor of *The Gospel Standard*, gave six reasons against the revision of the King James Bible. Under reason number four he warned about the doctrinal nature of the textual innovations proposed by modern textual critics. “The Socinianising Neologian would blot out ‘GOD’ in 1 Tim. 3.16, and strike out 1 John 5.7, as an interpolation. The Puseyite would mend it to suit his Tractarian views. ... Once set up a notice, ‘The Old Bible to be mended,’ and there would be plenty of workmen, who trying to mend the cover, would pull the pages to pieces” (Philpot, “The Authorized Version of 1611,” *The Gospel Standard*, April 1857). Philpot further warned of giving up the Bible “to be rifled by the sacrilegious hands of the Puseyites, concealed Papists, German Neologians, infidel divines, Arminians, Socinians, and the whole tribe of enemies of God and godliness.” [NOTE: Puseyites was another term for the Oxford Movement, the back-to-Rome movement within the Anglican Church. It was so named for Edward Pusey, an influential personality within the movement. German Neologians refers to German modernists who were pursuing every new modernistic theory; neology is a love of novelty.]
- (3) American Presbyterian scholar Robert Dabney (1820-98) also looked upon the textual debate as a doctrinal issue. He believed the Alexandrian manuscripts such as the Vaticanus represent the corruption introduced by Sabellians and Arians in the early centuries. He believed that Origen had a key role in transmitting this corruption. In 1871 Dabney published a warning against modern textual criticism, observing that many of the passages that are modified by textual criticism have key doctrinal significance: “The following list is not presented as complete, but as containing the most notable of these points. ... the Sinai and the Vatican MSS. concur in omitting, in Matthew vi. 13, the closing doxology of our Lord’s prayer. In John viii. 1-11, they and the Alexandrine omit the whole narrative of Christ’s interview with the woman taken in adultery and her accusers. The first two omit the whole of Mark xvi., from the ninth verse to the end. Acts viii. 37, in which Philip is represented as propounding to the eunuch faith as the qualification for baptism, is omitted by all three. ... in Acts ix. 5, 6 ... the Sinai, Vatican and Alexandrine MSS. all concur in omitting ‘Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said...’ from the passage. In 1 Tim. iii. 16 ... the Sinai, Codex Ephremi, and probably the Alexandrine [omit God] ... In 1 John v. 7 ... all the old MSS. concur in omitting the heavenly witnesses... In Jude 4 ... the MSS. omit God. In Rev. i. 11 ... all three MSS. under remark concur in omitting the Messiah’s eternal titles. ... IF NOW THE READER WILL GLANCE BACK UPON THIS LATTER LIST OF VARIATIONS, HE WILL FIND THAT IN EVERY CASE, THE DOCTRINAL EFFECT OF THE

DEPARTURE FROM THE RECEIVED TEXT IS TO OBSCURE OR SUPPRESS SOME TESTIMONY FOR THE DIVINITY OF THE SAVIOUR. ... THESE VARIATIONS ARE TOO NUMEROUS, AND TOO SIGNIFICANT IN THEIR EFFECT UPON THE ONE DOCTRINE, TO BE ASCRIBED TO CHANCE. ... SOMEBODY HAS PLAYED THE KNAVE WITH THE TEXT” (Dabney, “The Doctrinal Various Readings of the New Testament Greek,” *Southern Presbyterian Review*, April 1871).

- (4) John Burgon (1813-88) and his co-author Edward Miller (1825-1901) also saw the textual issue as a doctrinal issue. “Numerous as were the heresies of the first two or three centuries of the Christian era, they almost all agreed in this;--that they involved a denial of the eternal Godhead of the SON of Man: denied that He is essentially very and eternal God. ... IT IS A MEMORABLE CIRCUMSTANCE THAT IT IS PRECISELY THOSE VERY TEXTS WHICH RELATE EITHER TO THE ETERNAL GENERATION OF THE SON,--TO HIS INCARNATION,--OR TO THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF HIS NATIVITY,--WHICH HAVE SUFFERED MOST SEVERELY, and retain to this hour traces of having been in various ways tampered with” (Burgon and Miller, *The Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text of the Holy Gospels*, 1896, p. 209).

It is amazing that these matters, which were understood by the Reformation editors and confirmed by believing scholars in the nineteenth century, are scoffed at today, even by many evangelicals and fundamentalists. Why? It is because these evangelicals and fundamentalists are not depending on their own scholarship but upon rationalistic scholarship. Theologian Bernard Ramm admits this fact: “Much evangelical scholarship is piggy-backing on non-evangelical scholarship. It does not have an authentic scholarship of its own” (Ramm, *After Fundamentalism: The Future of Evangelical Theology*, New York: Harper & Row, 1983). Ramm was not speaking specifically of textual criticism, but the shoe does fit. Robert Dabney observed that evangelicals have adopted textual criticism “FROM THE MINT OF INFIDEL RATIONALISM.”

- b. Heretics also recognized the doctrinal issue associated with the modern texts and versions. James White and others today are claiming that there is no weakening of the doctrine of Christ’s deity or other doctrines in the modern texts and versions, but the Unitarians and theological modernists of the 19th century believed that the omissions and changes in the critical Greek text supported their theology and tended to weaken orthodox doctrine, and they gave strong support for the modern critical text on this basis. “And the Unitarians have stated that the only two verses that needed to be changed to destroy the doctrine of the Trinity are Romans 9:5 and 1 Tim. 3:16” (Jay Green, *The Gnostics, the New Versions, and the Deity of Christ*, 1994, p. 51). We have given several examples of this in the book “The Modern Bible Version Hall of Shame” under the section on the Unitarians of the 19th century. Following are three of these:

- (1) Consider the example of Unitarian G. Vance Smith, who was a member of the English Revised Version translation committee. Smith testified that the textual changes in the ERV and the Westcott-Hort Greek New Testament reflected his own Unitarian theology. Some of the passages listed by Smith as being theologically “superior” in the modern texts and versions as opposed to the King James Bible were Rom. 9:5; 1 Tim. 3:16; Tit. 2:13; and 1 Jn. 5:7, and that is because these passages in the critical text weaken the doctrine of Christ’s deity, which Smith rejected. Following are two examples from Smith’s pen:
- (a) “The only instance in the N.T. in which the religious worship or adoration of Christ was apparently implied, has been altered by the Revision: ‘At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow,’ [Philippians 2:10] is now to be read ‘in the name.’ Moreover, no alteration of text or of translation will be found anywhere to make up for this loss; as indeed it is well understood that the N.T. contains neither precept nor example which really sanctions the religious worship of Jesus Christ” (Smith, *Texts and Margins of the Revised New Testament Affecting Theological Doctrine Briefly Reviewed*, p. 47). This statement, of course, is a lie, because Jesus Christ accepted worship repeatedly and never rebuked those who were worshipping Him that they should not do this; but we reprint Smith’s statement to demonstrate the damnable heresies of this modern textual critic and how that Unitarians looked upon the textual issue as highly doctrinal.
  - (b) “The old reading [“God” in 1 Tim. 3:16] is pronounced untenable by the Revisers, as it has long been known to be by all careful students of the New Testament. ... It is in truth another example of the facility with which ancient copiers could introduce the word *God* into their manuscripts,--a reading which was the natural result of the growing tendency in early Christian times ... to look upon the humble Teacher as the incarnate Word, and therefore as ‘God manifested in the flesh’” (G. Vance Smith, *Texts and Margins*, p. 39).
- (2) The example of Unitarian Ezra Abbot, who was a member of the American Standard Version translation committee.
- (a) Abbot argued that the last clause of Romans 9:5 is a doxology to God and does not refer to Christ.
  - (b) In Acts 20:28 Abbot led the ASV committee to remove “God” and replace it with “the Lord,” thus corrupting this powerful witness to the deity of Jesus Christ. Unitarians and theological modernists allege that Jesus is “the Lord” but not actually God.
  - (c) Abbot wrote a long article arguing for the omission of “God” in 1 Timothy 3:16 along theological lines.
- (3) Consider the example of the modernists at Harvard College. In 1809 they published an

American edition of Griesbach's critical Greek N.T., BECAUSE ITS TEXTUAL CRITICISM WAS "A MOST POWERFUL WEAPON TO BE USED AGAINST THE SUPPORTERS OF VERBAL INSPIRATION" (Theodore Letis, *The Ecclesiastical Text*, p. 2). This was about the time that Harvard capitulated to Unitarianism. Thus, the enemies of Biblical inspiration understood in that day that modern textual criticism weakens key doctrines of the orthodox faith and undermines the absolute authority of the Bible.

**7. The allegation that the Bible version issue is not a doctrinal issue *IGNORES THE FACT THAT THE DOCTRINE OF INDIVIDUAL PASSAGES IS CHANGED BY THE OMISSIONS.***

While the doctrine of the overall Bible is not usually changed by the omissions in the critical Greek text, the doctrine of individual passages is most definitely changed. Since one of the chief principles of Bible interpretation is to interpret according to context, this is an important matter that affects Bible doctrine in general. Consider some examples:

MARK 16:9-20

- (1) The entire ending of the Gospel of Mark is omitted or questioned in the modern versions. For example, the New International Version separates Mark 16:9-20 from the rest of the chapter with a note that says, "The two most reliable early manuscripts do not have Mk. 16:9-20," thus discounting the authority of this vital passage in the minds of the readers and effectively removing 12 verses.
- (2) This omission dramatically changes the doctrine of this portion of Scripture and indeed the doctrine of Mark's entire Gospel. If the omission is allowed to stand, Mark's Gospel ends in defeat, with no victorious resurrection and ascension, and with the disciples confused and fearful--"And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they any thing to any man; for they were afraid" (Mk. 16:8).

ACTS 8:37

This entire verse is omitted or questioned in the critical text and in the modern versions, and the omission creates a dramatic doctrinal change in the passage. In verse 36 the Ethiopian Eunuch asks, "See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" Philip's crucial reply in verse 37 is omitted in the modern text--"And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." This is one of the most important N.T. passages on the doctrine of baptism. It shows that baptism must follow faith, that baptism is not a part of one's salvation but follows after as a testimony. All of this important doctrine is omitted from the passage by the modern critical text, and though this doctrine is taught in other portions of the Scripture it is nowhere taught as clearly as in Acts 8:37.



## 1 TIMOTHY 6:5

- (1) The modern critical text omits the words “apo toioutos ahistemi” (“from such withdraw thyself”) from this verse.
- (2) This is an issue affecting the doctrine of separation. By removing “from such withdraw thyself,” the critical text removes separation from this passage and greatly weakens the passage’s effect.
- (3) Though separation is taught in other passages that are left intact in the critical text, it is nowhere else taught in the way that it is found in 1 Tim. 6:3-5. This is the only passage that instructs believers to separate from those who consent not to “to the doctrine which is according to godliness” (1 Tim. 6:3). In light of conditions in Christianity today, this omission is significant; because there are prominent leaders on every hand who are refusing to consent to the doctrine of godliness by calling for less biblical strictness, by refusing to set moral standards for Christians in matters of dress and entertainment, by neglecting to preach against “worldliness” in any practical manner, by neglecting church discipline, by claiming that God is not concerned about externals, by claiming that a person can believe and be saved without a corresponding zeal for holiness reflected in his life, etc. 1 Timothy 6:5 in the Greek Received New Testament and in the Reformation translations such as the English King James Bible instructs God’s people to withdraw themselves from this type of error, but nowhere in the modern versions do we find this same instruction. Here we see the importance of even the repetitious things in the Bible. Nothing is there by accident and nothing is superfluous, and every change has doctrinal consequences.

Thus, even if there were no overall doctrinal differences between the two Greek texts, the fact remains that hundreds of doctrinal changes are introduced into the various passages. I do not understand the cavalier way that so many Christians treat these matters, but each individual must make his own decision before the Lord. As for me, I am convinced that these are serious matters that cannot be ignored.

**8. The allegation that the Bible version issue is not a doctrinal issue *IGNORES THE FACT THAT KEY DOCTRINES ARE WEAKENED BY THE CHANGES IN THE MODERN VERSIONS.***

While not entirely removing any “major” teaching of Scripture, the Greek text underlying the new versions does seriously weaken some teachings.

## **THE DEITY OF JESUS CHRIST IS WEAKENED**

MATTHEW 8:2; 9:18; 15:25; 20:20; MARK 5:6

KJV: “And, behold, there came a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou

canst make me clean.” (Matthew 8:2)

RSV: “and behold, a leper came to him and knelt before him, saying, ‘Lord, if you will, you can make me clean.’” (Matthew 8:2)

NASV: “And a leper came to Him and bowed down before Him, and said, “Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.”

NIV: “A man with leprosy came and knelt before him and said, ‘Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean.’” (Matthew 8:2)

CSV: “Right away a man with a serious skin disease came up and knelt before Him, saying, ‘Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.’”

- a. In these verses “worship” is changed to “kneel before” in the New American Standard Version, the New International Version, the Holman Christian Standard Version (CSV) and other modern versions. It is not done on the basis of the Greek text but is a decision that was made by the translators.
- b. Eleven times in the Greek Received Text and the KJV the Gospels tell us that Christ was worshipped (Mt. 2:11; 8:2; 9:18; 14:33; 15:25; 20:20; 28:9,17; Mk. 5:6; Lk. 24:52; Jn. 9:38). It is the same Greek word in every passage -- *proskuneo*.
- c. This is indisputable evidence that Jesus Christ is Almighty God, because only God can be worshipped (Ex. 34:14; Is. 42:8; Mt. 4:10; Acts 14:11-15; Rev. 19:10).
- d. The NIV, CSV, and other modern versions remove almost one-half of this unique witness to Christ’s deity, changing “worship” to “kneel before” in Mt. 8:2; 9:18; 15:25; 20:20; Mk. 5:6. Why did the translators make this decision? I don’t know, but I don’t agree with it and it weakens the doctrine of Christ’s deity.

### MATTHEW 19:17

KJV: “And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.”

ASV: “And he said unto him, Why askest thou me concerning that which is good? One there is who is good: but if thou wouldest enter into life, keep the commandments.”

RSV: “And he said to him, ‘Why do you ask me about what is good? One there is who is good. If you would enter life, keep the commandments.’”

NASV: “And He said to him, “Why are you asking Me about what is good? There is only One who is good; but if you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments.”

NIV: ““Why do you ask me about what is good?” Jesus replied. ‘There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, obey the commandments.’”

CSV: ““Why do you ask Me about what is good?” He said to him. ‘There is only One who is good. If you want to enter into life, keep the commandments.’”

- a. The rich young ruler had addressed Jesus as “Good Master” (Mat. 19:16). According to the Greek Received Text and the King James Version, Jesus replied in such a manner as to correct the young man’s thinking in two ways. The first part of His reply was to correct the young man’s thinking in regard to Jesus’ Person. When Jesus replied, “Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is God,” He was forcing the young man to think about the implications of what he was saying. If He was indeed “Good Master,” then He is God; because if He is not God, He is not good, for among the children of men “there are none that doeth good, no, not one” (Psa. 14:3; Rom. 3:12). (The second part of Christ’s reply was to correct the young man’s thinking about salvation, because he was deceiving in thinking that he had actually fulfilled the law; it was given to reveal man’s lost condition and to lead him to salvation in Christ -- Rom. 3:19-24; Gal. 3:24.)
- b. By changing “Why callest thou me good?” to “Why askest thou me concerning that which is good?” the modern versions remove this unique witness to Christ’s deity.
- c. This corruption was probably introduced by Gnostics. “It is surely very likely that this reading, redolent as it is of Greek wisdom, originated among Gnostic heretics of a pseudo-philosophic sort. The 2nd-century Gnostic teacher Valentinus and his disciples Heracleon and Ptolemaeus are known to have philosophized much on Matt. 19:17, and it could easily have been one of these three who made this alteration in the sacred text” (Edward Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, p. 143).

MARK 9:24

KJV: “And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.”

ASV: “Straightway the father of the child cried out, and said, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.”

RSV: “Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, ‘I believe; help my unbelief!’”

NASV: “Immediately the boy’s father cried out and said, “I do believe; help my unbelief.”

NIV: “Immediately the boy’s father exclaimed, ‘I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!’”

CSV: “Immediately the father of the boy cried out, ‘I do believe! Help my unbelief.’”

By removing the word “Lord,” the critical Greek text and the modern versions remove this testimony that Christ is the Lord.

MARK 16:9-20

These verses are omitted in Vaticanus and Sinaiticus and either omitted or seriously questioned in the modern versions. In the NIV, for example, this section is set apart from the rest of the chapter and introduced with this misleading note: “The most reliable early manuscripts and other ancient witnesses do not have Mark 16:9-20.”

This leaves Mark's Gospel of Jesus Christ ending with the disciples in fear and confusion, with no resurrection, glorious ascension, and victorious preaching with signs following, which is a significant weakening of Christ's deity.

LUKE 2:22

KJV: "And when the days of HER purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord."

NASV: "And when the days of THEIR purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him up to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord."

NIV: "When the time of THEIR purification according to the Law of Moses had been completed, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord."

CSV: "And when the days of THEIR purification according to the law of Moses were finished, they brought Him up to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord"

The purification of Mary is changed to the purification of both Mary and Jesus in the modern versions. This is contrary to the Law of Moses, which commanded that the purification be made for the mother, and it is contrary to the nature of Christ, who, being sinless, needed no purification. Leviticus 12 is very plain about this. It was the mother who was unclean (Lev. 12:1) and it was the mother who needed to be purified. It is "the days of HER purifying" (Lev. 12:6).

LUKE 24:52

KJV: "And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy."

RSV: "And they returned to Jerusalem with great joy."

DARBY: "And they, having done him homage, returned to Jerusalem with great joy."

20TH CENTURY: "They [bowed to the ground before him and] returned to Jerusalem full of joy."

YOUNG'S LITERAL: "and they, having bowed before him, did turn back to Jerusalem with great joy."

The RSV and some other versions, following the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, remove the important words "they worshipped him," thus removing yet another witness to the fact that Jesus Christ is God.

JOHN 1:14; 1:18; 3:16; 3:18

KJV: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." (John 1:14)

RSV: "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father." (John 1:14)

NIV: “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.” (John 1:14)  
CSV: “The Word became flesh and took up residence among us. We observed His glory, the glory as the One and Only Son, full of grace and truth.”

- a. The NIV and most other modern versions omit “begotten” from these four verses and replace it with “only Son” or “one and only Son.” This is not a textual issue. All of the Greek texts have the word “monogenes.” This is a translational issue. For some reason the translators of the modern version refuse to translate this word properly. It is composed of two words “mono” (only) and “gennao” (to beget or to generate).
  - b. To translate “monogenes” as “only” or “one and only” is possible when referring to a normal person. The King James Version does this in Lk. 7:18, 8:42; and 9:38. But to translate “monogenes” as “only” or “one and only” when referring to Christ creates a doctrinal error. Christ is not the only or the one and only son of God. Adam is the son of God (Lk. 3:38); angels are sons of God (Job 1:6); New Testament believers are sons of God (Phil. 2:15).
- (3) The King James Bible is correct. Christ is indeed the only *begotten* Son. The eternal Son of God was begotten *in the flesh* through the miracle of the virgin birth. Every believer is an adopted son of God, but Jesus Christ alone is the “only begotten” Son of God.

### JOHN 1:18

KJV: “No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.”

NASV: “No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.”

- a. Here the New American Standard Version, which is popular among some fundamentalists, follows the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus manuscripts by replacing “the only begotten son” with “the only begotten God.”
- b. The phrase “only begotten God” is heretical upon its face. God was not begotten; He has no beginning. “The word ‘God,’ as opposed to ‘Son,’ communicates nature or essence rather than position or relationship. Therefore, when ‘only begotten’ modifies ‘God’ it introduces a Gnostic concept that Jesus is not fully God, but a begotten god, in essence a mere mighty being. The theological language of Scripture uses descriptive words like holy, everlasting, Almighty, and merciful with the title ‘God’ but does not permit ‘only begotten.’ The phrase ‘only begotten God’ creates an unorthodox mixture, as does the phrase ‘Mary, mother of God.’ Mary was the mother of Jesus, and Jesus was God, but ‘mother of God’ expresses an erroneous concept. In the same way, Jesus is God and is the only begotten Son, but He is

not the ‘only begotten God.’ This reading attacks Scriptural Christology and undermines and confuses the doctrine of the full deity of Jesus Christ” (Gary Webb and David Sutton, “New Testament Passages as Examples of Doctrines Changes by Textual Alterations,” *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, edited by Kent Brandenburg, p. 168).

c. John Burgon proved that this reading, which appears in only five Egyptian Greek manuscripts, could be traced back to the heretic named Valentinus, who denied the Godhead of Jesus Christ (Burgon and Miller, *Causes of Corruption*, pp. 215, 216).

d. The following important observations on this issue are from Jay P. Green, Sr. (author of *A Literal Translation of the Bible, The Modern King James Version, and The Interlinear Bible*):

(1) “The patristic fathers were insistent upon calling Jesus God. The Gnostic opponents were intent on depicting Jesus as a created Being, an inferior god. John 1 became a battleground because of the many references to Christ as God. Burgon says that the Gnostic Valentinus (c. 150 A.D.) devised the clever theory that the Word and the Son of God were not the same person. The Word, according to the Gnostics, was created to be the ‘artificer,’ the creator to do the things that God has planned, implanting in Him the germ of all things. The Gnostics said that Christ was ‘the Beginning,’ the first of God’s creation, and Valentinus referred to Him as ‘the Only-begotten God’ and said that He was the entire essence of all the subsequent worlds (*Aeons*)” (Green, *The Gnostics, the New Versions, and the Deity of Christ*, 1994, p. 74).

(2) “Westcott-Hort, in their 1881 Greek New Testament text, selected a Gnostic-rendering in John 1:18: ‘... the only begotten God’ (*theos*), was substituted by them for ‘...the only begotten Son’ (*huios*). A Divinity that was ‘begotten,’ was therefore inferior or second-rank; so reasoned the Gnostics. Such readings were common to the Egyptian texts; such as the Vaticanus, Sinaiticus, p66 and p75. Egypt was the center of ‘Christian Gnosticism,’ and Westcott and Hort, in their love for ‘oldest’ manuscripts, embraced (unknowingly?) two Gnostic-tainted texts. Because of their Gnostic adulteration, the orthodox Christians of the early centuries had nothing to do with what became known as the Vaticanus (B) and Sinaiticus Aleph manuscripts. Consequently, through non-use, these two (oldest) texts continued to exist until modern times. The very existence of Aleph (Sinaiticus) and B (Vaticanus), the ‘oldest’ surviving manuscripts, has contributed to the unfortunate designation as ‘oldest-and-best,’ in the footnotes of many modern versions of the New Testament. In reality, these two manuscripts are the oldest surviving due to non-use! In the early centuries, the Orthodox refused to make use of them, because of their having been altered or modified by the Gnostics; thus, they were never ‘worn out’ as were the many other Byzantine-type manuscripts. **Now, in the 20th century, many modern translators have followed Lachmann, Tischendorf, Westcott, and Hort, and have fallen into the Gnostic-trap wherein they assume that they must be the best since they are obviously**

**the oldest. Actually, these manuscripts are the oldest and most Gnostic**” (Luther W. Martin, “The History of Gnosticism’s Influence Upon the English Bible,” Appendix I of *Unholy Hands on the Bible*, Vol. II, edited by Jay Green, Sr., p. 399).

- e. In the Received Text there is no question that the Word is also the Son and that both are God. The Word is God (Jn. 1:1); the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us (Jn. 1:14); the Word is the Son (Jn. 1:18). By changing John 1:18 to “the only begotten God,” Valentinus and his followers broke the clear association between the Word and the Son as well as created confusion about the Person of God.

### JOHN 1:27

KJV: “He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe’s latchet I am not worthy to unloose.”

ASV: “even he that cometh after me, the latchet of whose shoe I am not worthy to unloose.”

RSV: “even he who comes after me, the thong of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie.”

NASV: “It is He who comes after me, the thong of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie.”

NIV: “He is the one who comes after me, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.”

CSV: “He is the One coming after me, whose sandal strap I’m not worthy to untie.”

The omission of “is preferred before me” destroys the witness of this verse to the deity of Christ. Evangelist Chuck Salliby notes: “Each little expression such as ‘is preferred before me,’ like so many pieces in a puzzle, was designed to make its own contribution to the completed picture of Christ on the Bible page--His Person, works, character, incomparableness, etc. Yet, they are systematically left out wherever possible in the NIV. This is indeed a strange practice. While a secular book generally exaggerates the depiction of its main character, the NIV depreciates that of its own” (Salliby, *If the Foundations Be Destroyed*, p. 21).

### JOHN 3:13

KJV: “And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.”

RSV: “No one has ascended into heaven but he who descended from heaven, the Son of man.”

NASV: “No one has ascended into heaven, but He who descended from heaven: the Son of Man.”

NIV: “No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven--the Son of Man.”

CSV: “No one has ascended into heaven except the One who descended from heaven—the Son of Man”

- a. The omission of “which is in heaven” destroys this powerful witness to the omniscience of Jesus. One of the traditional evidences that Jesus is God is that He has the characteristics of God, and when the passages demonstrating those characteristics are corrupted, the evidence for His Deity is weakened.
- b. The vast majority of all Greek manuscripts contain the phrase in question. Only roughly two papyri, four uncials (chiefly the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus), and one cursive manuscript omit it.

JOHN 8:59

KJV: “Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.”

ASV: “They took up stones therefore to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple.”

RSV: “So they took up stones to throw at him; but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple.”

NASV: “Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple.”

NIV: “At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds.”

CSV: “At that, they picked up stones to throw at Him. But Jesus was hidden and went out of the temple complex.”

The omission of “going through the midst of them” changes the doctrine of the verse. Whereas the Received Text and the King James Bible teaches here that Jesus supernaturally went out right through the midst of the angry crowd that was trying to kill Him, the modern versions have Jesus hiding Himself.

JOHN 10:14

KJV: “I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.”

ASV: “I am the good shepherd; and I know mine own, and mine own know me.”

RSV: “I am the good shepherd; I know my own and my own know me.”

NASV: “I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me.”

NIV: “I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me.”

CSV: “I am the good shepherd. I know My own sheep, and they know Me,”

- a. In the Traditional Text, the way that Jesus knows His sheep and the way He knows the Father and the Father knows Him (v. 15) is different from the way the sheep know Him. The KJV accurately translates the difference. However, there is a change in the critical Greek text so that the sheep are made to know Jesus just as Jesus knows the sheep.



- b. "... this change destroys the exquisite diversity of expression of the original, which implies that whereas the knowledge which subsists between the Father and the Son is mutually identical, the knowledge the creature has of the Creator is of a very different sort; and it puts the creature's knowledge of the Creator on the same level as the Father's knowledge of the Son, and the Son's knowledge of the Father" (Philip Mauro, *Which Version: Authorised or Revised?*). "And yet it is worth observing that whereas He describes the knowledge which subsists between the FATHER and the SON in language which implies that it is strictly identical on either side, He is careful to distinguish between the knowledge which subsists between the creature and the CREATOR by slightly varying the expression, --thus leaving it to be inferred that it is not, neither indeed can be, on either side the same. God knoweth us with a perfect knowledge. Our so-called 'knowledge' of God is a thing different not only in degree, but in kind. Hence the peculiar form which the sentence assumes. And this delicate diversity of phrase has been faithfully retained all down the ages, being witnessed to at this hour by every MS. in existence except four now well known to us: viz. Aleph, B, D, L. ... It is a point which really admits of no rational doubt: for does any one suppose that if St. John had written 'mine own know me,' 996 MSS. out of 1000 at the end of 1,800 years would exhibit, 'I am known of mine'?" (Burgon and Miller, *The Causes of Corruption*, p. 206).
- c. The source of this corruption was the heretic Manes. "But in fact it is discovered that these words of our LORD experienced depravation at the hands of the Manichaeen heretics. Besides inverting the clauses, (and so making it appear that such knowledge begins on the side of Man,) Manes (A.D. 216) obliterated the peculiarity above indicated. Quoting from his own fabricated Gospel, he acquaints us with the form in which these words were exhibited in that mischievous production. This we learn from Epiphanius and from Basil" (Burgon and Miller, *The Causes of Corruption*, pp. 206, 207).

### ACTS 2:30

- KJV: "Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, ACCORDING TO THE FLESH, HE WOULD RAISE UP CHRIST to sit on his throne.
- ASV: "Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins he would set one upon his throne."
- RSV: "Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants upon his throne."
- NASV: "And so, because he was a prophet and knew that God had sworn to him with an oath to seat one of his descendants on his throne."
- NIV: "But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne."
- CSV: "Since he was a prophet, he knew that God had sworn an oath to him to seat one of his descendants on his throne."

By omitting the important words “according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ,” the modern versions, following the Alexandrian text, destroy this clear testimony that Jesus Himself fulfills the promise to David. The heretics tried to disassociate Jesus from the Christ, and this omission falls right into their hands.

### ACTS 3:13

KJV: “The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his SON Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go.”

ASV: “The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Servant Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied before the face of Pilate, when he had determined to release him.”

RSV: “The God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified his servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release him.”

NASV: “The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified His servant Jesus, the one whom you delivered and disowned in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release Him.”

NIV: “The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus. You handed him over to be killed, and you disowned him before Pilate, though he had decided to let him go.”

CSV: “The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you handed over and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release Him.”

- a. The critical text changes “his Son Jesus” to “his servant Jesus,” thus removing the witness to the deity of Christ from this verse.
- b. In the Greek Received Text, Christ is called the Son of God or God’s Son 126 times, whereas he is called “servant” only once, and that is in Matt. 12:18, which is a quotation of Isaiah 42:1.

### ACTS 20:28

KJV: “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed THE CHURCH OF GOD, WHICH HE HATH PURCHASED WITH HIS OWN BLOOD.”

ASV: “Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood.”

RSV: “Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God which he obtained with the blood of his own Son.”

NIV: Footnote: “many manuscripts [read] *of the Lord.*”

The critical Greek text supports the change from “church of God” to “church of the Lord.” This change is significant because ancient heretics such as Arians and modern heretics such as Unitarians and Jehovah’s Witnesses make a distinction between Jesus as “the Lord” and Jesus as “God.” If it was “God” that purchased the church with His own blood, then the Jesus that died on the cross is clearly God and there is no room for heretical depravation; but if it were a more ambiguous “Lord” that purchased the church, then there is more room for the doctrine of ancient and modern heretics that while Jesus is Lord he is not the same as God.

ROMANS 9:5

KJV: “Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh CHRIST CAME, WHO IS OVER ALL, GOD BLESSED FOR EVER. Amen.”

ERV: “... Christ who is over all, God be forever praised.”

RSV: “To them belong the patriarchs, and of their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ. God who is over all be blessed for ever. Amen.”

NIV: “Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen.” [Footnote: “or, ‘Christ who is over all, God be forever praised.’”]

- a. The ERV with its textual change and the NIV with its footnote and the RSV by adding a period between “Christ” and “God” undermine this witness to the deity of Christ.
- b. Bible scholar/translator Jay Green, Sr., notes: “The NIV footnote is a gloss preferred by those who do not believe that Christ is co-equal with God in essence and attributes. When the Revised Version (1881) inserted it, Burgon quoted 60 patristic fathers as using this verse to prove the Godhood of Christ. And the Unitarians have stated that the only two verses that needed to be changed to destroy the doctrine of the Trinity are Romans 9:5 and 1 Tim. 3:16” (Green, *The Gnostics, the New Versions, and the Deity of Christ*, p. 51).
- c. James White claims that the King James Version is ambiguous in this verse.

- (1) Yet the KJV follows the Greek almost word for word and gives an accurate and clear translation in English. The verse does not say that Christ is blessed of God forever; it says He is GOD blessed for ever. It is one of the most powerful statements to the Godhood of Christ in the Bible, and it is plain for anyone who has ears to hear.
- (2) Unitarians who were on the committees that revised the King James Bible (the English Revised Version of 1881 and the American Standard Version of 1901) wanted to change the KJV translation of Romans 9:5 because they understand that it clearly supported the doctrine that Christ is God.

- (3) Godly English commentators of generations past had no problem with this verse as it stands in the King James Version. Matthew Henry (1662-1714) is an example. He saw this verse as it stands in the KJV as “a very full proof of the Godhead of Christ; he is not only over all, as Mediator, but he is God blessed for ever.”
- (4) We therefore do not accept White’s charge that the KJV is weak in Romans 9:5 about Christ’s deity. Every passage must be interpreted in the context of the wider testimony of Scripture, and when we do so with the KJV in Romans 9:5 we see that Christ is both God and God blessed. That is exactly what the rest of the Bible says! It speaks of the mystery of the Trinity.

#### ROMANS 14:10

KJV: “But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST.”

ASV: “But thou, why dost thou judge thy brother? or thou again, why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of God.”

RSV: “Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God.”

NASV: “But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God.”

NIV: “You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God’s judgment seat.”

CSV: “But you, why do you criticize your brother? Or you, why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God.”

Modern versions such as the ASV, RSV, NASV, and NIV follow the Alexandrian manuscripts by changing “judgment seat of Christ” to “judgment seat of God.” When we compare Isaiah 45:23, the “judgment seat of Christ” identifies Jesus Christ directly as Jehovah God, whereas the “judgment seat of God” does not. Thus, this change significantly weakens the Bible’s overall testimony to Christ’s deity.

#### 1 CORINTHIANS 15:47

KJV: “The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is THE LORD from heaven.”

ASV: “The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is of heaven.”

RSV: “The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven.”

NASV: “The first man is from the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven.”

NIV: “The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven.”

CSV: “The first man was from the earth and made of dust; the second man is from heaven.”

The modern versions, following the critical Greek text, omit “the Lord,” thus removing this powerful and important witness to Christ’s deity.

### EPHESIANS 3:9

KJV: “And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things BY JESUS CHRIST.”

ASV: “and to make all men see what is the dispensation of the mystery which for ages hath been hid in God who created all things.”

RSV: “and to make all men see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things.”

NASV: “And to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things;”

NIV: “and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things.”

CSV: “and to shed light for all about the administration of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things.”

By removing the crucial phrase “by Jesus Christ,” the modern versions destroy this verse’s powerful witness that Jesus Christ is the Creator of all things. This verse as it stands in the Greek Received Text and the KJV and other Reformation Bibles also teaches us that Jesus was not created, since “ALL things” were created by him.

### 1 TIMOTHY 3:16

KJV: “And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: GOD WAS MANIFEST IN THE FLESH, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.”

ASV: “And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness; He who was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the spirit, Seen of angels, Preached among the nations, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory.”

RSV: “Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of our religion: He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.”

NASV: “By common confession, great is the mystery of godliness: He who was revealed in the flesh, was vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.”

NIV: “Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great: He appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory.”

TEV: “No one can deny how great is the secret of our religion: He appeared in human form, was shown to be right by the Spirit, and was seen by angels. He was preached among the nations, was believed in throughout the world, and was taken up to heaven.”

CSV: “And most certainly, the mystery of godliness is great: He was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.”

- a. By replacing the word “God” with the general pronoun “he” we are robbed of one of the plainest witnesses to Christ’s deity in the entire Bible and are left with a meaningless reference to an unidentified, ambiguous “he” that was manifested in the flesh. If the one who was manifested in the flesh was not God, there is no mystery, because even ordinary men are manifested in the flesh.
- b. There are three main readings for this verse in the Greek manuscripts.
- (1) “who” -- The Sinaiticus and three cursive manuscripts have “who.”
  - (2) “which” -- Codex D is the only Greek manuscript containing this reading, but it appears in most Latin manuscripts and most ancient versions, including the Syriac Peshitta, the Coptic, and the Old Latin.
  - (3) “God” -- 98% of Greek manuscripts (some 600), including most of the uncials and all of the lectionaries, contain “God.” Though Codex A no longer has the line through the O indicating God, it was there and was seen and testified by many textual editors prior to 1765, including Fell, Mill, Bentley, Wettstein, Bengel, and Woide. This was documented by John Burgon in *The Revision Revised*, p. 434.
- c. The reading of the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus, “the mystery of godliness, *who*” is grammatically strange, “even more pathologic in Greek than it is in English. ... it is a nominative relative pronoun with no antecedent in the context; I regard the claim that it came from a primitive hymn to be gratuitous, a desperate effort to save an obviously bad reading” (Wilbur Pickering, *The Identify of the New Testament Text*). “Accordingly ... ‘the mystery of godliness, *which*’ is generally regarded as an attempt to make the difficult reading intelligible. ... It is found in only one Greek MS, Codex D, and in no Greek Father before the fifth century” (Pickering).
- d. Dr. Edward F. Hills observed that the modern versions create readings out of thin air in this verse because the grammatical construction requires something different from that which is in the Alexandrian text: “Undoubtedly the Traditional reading, ‘*God was manifest in the flesh,*’ was the original reading. This was altered by the Gnostics into the Western reading, ‘*which was manifest in the flesh,*’ in order to emphasize their favorite idea of mystery. Then this Western reading was later changed into the meaningless Alexandrian reading, ‘*who was manifest in the flesh.*’ Since Westcott and Hort, critics have adopted the Alexandrian reading and have translated the word *who* as ‘*He who,*’ insisting that Paul is here quoting a fragment of an early Christian hymn. But what could Paul have meant by this quotation? Did he mean that the mystery of godliness was the fact that Christ was manifest in the flesh? If he did, why then did he not make his meaning plain by substituting the word Christ for the word He who, making the quotation read, ‘*Christ was manifest in the flesh,*’ etc.? Did he mean that Christ was the mystery of godliness? Why then did he not

place the word *Christ* in apposition to the word *who*, making the quotation read, ‘*Christ, He who was manifest in the flesh,*’ etc.? But, according to the critics, Paul did neither of these two things. Instead he quoted an incomplete sentence, a subject without a predicate, and left it dangling. The makers of the RSV adopt the Alexandrian reading and translate it, *He was manifested in the flesh,* etc., and then place under it a note, Greek, ‘*who.*’ But if the Greek is ‘*who,*’ how can the English be ‘*He*’? This is not translation but the creation of an entirely new reading. The change, therefore, that the translators felt compelled to make from ‘*who*’ to ‘*He*’ comes as a belated admission that the reading, ‘*who was manifest in the flesh,*’ cannot be interpreted satisfactorily. And ought not unprejudiced students of the problem to regard this as proof that Paul never wrote the verse in this form but rather as it stands in the Traditional Text, ‘*God was manifest in the flesh*’?” (Edward Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, 4th edition, pp. 137, 138).

- e. Unitarians such as George Vance Smith of the English Revision committee of 1881 understood that the removal of “God” in this verse was a theological issue. He claimed that the word “God” was added by Christians in early centuries because of “the growing tendency in early Christian times to look upon the humble Teacher as the incarnate Word, and therefore as ‘God manifested in the flesh’” (Smith, *Texts and Margins*, p. 39).
- f. Terence Brown, respected former Secretary of the Trinitarian Bible Society, makes the following comment in his masterly paper “God Was Manifest in the Flesh”: “Countless millions of the Lord’s people, from the dawn of the Christian era to the present day, have read these words in their Bibles precisely as they appear in our Authorised Version, but now this powerful testimony to the Godhead of our Saviour is to be swept out of the Scriptures and to disappear without trace.”

#### 1 JOHN 4:2

KJV: “... Jesus Christ IS come in the flesh...”

RSV: “... Jesus Christ HAS come in the flesh...”

NASV: “... Jesus Christ HAS come in the flesh...”

NIV: “... Jesus Christ HAS come in the flesh...”

NKJV: “... Jesus Christ HAS come in the flesh...”

CSV: “...Jesus Christ HAS come in the flesh.”

- a. The Greek word translated “is come” in the KJV, “*eleluthota,*” is a perfect participle and means “that the Word not only has been made flesh but is still flesh; He came in flesh, is now in flesh, and will forever be in flesh; His incarnation will have no end” (James Sightler, *Tabernacle Essays on Bible Translations*, p. 33).
- b. To translate this Greek word as “has come” has serious theological implications, especially in the context of John’s epistle, which was written to refute Christological heresies that

were tempting the churches even in that day. Heretics then and now teach that Jesus is no longer a man or is no longer in the flesh. The Jehovah's Witnesses deny that Jesus is now a man, claiming that he is some sort of spirit being. Many modernists claim that Jesus did not rise bodily but only spiritually, that while he *was* in the flesh he *is* no longer so. A proper translation of 1 John 4:2 destroys these heresies, whereas the mis-translation found in the modern versions leaves room for them.

### 1 JOHN 4:3

KJV: "And every spirit that CONFESSETH NOT THAT JESUS CHRIST IS COME IN THE FLESH is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world."

ASV: "and every spirit that confesseth not Jesus is not of God: and this is the spirit of the antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it cometh; and now it is in the world already."

RSV: "and every spirit which does not confess Jesus is not of God. This is the spirit of antichrist, of which you heard that it was coming, and now it is in the world already."

NASV: "and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world."

NIV: "but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world."

CSV: "But every spirit who does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist; you have heard that he is coming, and he is already in the world now."

The genuine test to determine the false spirit of antichrist is removed from the modern versions by the corruption of 1 John 4:3. The KJV requires that one confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, whereas the modern versions only require that one acknowledge or confess Jesus. There is a great difference between these two tests. Every false spirit will "confess Jesus" in a general sense (even Unitarians, Mormons, and Jehovah's Witnesses), but the spirit of antichrist will not "confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh," meaning that Jesus Christ is the very Messiah, the very God manifest in the flesh, promised in Old Testament prophecy (e.g., Isa. 7:14; 9:6). This is a serious textual and translational error.

### 1 JOHN 5:7-8

KJV: "For there are three that bear record in heaven, THE FATHER, THE WORD, AND THE HOLY GHOST: AND THESE THREE ARE ONE. AND THERE ARE THREE THAT BEAR WITNESS IN EARTH, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one."

ASV: "And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is the truth. For there are three who bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and the three agree in one."

RSV: "And the Spirit is the witness, because the Spirit is the truth. There are three witnesses, the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree."



NASV: “For there are three that testify: the Spirit and the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement.”

NIV: “For there are three that testify: the Spirit, the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement.”

CSV: “For there are three that testify: the Spirit, the water, and the blood—and these three are in agreement.”

- a. The statement in 1 John 5:7 in the KJV, called the “Johannine Comma,” is a powerful witness to the doctrine that Jesus Christ is an equal member of the Godhead. It is the clearest statement of the Trinity in the entire Bible, but the modern versions omit it.
- b. Erasmus added the *Johannine Comma* to the 3rd edition of his Greek N.T., but the reason was not that a Greek manuscript was found that contained it. The main reason that the editors of the Greek Received Text (not only Erasmus but all of them) included the *Johannine Comma* was the general conviction that it was inspired Scripture and that it had been preserved in the Latin. As Edward F. Hills observed, “But whatever may have been the immediate cause, still, in the last analysis, it was not trickery that was responsible for the inclusion of the *Johannine comma* in the Textus Receptus, but the usage of the Latin speaking Church” (*The King James Version Defended*, p. 209).
- c. In another place in *The Bible Version Question-Answer Database* we list the reasons for holding to the *Johannine Comma* in 1 John 5:7-8. See “Should 1 John 5:7 be in the Bible since it has minority support among the Greek manuscripts?” There we list 13 arguments for the apostolic authenticity of this passage. We also expose the myths pertaining to how Erasmus added the verse.
- d. I, for one, believe the apostle John wrote the Trinitarian statement in 1 John 5:7-8 under divine inspiration. A recommended resource for further study is Michael Maynard, *A History of the Debate over 1 John 5:7-8: a tracing of the longevity of the Comma Johanneum, with evaluations of arguments against its authenticity* (Comma Publications, P.O. Box 1544, Douglas, AZ 85607, [receptus@sprynet.com](mailto:receptus@sprynet.com); a second edition is scheduled for publication sometime in late 2005 or 2006).

#### JUDE 4

KJV: “For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord GOD, and our Lord Jesus Christ.”

ASV: “... denying our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.”

RSV: “... deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.”

NASV: “... deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.”

NIV: “... deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.”

The omission of “God” from this passage removes a powerful and clear witness to Christ’s full deity. Clever heretics who deny that Jesus is fully God will admit that He is Master and Lord.

### REVELATION 1:8, 11

KJV: “I am Alpha and Omega, THE BEGINNING AND THE ENDING, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty. ... Saying, I AM ALPHA AND OMEGA, THE FIRST AND THE LAST: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.”

RSV: “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty. ... saying, “Write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches, to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea.”

NASV: “I am the Alpha and Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty. ... saying, “Write in a book what you see, and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea.”

NIV: “‘I am the Alpha and the Omega,’ says the Lord God, ‘who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.’ ... which said: ‘Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea.’”

CSV: “‘I am the Alpha and the Omega,’ says the Lord God, ‘the One who is, who was, and who is coming, the Almighty.’ ... saying, ‘Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.’”

- a. In the critical Greek text “the beginning and the ending” is omitted from verse 8 and “I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last” is omitted from verse 11.
- b. As it stands in the Received Text and in the KJV and any other faithful TR translations, the “Almighty” of verse 8 is clearly the Lord Jesus Christ of verse 11, but this connection is broken by the omissions in the critical text.
- c. Modern version proponents like to point out that the critical text adds the word “God” in Rev. 1:8. But consider the whole picture: Verse 8 in the critical text omits “the beginning and the ending.” Verse 9 omits “Christ” two times. Verse 11 omits “I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last.” The overall effect of the modern version rendering of Revelation chapter one is to weaken its testimony to Christ’s deity as compared with the Greek Received Text and faithful translations such as the King James Bible.

We have looked briefly at more than 30 important passages in which the testimony of Christ’s

deity has been removed or weakened in the critical Greek New Testament and in the modern versions. There are many passages we did not include. While not every modern version contains all of these corruptions, every modern version based on the critical Greek text contains most of them. The doctrine that Jesus Christ is God is not entirely removed from these Bibles, but the overall testimony to Christ's deity has been weakened. Is this really a matter of little consequence, as so many would have us believe?

In his book "The Truth about the King James Only Controversy," James White makes the claim that the modern versions based on the critical Greek text are actually stronger in their witness to Christ's deity than the Reformation Greek text and the Reformation translations. This is a new position that he has invented in his zeal to defend the modern versions against the KJV, but it is without basis in fact. The charts that he includes are selective in their witness and do not give the full story. Christians on both sides of this debate in former times understood the doctrinal issue associated with modern textual criticism. On one side the Unitarians and modernists understood that the critical Greek text supported their doctrine of Christ more than the Received Text, and this is why they put all of their support behind it. On the other side, the majority of Bible believing Christians in the 18th and 19th centuries knew that to make the aforementioned changes, taking "God" out of 1 Tim. 3:16 and removing 1 Jn. 5:7,8, for example, was an attack upon Christ's deity. I have answered White at some length in "Examining James Whites' 'King James Only Controversy.'" This is available at the Way of Life web site in the Bible Version section of the End Times Apostasy database.

#### THE OMISSION OF "LORD" AS APPLIED TO JESUS CHRIST

MATTHEW 13:51; 28:6; MARK 9:24; LUKE 9:57, 59; ROMANS 6:11; 1 CORINTHIANS 4:10; GALATIANS 6:17; 1 TIMOTHY 1:1; 5:21; 2 TIMOTHY 4:1; TITUS 1:4; 2 JOHN 3

In all of these verses "Lord" is removed, thus weakening the overall testimony of the New Testament to Christ's deity.

#### THE SEPARATION OF "JESUS" FROM "CHRIST"

MATTHEW 9:29; 12:25; 13:51; 14:14; 22:22, 25, 27; 15:30; 16:20; JOHN 6:14; ACTS 3:26; 9:29; 19:10; ROMANS 16:18; 2 CORINTHIANS 5:18; COLOSSIANS 1:28; 1 PETER 5:10, 14

- a. These are just a few examples of more than 60 passages in which the name "Jesus" is omitted in association with the great works of Christ, or in which "Christ" is omitted in association with the name "Jesus."
- b. "The separation of 'Jesus' from 'Christ' occurs far too often to look for any cause other than deliberate editing in certain N.T. manuscripts. That there was a strong movement in the

early centuries which could result in such a systematic editing, there can be no doubt! The foremost error regarding the Person of Christ, is of course, to deny His true Deity and true Humanity. The chief means by which this was done, and which finds expression down to our own day, is technically known as 'Adoptionism' or 'Spirit Christology.' Here, Jesus of Nazareth, an ordinary man of unusual virtue, was 'adopted' by God into divine Sonship by the advent of the 'Christ-Spirit' at His baptism. Therefore, Jesus became Christ at His baptism, rather than, the fact that He was always the Christ from eternity. And though united for a time, Jesus and Christ were separate personages. ... it is the small group of Alexandrian manuscripts which consistently disassociate 'Jesus' from 'Christ.' And, along with Aleph and B, Papyri 46 follows the same trend. ... in 1 Cor. 15:47, it reveals its dark secret! '... the second man is THE SPIRIT from heaven' (P46)" (Jack Moorman, *A Closer Look: Early Manuscripts and the Authorized Version*, pp. 5, 6).

### THE CORRUPTION OF THREE GREAT TESTIMONIES TO CHRIST

By its omissions and changes, the critical text corrupts three of the greatest testimonies of Christ in the New Testament, that of the thief on the cross in Luke 23, of Peter in John 6, and of the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8.

#### LUKE 23:42

KJV: "And he said unto Jesus, LORD, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom."  
ASV: "And he said, Jesus, remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom."  
RSV: "And he said, 'Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.'"  
NASV: "And he was saying, "Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom!"  
NIV: "Then he said: 'Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.'"  
CSV: "Then he said, 'Jesus, remember me when You come into Your kingdom!'"

The modern versions, following the critical Greek text, have the penitent thief addressing Jesus Christ merely as "Jesus," rather than as "Lord."

#### JOHN 6:69

KJV: "And we believe and are sure that thou art THAT CHRIST, THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD."  
ASV: "And we have believed and know that thou art the Holy One of God."  
RSV: "and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God."  
NASV: "We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God."  
NIV: "We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God."  
CSV: "We have come to believe and know that You are the Holy One of God!"

The critical Greek text changes "that Christ, the Son of the living God" to "the holy one of

God,” thus corrupting this powerful witness to the fact that Jesus is the very Christ. One of the ways that false teachers have corrupted the doctrine of Jesus’ deity was to distinguish between “the Christ” and “Jesus,” alleging that though Christ is God, Jesus was not the same as Christ. Adoptionists, for example, claimed that “the Christ” came upon Jesus at his baptism and left him at the crucifixion. As it stands in the Traditional text, this heresy is plainly refuted, but the weak replacement in the Alexandrian text is almost meaningless. The only place in the Traditional text where Jesus is called “the holy one of God” is in Mk. 1:24 and Lk. 4:34, where demons are speaking.

### ACTS 8:37

KJV: “And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I BELIEVE THAT JESUS CHRIST IS THE SON OF GOD.”

ASV: Verse in italic

RSV: Verse omitted

NASV: Verse bracketed with footnote “Early mss do not contain this v.”

NIV: Verse omitted

CSV: Verse bracketed

- a. The modern versions omit or seriously question this verse and thereby remove the glorious and important testimony of the Ethiopian eunuch as to the incarnation and deity of Jesus Christ. “And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”
- b. While it is true that this verse is absent from the majority of Greek manuscripts, “it is present in some of them, including *E* (6th or 7th century). It is cited by Irenaeus (c. 180) and Cyprian (c. 250) and is found in the Old Latin and the Vulgate” (Edward Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, 4th edition. p. 201).

The Alexandrian text thus weakens or removes three of the Bible’s most powerful testimonies to Christ’s deity, that of the thief on the cross (by the omission of “Lord”), that of Peter in John 6:69 (by changing “that Christ, the Son of the living God” to “the holy one of God”), and by omitting the Eunuch’s testimony in Acts 8:37.

## **THE VIRGIN BIRTH OF CHRIST IS WEAKENED**

### MATTHEW 1:25

Here “firstborn son” is changed to “a son” in the modern versions. This plays into the hands of the Roman Catholic Church, which claims that Mary did not have any children other than Jesus.

## LUKE 2:22

Here “HER purification” is changed to “THEIR purification.” This strikes at the virgin birth and the sinlessness of Christ, for it implies that Jesus needed purification as well as Mary. The Greek manuscript support for “her purification” is weak, but as with Acts 8:37 and the Trinitarian statement in 1 John 5:7, the true text is preserved in the Latin. “The reading *her purification* has a great deal of textual support among the Latin witnesses. The majority of all Latin manuscripts read, *et postquam postquam impleti sunt dies purgationis eius secundum legem mosi* (And after the days of her purification, according to the law of Moses). The Latin word *eius* (or *ejus*) means her and stands in the feminine genitive singular, thus of her. In order to have the translation of them, the Latin texts would have to use the word *eorum*. When we consider the age and the number of extant Latin manuscripts, we find the reading is both ancient and well substantiated” (Thomas Holland, *Crowned with Glory*, 2000).

## LUKE 2:33, 43

KJV: “And JOSEPH AND HIS MOTHER marvelled at those things which were spoken of him. ... And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and JOSEPH AND HIS MOTHER knew not of it.”

ASV: “And his father and his mother ... his parents knew it not.”

RSV: ‘And his father and his mother ... His parents did not know it.’”

NASV: “And His father and mother ... His parents were unaware of it.”

NIV: “The child’s father and mother ... they were unaware of it.”

CSV: “His father and mother ... His parents did not know it.”

- a. By changing “Joseph” to “the child’s father” and “his parents,” the NIV and other modern versions weaken the testimony of Christ’s virgin birth, compared with the KJV and the Greek Received Text. While it is true that the NIV elsewhere says that Christ was virgin born (Mt. 1:18-20), the KJV backs up that testimony with the added witness of Lk. 2:33 and 43, whereas the NIV does not. Those who understand the duplicity and cleverness of false teachers understand the importance of each and every one of these biblical testimonies.
- b. In Luke 2:33, the possessive pronoun is connected to Mary alone (*he meter autou*) and does not include Joseph.
- c. It is true that Luke 2:41 reads “his parents” in the KJV, but the fact remains that the NIV weakens the overall testimony of this passage by the changes.
- d. When Mary calls Joseph Jesus’ father in verse 48, Jesus replies, “... wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business?” “Why did not Jesus use ‘God,’ or ‘the Lord,’ but ‘Father’ at this juncture? I believe it is to correct any misconception that Joseph was in any way His father. God alone was His Father” (Jeffrey Khoo, *Kept Pure in All Ages*, p. 92).

## GALATIANS 4:4 and HEBREWS 2:16

### Galatians 4:4

KJV: “But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, MADE OF A WOMAN, made under the law.” “

ASV: “but when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law.”

RSV: “But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law.”

NASV: But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law.”

NIV: “But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons.”

CSV: “But when the completion of the time came, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under the law.”

### Hebrews 2:16

KJV: “For verily HE TOOK NOT ON HIM THE NATURE OF ANGELS; but he took on him the seed of Abraham.”

ASV: “For verily not to angels doth he give help, but he giveth help to the seed of Abraham.”

RSV: “For surely it is not with angels that he is concerned but with the descendants of Abraham.”

NASV: “For assuredly He does not give help to angels, but He gives help to the descendant of Abraham.”

NIV: “For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham’s descendants.”

CSV: “For it is clear that He does not reach out to help angels, but to help Abraham’s offspring.”

a. Some who deny the virgin birth claim that the Apostles did not refer to this doctrine in their epistles to the churches (as if the clear statements in the Prophets and the Gospels are not sufficient). This claim is wrong. The virgin birth is referred to in Galatians 4:4 and Hebrews 2:16. Galatians says Christ was “made of a woman.” This unusual manner of speech is a reference to the virgin birth, as Christ was made of a woman without the assistance of a man. Hebrews says, “... he took on him the seed of Abraham.” This unusual manner of speech describes the preexistent Son of God taking upon Himself the seed of Abraham through the womb of the virgin Mary. Thus He could be both the Son of God and the son of Man and yet not inherit sin from Adam.

b. But the changes made in these passages in the modern versions remove the possibility of a reference to the virgin birth.

(1) In Galatians 4:4 “made of a woman” is changed to “born of a woman” in the ASV, RSV,

NASV, NIV, and other modern versions. To be born of a woman is natural; to be made of a woman without the assistance of a man is supernatural and points to the virgin birth. This is not a textual issue but a translational one. The Greek word (*ginomai*) is the same in all texts and means “to cause to be (‘gen’-erate), i.e. (reflexively) to become” (Strong’s). Thus “made” and not “born” is the proper translation. It is used 636 times in the N.T. (and 11 times in Galatians) but is never translated “born” in the KJV. The Greek word for *born* is a different word (*gennaō*) and it is used in Gal. 4:23 and 4:29. The word for “born again” is *anagennaō* (1 Pet. 1:23).

- (2) In Hebrews 2:16 “For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham” is changed to “For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham’s descendants” in the NIV. The ASV, RSV, NASV, and other modern versions have something similar. Thus, according to the modern versions, Jesus merely helped the Jews, whereas according to the KJV, the preexistent Christ incarnated Himself through the womb of the virgin and became a Jew. This is not a textual issue but a translational one. The critical Greek text reads the same here as the Received Text.

## **THE BLOOD ATONEMENT OF CHRIST IS WEAKENED**

### COLOSSIANS 1:14

KJV: “In whom we have redemption THROUGH HIS BLOOD, even the forgiveness of sins:”  
ASV: “in whom we have our redemption, the forgiveness of our sins:”  
RSV: “in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”  
NASV: “in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”  
NIV: “in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”  
CSV: “in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”

The modern versions omit the all-important phrase “through his blood.”

### HEBREWS 1:3

KJV: “Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had BY HIMSELF purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;”  
ASV: “... when he had made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.”  
RSV: “... When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.”  
NASV: “... When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.”  
NIV: “... After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.”



CSV: "... After making purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high."

The modern versions omit the words "by himself" from this verse, thus weakening the testimony of Scripture as to the completion of the atonement. It removes from Scripture a powerful testimony that single-handedly refutes heresies such as Romanism, with its doctrine that the sacrifice of Christ must be perpetuated in the mass.

#### 1 PETER 4:1

KJV: "Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered FOR US in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin."

ASV: "Forasmuch then as Christ suffered in the flesh, arm ye yourselves also with the same mind; for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin;"

RSV: "Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same thought, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin."

NASV: "Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose, because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin."

NIV: "Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin."

CSV: "Therefore, since Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same resolve—because the One who suffered in the flesh has finished with sin."

The modern versions omit "for us" and thus remove the precious doctrine of the substitutionary atonement from this verse. Of course, this is a doctrine that has been under tremendous attack in the past 150 years. The footnote in the Holman Christian Standard Bible (CSV) says, "In the flesh probably means 'in human existence,'" thus supporting the false doctrine that Christ's atonement was purchased by His life more than by His blood and death.

#### 1 CORINTHIANS 5:7

KJV: "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened.

For even Christ our passover is sacrificed FOR US:"

ASV: "... For our passover also hath been sacrificed, even Christ:"

RSV: "... For Christ, our paschal lamb, has been sacrificed."

NASV: "... For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed."

NIV: "... For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed."

CSV: "... For Christ our Passover has been sacrificed."

The modern versions omit "for us" in this verse, as well.

## THE DOCTRINE OF SEPARATION IS WEAKENED

Following are five New Testament passages on biblical separation compared in the King James Bible and the New International Version. The NIV weakens or destroys the testimony of each passage. Since separation is one of the most important means of protecting the churches from error, this is a serious issue. The NIV is the preferred Bible of New Evangelicalism, and it is not surprising that it strengthens the New Evangelical tendency to ignore separation.

### ROMANS 16:17-18

KJV: “Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.”

NIV: “I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them. For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. By smooth talk and flattery they deceive the minds of naïve people.”

The NIV turns this passage on its head by making it appear that anyone who causes division should be rejected. In fact, the KJV translation is correct in that it is only *a certain kind* of division that is wrong, that is, division based on false doctrine. As the NIV stands in this passage, the danger does not appear to be false doctrine but divisiveness itself, regardless of the cause of the division. This, of course, fits the contemporary ecumenical philosophy, but the Bible tells us that the truth itself causes divisions. In fact, the truth demands divisions! The Lord Jesus Christ Himself came to bring division to the earth (Lk. 12:51).

### 2 THESSALONIANS 3:6

KJV: “Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.”

NIV: “In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we command you, brothers, to keep away from every brother who is idle and does not live according to the teaching you received from us.”

The NIV severely weakens this passage by paraphrasing the Greek words *peripateo ataktos* (correctly translated by the KJV as “walks disorderly”) as “who is idle.” This limits the passage to only one certain type of disobedience. While the passage would apply to one who is idle and refuses to work, that is only one application. The Greek and the King James Bible’s accurate English translation thereof allows for a much broader application. Correctly translated, the verse teaches that a professing Christian who openly disobeys the plain teaching

of the Epistles is to be avoided. Many fundamentalists have applied this to New Evangelicals who brazenly reject the Bible's commands of separation, and rightfully so; but the NIV paraphrase does not allow for this. "Unfortunately, English translations like the NIV have paraphrased the Greek in rendering the passage. This obscures the principle and limits the passage to only one application of the principle, namely--the problem of loafers. ... Since both of these non-specific phrases are found in the very first verse of the paragraph in which Paul proceeds to address the issue of errant non-working brethren, it would not be unreasonable to conclude that he deliberately chose to begin his instruction by stating a general principle, before dealing specifically with the problem itself. This pattern can be demonstrated in many other Pauline passages (Rom. 13:1, 6, 1 Cor. 6:12, 13-20; Gal. 5:1ff). The whole of v. 6 is therefore a general principle, that believers ought to separate themselves from every one in their midst who was deliberately disobeying any part of the whole body of inspired instruction. Thus, the main issue this paragraph addresses is disobedience" (Charles Seet, "The Principle of Secondary Separation," *The Burning Bush*, 1996, 2, pp. 41-42).

### 1 TIMOTHY 6:3-5

KJV: "If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: FROM SUCH WITHDRAW THYSELF."

NIV: "If anyone teaches false doctrines and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, he is conceited and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions and constant friction between men of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain."

With the omission of the phrase "from such withdraw thyself" the doctrine of separation is removed entirely from this important passage.

### 2 TIMOTHY 2:15-18

KJV: "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But SHUN PROFANE AND VAIN BABBLINGS: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some."

NIV: "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. AVOID GODLESS CHATTER, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly. Their teaching will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, who have

wandered away from the truth. They say that the resurrection has already taken place, and they destroy the faith of some.”

The NIV translation “godless chatter” is another example of paraphrasing which weakens a passage. The KJV, on the other hand, carefully and precisely translates the Greek words *bebelos* (profane) *kenophonia* (vain babblings). The English word “profane” is a good translation of *bebelos*, but godless is not, because “profane” allows for the full meaning of the Greek word *bebelos*, whereas “godless” refers to only one possible aspect of its meaning. *Bebelos* refers to a wide variety of errors, including Jewish and pagan fables, anything, in fact, that is contrary to God’s Word. Further, the NIV completely ignores the Greek word *keno*, meaning vain or empty. Thus the NIV paraphrase severely reduces the application of this verse and renders it largely impotent in the battle for separation from end-time apostasy. The KJV translation, on the other hand, carefully follows the Greek and teaches us that *any* babbling or teaching that is either profane *or* vain is to be shunned.

### TITUS 3:10-11

KJV: “A man that is AN HERETIC after the first and second admonition reject; Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.”

NIV: “Warn A DIVISIVE PERSON once, and then warn him a second time. After that, have nothing to do with him. You may be sure that such a man is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned.”

The NIV destroys the meaning of this passage and renders it ineffective by mistranslating the word “heretic.” The King James Bible, on the other hand, simply transliterates the Greek word *hairetokos*, which is from the root word *hairetizo*, meaning “to choose.” A heretic in the biblical sense is not merely a divisive person. A person can be divisive and not be a heretic, because division can be caused by truth as well as by error. The Lord Jesus Christ caused division (John 7:43; 9:16; 10:19) and even said that this was one of the purposes of His coming (Lk. 12:51). Likewise, the Apostle Paul caused many divisions. He sought to divide the churches in Galatia from the false teachers there, for example. Diotrephes doubtless charged the Apostle John with divisiveness when John wrote to one of Diotrephes’ church members and criticized the proud church leader’s self-willed ways (3 John 9-11). The number of proud Diotrephes-type false teachers increased rapidly after the death of the Apostles, and within a few hundred years the false teachers outnumbered sound teachers and began to persecute them, and the real heretics, those who had departed from the New Testament faith, began to label apostolic Christians the heretics! Thus from about 500 A.D. even to this day, there have been more unscriptural churches than sound Bible ones and the unscriptural churches have branded sound churches as false and have charged them with heresy and division from the “Catholic” church. The NIV translation of Titus 3:10-11 gives support to the false churches in their rush to label any division as sinful. The NIV translation, though, is wrong. The heretic of Titus 3 is more than merely someone who causes division. A heretic causes division, but it is division on

the basis of his self-willed choice of error and his refusal to submit to the apostolic faith. The NIV mistranslation turns this passage on its head. Instead of calling for separation from true heretics, it calls for separation from anyone causing division for any reason. By mistranslating the passage, the NIV actually calls for separation from separatist Bible believers rather than separation from true heretics, thus supporting the ecumenical New Evangelical philosophy.

## **DOCTRINE WEAKENED THROUGH THE REMOVAL OF DIVINE REPETITION**

a. Consider what the Bible teaches about the significance of repetition in Scripture.

- (1) In Genesis 41:32 Joseph explains that the reason why God showed the vision to Pharaoh twice was “because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass.” The repetition emphasized the certainty of the thing.
- (2) We see the same thing in Peter’s vision in Acts 10. The vision was repeated three times (v. 16) to emphasize its importance and to enforce its teaching upon Peter’s mind and heart.
- (3) This is why there is so much repetition in many parts of the Bible, such as the continual repetition of “they shall know that I am the Lord” in Ezekiel.
- (4) This is why Jesus often said “verily, verily” rather than “verily.”

b. Consider some examples of how repetition is removed in the modern versions:

- (1) The omission of “to repentance” in Mat. 9:13 and Mk. 2:17

### MATTHEW 9:13

KJV: “But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners TO REPENTANCE.”

ASV: “But go ye and learn what this meaneth, I desire mercy, and not sacrifice, for I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.”

### MARK 2:17

KJV: “When Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners TO REPENTANCE.”

ASV: “And when Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.”

In these passages the words “to repentance” are omitted in the critical Greek text

and in the modern versions. Though the words “to repentance” are left in the critical text in Lk. 5:32, the two omissions weaken the doctrine overall because the emphasis is removed. The Greek Received Text and the King James Bible repeat this important statement (“I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance”) three separate times in the Gospels.

(2) The omission of “by every word of God” in Luke 4:4

KJV: “And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but **BY EVERY WORD OF GOD.**”

NIV: “Jesus answered, ‘It is written: Man does not live on bread alone.’”

Though this verse is repeated in Matt. 4:4 and there the critical text does not remove the part about the words of God, the fact remains that half of the New Testament witness to this important truth is omitted in the modern versions.

(3) The omission of Mark 9:44 and 46

According to the Greek Received Text, Christ repeats the following statement three times in His sermon in Mark 9, “Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched” (Mk. 9:44, 46, 48). But the critical text and the modern versions remove two of those references, in verses 44 and 46. By removing this repetition, the power and impact of this sermon is weakened.

We have demonstrated that the allegation that the Bible version issue is not doctrinal **IGNORES THE FACT THAT KEY DOCTRINES ARE WEAKENED BY THE CHANGES IN THE MODERN VERSIONS.**

**9. The allegation that the Bible version issue is not a doctrinal issue *IGNORES THE FACT THAT SOME DOCTRINE IS ACTUALLY REMOVED FROM THE CRITICAL TEXT AND THE MODERN VERSIONS.***

Let’s consider **the doctrine of fasting**. Though the word “fasting” is not removed entirely from the modern versions, the crucial doctrine that fasting is a part of spiritual warfare is removed. For example, the modern versions retain “fasting” in Acts 13:2-3 and 14:23; but with the omission of Matthew 17:21 and the corruption of Mark 9:29 the reason for the fasting is never clearly stated.

**MATTHEW 17:21**

KJV: “Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.”

This entire verse is omitted in most of the modern versions, including the ASV, NASV, New English Bible, Jerusalem Bible, Twentieth Century, and Phillips. The RSV puts the verse in italics and the TEV puts it in brackets. The Holman Christian Standard Version also brackets the verse, thus casting doubt upon its apostolic authenticity.

In this context the Lord Jesus was referring to overcoming demonic strongholds (see Mat. 17:14-21), and He taught that to overcome in spiritual warfare one must practice three things: *faith* (Mat. 17:20) and *prayer* and *fasting* (Mat. 17:21), not faith alone and not prayer alone and not fasting alone, but a combination of faith *and* prayer *and* fasting. This important lesson is removed from the modern versions by the omission or serious questioning of the verse.

### MARK 9:29

KJV: “And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer AND FASTING.”

ASV: “And he said unto them, This kind can come out by nothing, save by prayer.”

RSV: “And he said to them, ‘This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer.’”

NASV: “And He said to them, ‘This kind cannot come out by anything but prayer.’”

NIV: “He replied, ‘This kind can come out only by prayer.’”

CSV: “And He told them, ‘This kind can come out by nothing but prayer [and fasting].’”

The critical Greek text and the modern versions based on this text omit or seriously question “fasting.” Mark 9:29 is a companion verse to Matthew 17:21. These are the key passages where fasting is shown to be an essential part of spiritual warfare, but both are changed in the modern versions in such a manner that the teaching is removed.

### ACTS 10:30

KJV: “And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was FASTING until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing,”

ASV: “And Cornelius said, Four days ago, until this hour, I was keeping the ninth hour of prayer in my house; and behold, a man stood before me in bright apparel,”

RSV: “And Cornelius said, ‘Four days ago, about this hour, I was keeping the ninth hour of prayer in my house; and behold, a man stood before me in bright apparel,’”

NASV: “Cornelius said, ‘Four days ago to this hour, I was praying in my house during the ninth hour; and behold, a man stood before me in shining garments.’”

NIV: “Cornelius answered: ‘Four days ago I was in my house praying at this hour, at three in the afternoon...’”

CSV: “Cornelius replied, ‘Four days ago at this hour, at three in the afternoon, I was praying in my house. Just then a man in a dazzling robe stood before me.’”

Cornelius' testimony that he was praying *and fasting* is removed from the Bible by the omission of the word "fasting" from this verse.

### 1 CORINTHIANS 7:5

KJV: "Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to FASTING AND prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency."

ASV: "Defraud ye not one the other, except it be by consent for a season, that ye may give yourselves unto prayer, and may be together again, that Satan tempt you not because of your incontinency."

RSV: "Do not refuse one another except perhaps by agreement for a season, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, lest Satan tempt you through lack of self-control."

NASV: "Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control."

NIV: "Do not deprive each other except by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control."

CSV: "Do not deprive one another—except when you agree, for a time, to devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again; otherwise, Satan may tempt you because of your lack of self-control."

The omission of fasting from this verse in the critical Greek text and the modern versions weakens the overall doctrine of fasting as an important part of the Christian life.

### 2 CORINTHIANS 6:5

KJV: "In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings;"

RSV: "beatings, imprisonments, tumults, labors, watching, hunger;"

NASV: "in beatings, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in hunger;"

TEV: "We have been beaten, imprisoned, and mobbed; we have been overworked and have gone without sleep or food."

NIV: "in beatings, imprisonments and riots; in hard work, sleepless nights and hunger;"

CSV: "by beatings, by imprisonments, by riots, by labors, by sleepless nights, by times of hunger."

The modern versions have changed "fasting" to "hunger." Yet hunger and fasting are two different things, as we see in the next example (2 Cor. 11:27). In the Greek



Received Text the word translated “fasting” in 2 Cor. 6:5 in the KJV is “nesteia,” which is always translated “fasting” in the KJV. It appears in Mat. 17:21; Mk. 9:29; Acts 14:23; 27:9; 1 Cor. 7:5; 2 Cor. 6:5 and 11:27. The critical Greek New Testament has the same Greek word, but for some reason the modern versions refuse to translate it.

## 2 CORINTHIANS 11:27

KJV: “In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.”

RSV: “in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure.”

NASV: “I have been in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure.”

TEV: “There has been work and toil; often I have gone without sleep; I have been hungry and thirsty; I have often been without enough food.”

NIV: “I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked.”

CSV: “labor and hardship, many sleepless nights, hunger and thirst, often without food, cold, and lacking clothing.”

Most of the modern versions replace “fastings often” with “often without food.” This not only removes another witness to the importance of fasting in the Christian life and ministry, it creates a meaningless repetition and has Paul saying that he was “in hunger and thirst, often without food,” whereas to be in hunger and thirst obviously means that he was without food.

In the Greek Received Text underlying the KJV, there is both the word for hunger (*limos*) and the word for fasting (*nesteia*). The word “limos” means a scarcity of food and is always translated “dearth,” “famine,” or “hunger.” It appears 12 times in the Greek Received Text (Mat. 24:7; Mk. 13:8; Lk. 4:25; 15:14, 17; 21:11; Acts 7:11; 11:28; Rom. 8:35; 2 Cor. 11:27; Rev. 6:8; 18:8). Seven times it is translated “famine”; three times, “hunger”; and twice, “dearth.” The word “nesteia” appears seven times in the TR and is always translated “fasting.” Though the critical Greek New Testament also has the Greek word “nesteia,” for some reason the modern versions refuse to translate it properly.

### **10. The allegation that the Bible version issue is not a doctrinal issue *IGNORES THE FACT THAT THE CHANGES IN THE MODERN VERSIONS CREATE ERRORS IN THE BIBLE, AND THIS IS CERTAINLY A DOCTRINAL ISSUE.***

Not only do the modern versions weaken important doctrines, they also contain gross error, thus undermining the Bible’s authority. Psalm 12:6 says, “*The words of the Lord are PURE words,*”

but the new versions are not pure. 1 Peter 1:23 says the word of God is “incorruptible.” In contrast to this, consider the following examples of the errors in modern versions:

### MATTHEW 5:22

KJV: “But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother WITHOUT A CAUSE shall be in danger of the judgment ...”

ASV: “but I say unto you, that every one who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment ...”

RSV: “But I say to you that every one who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgment ...”

NASV: “But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court ...”

NIV: “But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. ...”

CSV: “But I tell you, everyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. ...”

The modern versions, following the critical Greek text, omit the words “without a cause.” This omission creates a serious error, because the Lord Jesus Himself was angry at times. Mark 3:5 says, “And when he had looked round about on them WITH ANGER...” To be angry is not always a sin, but to be angry “without a cause” is. The Lord Jesus was angry for the sake of righteousness and truth. The modern version omission in this verse makes Jesus Christ subject to judgment.

### MARK 1:2-3

KJV: “As it is written in THE PROPHETS, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.”

ASV: “Even as it is written in Isaiah the prophet...”

RSV: “As it is written in Isaiah the prophet...”

NASV: “As it is written in Isaiah the prophet...”

NIV: “It is written in Isaiah the prophet...”

CSV: “As it is written in Isaiah the prophet...”

The KJV says Mark is quoting the “prophets” plural, but the modern versions say he is quoting “Isaiah the prophet.” This creates an error, because it is plain that Mark was not quoting Isaiah only but was quoting Malachi 1:3 *as well as* Isaiah 40:3.

### LUKE 4:44

KJV: "And he preached in the synagogues of GALILEE."

RSV: "And he was preaching in the synagogues of Judea."

NASV: "So He kept on preaching in the synagogues of Judea."

NIV: "And he kept on preaching in the synagogues of Judea."

In this verse, "Galilee" is changed to "Judea" in the RSV, NASV, NIV and many other modern versions; and yet we know from a comparison to Mark 1:35-39, a companion passage, that Christ was not preaching in Judea at this time.

### JOHN 7:8

KJV: "Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up YET unto this feast; for my time is not yet full come."

ASV: "... I go not up unto this feast..."

NASV: "... I go not up to this feast..."

RSV: "... I am not going up to this feast..."

NIV: "... I am not yet going up to this Feast because for me the right time has not yet come." [Footnote: "Some early manuscripts do not have *yet*."]

By removing the word "yet," many modern versions have Jesus speaking a lie, because in verse 10 we see plainly that Jesus did go to the very feast later.

### ACTS 9:31

KJV: "Then had THE CHURCHES rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified..."

ASV: "So the church throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria had peace..."

RSV: "So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace..."

NASV: "So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria enjoyed peace..."

NIV: "Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace..."

CSV: "So the church throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace..."

By changing the word "churches" to "church," the modern texts and versions legitimize the heresy of ecclesiastical territorialism and hierarchicalism, of one church or ecclesiastical leader ruling over an entire region (or the entire world in the case of Roman Catholicism). In the Greek Received Text and in the King James Bible, the word "church" is used very precisely, and every time that it refers to the churches in a region it is used in the plural -- the churchES of Galatia (1 Cor. 16:1), the churchES of Asia (1 Cor. 16:19), the churchES of Macedonia (2 Cor. 8:1), the churchES of Judaea (Gal. 1:22).

## **CONCLUSION TO THIS SECTION ON THE DOCTRINAL ISSUE PERTAINING TO THE MODERN VERSIONS**

1. There is a serious doctrinal issue pertaining to the texts and versions, and we must be careful not to accept commonly held myths.
2. Both the heretics and the Bible believers in the 19th century understood that there is a serious theological issue at stake with the competing texts.
3. While we can thank the Lord that sound doctrine in general can be taught from most texts and versions in spite of their differences, this does not mean that one version is as theologically sound as another or that the theological issue at stake is not serious.
4. We must remember the principal of the sword.
  - a. The Bible is likened to a sword (Heb. 4:12) and it is said to be a part of our spiritual weaponry against the devil (Eph. 6:17).
  - b. To be effective, a sword must be sharp. While any Bible text or translation, even a Roman Catholic one, contains the doctrine of the Christian faith in a general sense, this does not mean that any one text or version is as effective and sharp as another. Who would think highly of a soldier who does not care if his sword is sharp just so long as he has a sword? I am convinced that the Hebrew Masoretic and the Greek Received Text underlying the King James Bible is the very sharpest Sword and when this is translated properly into another language it becomes a sharp Sword in that language. I am convinced that in English the sharpest Sword is the King James Bible. To say that a text that omits more than 200 verses and significant portions of verses and thousands of other words in the New Testament alone is as effective as one that has all of these words is ridiculous.
  - c. This is not a light matter. A battle is raging. There are spiritual enemies in high places. Truth is being cast to the ground. It is difficult enough to win the battle when we have the sharpest sword and the most complete armor. And yet it appears that we have come upon an entire generation of Christians who are slashing away at their spiritual enemies with dull swords, and if a bystander tries to warn them of the folly of this, they rail upon him and charge him with being divisive and mean-spirited!
  - d. Is it any wonder that though Bibles and churches and Bible teaching are multiplied today beyond anything former times could have imagined, that there is less spiritual power and discernment than ever?

## DOES THE BIBLE EXPLICITLY TEACH THAT GOD WOULD PRESERVE THE SCRIPTURE?

Even some fundamentalists are claiming today that the Bible does not explicitly teach the doctrine of preservation. Consider two examples:

W. Edward Glenny made this claim in an article that appeared in *The Bible Version Debate: The Perspective of Central Baptist Theological Seminary* (1997). The article is titled “The Preservation of Scripture.” Consider the following plain : “The doctrine of the preservation of Scripture was first included in a church creed in 1647. As we have argued above IT IS NOT A DOCTRINE THAT IS EXPLICITLY TAUGHT IN SCRIPTURE, nor is it the belief that God has perfectly and miraculously preserved every word of the original autographs in one manuscript or text-type. It is a belief that God has providentially preserved His Word in and through all the extant manuscripts, versions and other copies of Scripture. ... not only does no verse in Scripture explain how God will preserve His Word, but THERE IS NO STATEMENT IN SCRIPTURE FROM WHICH ONE CAN ESTABLISH THE DOCTRINE OF THE PRESERVATION OF THE TEXT OF SCRIPTURE. ... it is also obvious from the evidence of history that GOD HAS NOT MIRACULOUSLY AND PERFECTLY PRESERVED HIS WORD IN ANY ONE MANUSCRIPT OR GROUP OF MANUSCRIPTS, OR IN ALL THE MANUSCRIPTS” (Glenny, *The Bible Version Debate*, pp. 93, 95, 99).

Dr. James Price, a professor at Tennessee Temple Seminary in Chattanooga, Tennessee, in an e-mail to me said: “One may infer the doctrine of preservation from statements in the Bible, but the explicit term ‘preserve’ (or its derivatives) is never used in the KJV of the written word of God” (Price, e-mail, Dec. 20, 2000).

Please note that Dr. Price’s answer dodges the issue. The question is not whether the *term* “preserve” is found in the Bible in relation to the Scripture but whether the *doctrine* of preservation is taught therein.

**ANSWER:**

We have given an extensive survey of the Bible’s teaching on preservation in the book *Faith vs. the Modern Bible Versions*. Following are some examples of the precise and explicit manner in which the Bible states this doctrine:

### **The Testimony of the Psalmist to the Doctrine of Preservation: Psalm 119:89, 152, 160**

“For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven.” (v. 89)

“Concerning thy testimonies, I have known of old that thou hast founded them for ever.” (v. 152)

“Thy word is true from the beginning; and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever.” (v. 160)

1. The combined testimony of these three Scriptures is very important, teaching that God’s Word is settled both in Heaven and in earth.

2. The Word of God was settled in the eternal plan of God. The Bible is a supernatural book from beginning to end.

a. God foreknew the languages of Scripture and “worked providentially to develop the Hebrew and Greek tongues into fit vehicles for the conveyance of His saving message.” Hence “in the writing of the Scriptures the Holy Spirit did not have to struggle, as modernists insist, with the limitations of human language” (Edward Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, p. 90). The Scripture, written in providentially developed human language, is capable of imparting the “deep things of God” (1 Cor. 2:10).

b. God foreknew the individual words of Scripture. Each word in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek was weighed and selected in the eternal council of the Almighty.

c. God foreknew the times (Dan. 2:21). He created the earthly times to fit the Scripture and the Scripture to fit the times. “When God designed the holy Scriptures in eternity, He had the whole sweep of human history in view. Hence the Scriptures are forever relevant” (Hills, p. 90).

3. When God gave the Scriptures, He intended to guard and preserve them; they are “founded forever” (v. 152). All of the demons in Satan’s army and all of the heretics of all ages and all of the unbelief of man cannot thwart even one of God’s testimonies.

4. God’s people have always had a confidence in the divine preservation of Scripture (“I have known of old...” v. 152). This was true historically until the rise of modern biblical criticism. Prior to that, the saints testified of their faith in divine preservation in their confessions. An example is the Westminster Confession of 1648, which was repeated in the London Baptist Confession of 1677 and the Philadelphia Confession of 1742. “The Old Testament in Hebrew (which was the native language of the people of God of old), and the New Testament in Greek (which, at the time of the writing of it, was most generally known to the nations), being immediately inspired by God, and BY HIS SINGULAR CARE AND PROVIDENCE, KEPT PURE IN ALL AGES, are therefore authentical; so as, in all controversies of religion, the Church is finally to appeal unto them.”

5. The Psalmist promises that God will preserve both His word and His words (v. 160). The first part of the verse refers to the Word of God as a whole, whereas the second part refers to the small parts of God’s Word, the individual judgments, the books, chapters, verses, and words.

### **The Testimony of the Prophets to the Doctrine of Preservation: Isaiah 40:8**

“The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.”

1. Here the Word of God is contrasted with flowers. Flowers are intricate and beautiful, but they soon fade away. Not so the Word of God. While it is more intricate and beautiful than any flower, it does not wither or fade; it stands forever, for the sole reason that it is God’s very Word and He jealously guards it.

2. The context of Isaiah 40:8 is the coming of Christ and the establishment of His kingdom. In this context, Isaiah promises that nothing shall fail of divine prophecy; not only will the prophecies stand by being fulfilled but they will also stand by the preservation of the very jots and tittles of the Scripture record. We live 2,700 years after Isaiah wrote. We live down toward the end of the church age, near the time of Christ’s return. And we can testify that the Word of God still stands, that all of the inscripturated divine prophecies are perfectly intact in the Masoretic Hebrew Old Testament and the Greek Received New Testament and in the accurate translations thereof such as the King James Bible, and they patiently await fulfillment as they continue to accomplish God’s purposes.

### **The Testimony of Christ to the Doctrine of Preservation: Matthew 5:18; 24:35**

“For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” (Mat. 5:18)

1. The Lord Jesus was certain about the preservation of God’s Word. Even the smallest details are preserved. This can only be accomplished by God’s supernatural, providential intervention in the Bible’s transmission through the centuries.

2. In particular, Christ is referring to the Old Testament Hebrew text. It is the Hebrew language that has jots and tittles. There is an attack upon the Masoretic Hebrew text today, with the Greek Septuagint and other things being exalted over the Hebrew in many places, but the Greek language does not have jots and tittles.

3. Though Jesus is referring to the Old Testament, the same must apply to the New, because it exceeds the Old in glory (2 Cor. 3:9).

“Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.” (Mat. 24:35)

1. This is an amazing promise and it holds important doctrine about the inspiration and preservation of Scripture. Jesus promised that His words would not pass away; thus guaranteeing that His words would be inscripturated and preserved.

2. The doctrine of inspiration and preservation are intimately associated throughout Scripture.

The association is not merely logical, it is scriptural; it is not merely inferred, it is plainly stated.

3. Christ's promise applies, first, to the four Gospels. It teaches us that the Gospels are supernatural. The human authors did not have to fumble around in a naturalistic manner as most textbooks on the history of the Bible presume, borrowing from one another and from other documents, imperfectly and inaccurately describing things. The entire foundation of the modern field of "form or redaction criticism" of the Gospels is vain and heretical. It is vain because it is impossible at this point in history to know how the Gospels were written from a human perspective, and it is heretical because God's Word informs us that the writing of the Gospels was supernatural and gives no emphasis to the "human element."

4. Christ's promise applies not only to the four Gospels but also to all of the words of the New Testament as given by the Spirit of Christ (1 Pet. 1:11). Some Bibles are "red letter editions" because they print the spoken words of Christ in the Gospels in red; but scripturally speaking, the entire Bible is a "red letter" edition!

### **The Testimony of the Apostles to the Doctrine of Preservation: 1 Peter 1:23-25**

"Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."

1. This is a clear promise that Scripture will be preserved. The word of the Lord endureth forever.

2. The Bible is incorruptible because it is living, and it is living because of the Spirit of God who breathed it out. The Spirit of God did not breathe out the Scriptures and then abandon them. The Spirit that quickens the Scriptures preserves them. The same is true in creation. "Thou, even thou, art LORD alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee" (Neh. 9:6). The Spirit of God did not abandon the world when He completed the creation. He is not an absentee Creator. He jealously watches over the creation to preserve it and to accomplish the Divine purpose, *and even more does He watch over the Scriptures.*

3. It is crucial that the Scripture be pure because of its nature as the sole Revelation to man and as man's only way to Heaven. The Bible is the only Book in the world that contains the truth about God, life, and eternity. It is the only genuine Gospel of man's salvation. We must have a pure Bible! Those who are unconcerned about the thousands of serious differences between the Received Greek text and the Critical Greek text, between the Masoretic Hebrew and the Greek Septuagint, between the old Reformation translations and the modern ones, have a strange attitude toward God's Word.



4. Peter associates the inspiration and preservation of the Old Testament directly with that of the New (v. 25). As the New Covenant exceeds the Old in glory (2 Cor. 3:6-11), we can expect that the God who has promised to preserve the very jots and tittles of the Old will do no less with the New.

### **The Testimony of Revelation to the Doctrine of Preservation: Revelation 22:18-19**

“For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:

19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.”

1. Capping off our brief survey of Scripture on the doctrine of biblical preservation is the testimony of Revelation 22:18-19. In the last chapter of this book, God gives man a dire warning not to tamper with its contents. This applies directly to Revelation, of course, but since the Bible as a whole is given by inspiration, the warning must apply equally to the entire Book of which Revelation forms the last chapter.

2. Note that it is the WORDS that man is forbidden to tamper with, not merely the general message or teaching. “For I testify unto every man that heareth the WORDS of the prophecy of this book ... if any man shall take away from the WORDS of the book of this prophecy...” If God forbids man to tamper with any of the WORDS of the Bible, it is obvious that He intends to preserve those words so they will be available to man. Otherwise, the warning of Revelation 22:18-19 is meaningless.

3. This passage instructs us to be exceedingly fearful about handling the Scriptures. If one tampers with other books, there can be earthly consequences (such as copyright infringement), but if one tampers with the Bible the consequences are eternal. The Bible is a supernatural Book and it must be handled (examining manuscripts, translating, etc.) with fear and trembling. It appears to me that this is a missing element in the field of modern textual criticism.

4. God gave this warning because He knew that men would tamper with the Scripture. The promise of divine preservation is not the promise that no Old or New Testament manuscripts and translations will be corrupted. It is the promise, rather, that in the midst of the devil’s attack God will keep His Word pure and not allow it to be lost.

### **Summary of the Doctrine of Bible Preservation**

1. The doctrines of inspiration and preservation are intimately associated in the Scripture. The association is not merely logical; it is scriptural.

2. The divine preservation of Scripture is not merely implied or inferred in the Bible, it is explicitly promised. It is therefore a Bible doctrine, and it must and can be accepted by faith.
3. God promises to preserve the words and details of Scripture as well as its teaching.
4. As the New Covenant exceeds the Old in glory (2 Cor. 3:6-11) we can expect that the God who has promised to preserve the very jots and tittles of the Old will do no less with the New.
5. The Bible is preserved *in the midst of* the enemy's attacks and *in spite of* these attacks, not *from* the enemy's attacks. God has allowed corruptions to enter into the overall biblical record.

For a more extensive study of this important subject, see *Faith vs. the Modern Bible Versions*.

### **DOES PSALM 12:7 REFER TO THE PRESERVATION OF SCRIPTURE?**

Those who support the modern versions commonly deny that Psalm 12:7 has any association to Bible preservation, claiming that it describes the preservation of God's people but not of God's words. These argue that the pronoun "them" in verse 7 is masculine whereas "words" of verse 6 is feminine. Thus, they say, the gender discordance requires that we look for a masculine pronoun to fit "them." Their conclusion is that to find the antecedent of "them" in verse 7 we must leap over verse 6 to the "poor" in verse 5.

#### **ANSWER:**

For the following reasons we are convinced that this view is wrong and that Psalm 12:7 refers to the preservation of God's words *as well as to* the preservation of God's people:

1. The rule of proximity requires that the antecedent of "them" in v. 7 be the "words" of verse 6.
2. There is an accepted rule of gender discordance in the Psalms. "It is not uncommon, especially in the Psalter, for feminine plural noun synonyms for the 'words' of the Lord to be the antecedent for masculine plural pronouns/pronominal suffixes, which seem to 'masculinize' the verbal extension of the patriarchal God of the Old Testament" (Thomas Strouse, April 2001, Emmanuel Baptist Theological Seminary). Following are examples:

Psalm 119:111 -- the feminine "testimonies" is the antecedent for the masculine "they."  
 Psalm 119:129 -- the feminine "testimonies" is the antecedent for the masculine "them."  
 Psalm 119:152 -- the feminine "testimonies" is the antecedent for the masculine "them."  
 Psalm 119:167 -- the feminine "testimonies" is the antecedent for the masculine "them."

3. In the context of Psalm 12, the words of men are contrasted with the words of God. This favors the view that verse 7 describes God's words. "The context is favorable to the preservation interpretation. God's promise to save the poor and needy is given in verse 5; verses 6 and 7 are

injected to show that His promise of verse 5 will never be broken” (Bruce Lackey, personal letter to David Cloud, Feb. 29, 1984).

4. Some of the Reformers and well-known Bible commentators have interpreted Psalm 12:7 as the preservation of words. These include Martin Luther, Henry Ainsworth, John Wesley, Henry Martyn, and G. Campbell Morgan. Consider some examples:

Martin Luther said, “Thy truth thou wilt preserve, O Lord, from this vile generation...”

Henry Ainsworth, called “the prince of Puritan commentators,” wrote in 1626 that Psalm 12:7 refers to the preservation of God’s Word.

John Wesley said, “*Thou shalt keep them*--Thy words or promises...”

5. There is an ambiguity in the Hebrew text so that it is probable that Psalm 12:7 refers *both* to God’s words and to God’s people.

Myles Coverdale translated Psalm 12:7 to refer both to the words of God and to the people of God -- “Keep them therefore (O Lord) and preserve us from this generation for ever.”

John Rogers in the Matthew Bible followed Coverdale. In a marginal note he observed that two of the greatest Hebrew scholars differed on the interpretation of “them” in Ps. 12:7, one believing it refers to God’s words; the other believing that it refers to God’s people.

John Calvin, while himself holding the interpretation that Psalm 12:7 refers to the keeping of God’s people, admitted, “Some give this exposition of the passage, *Thou wilt keep them*, namely, thy words...” Thus, Calvin acknowledged that there was a division among Bible scholars in his day, some believing that Psalm 12:7 refers to words with others believing that it refers to people.

Matthew Poole, in his 1685 commentary on Psalms, had this note at Psalm 12:7, “Thou shalt keep them; either, 1. The poor and needy, ver. 5 ... Or, 2. Thy words or promises last mentioned, ver. 6...”

6. The King James Bible allows for both of these applications, whereas the modern versions have entirely shut out the doctrine of the preservation of God’s Word in this passage by giving an interpretation rather than a strict translation.

KJV -- “Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.”

RSV -- “Do thou, O LORD, protect us, guard us ever from this generation.”

NIV -- “O Lord, you will keep us safe and protect us from such people forever.”

NRSV -- “You O Lord, will protect us; you will guard us from this generation forever.”

“In spite of *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* reading ‘keep them’ and ‘preserve him,’ both the NRSV and NIV have elected not to translate the Hebrew and have, in its place, substituted a translation from the Greek and Latin rendering of these two pronouns. By so doing, the editors of these translations have endorsed one exegetical tradition, the Greek-Latin, to the exclusion of the other, the Hebraic, and by doing so have censured any further debate within the Hebrew exegetical tradition itself” (Peter Van Kleeck, *THE GENIUS OF AMBIGUITY--The Translational and Exegetical Rendering of Psalm 12:7 Primarily Considered in the Churchly Tradition of the 16th and 17th Centuries and Its Expression in the Reformation English Bibles*, March 1993).

### **DOES THE BIBLE TEACH *HOW* GOD WOULD PRESERVE THE SCRIPTURE?**

The modernists and Unitarians who were at the forefront of the development of modern textual criticism in the 18th and 19th centuries did not care anything about a doctrine of *preservation*. In fact, they did not even believe in supernatural *inspiration*. But evangelicals and fundamentalists who defend the modern versions and practice modern textual criticism must attempt to fit some type of doctrine of preservation into the process. The standard approach is to claim that the Bible does not teach us *HOW* God would preserve the Scripture. For example, writing in *The Bible Version Debate: The Perspective of Central Baptist Theological Seminary* (1997), W. Edward Glenny stated that “no verse in Scripture explain[s] how God will preserve His Word...” (p. 95). They take this position because they hold to modern textual criticism; and they understand that if modern textual criticism is true, the majority of extant Bible manuscripts from throughout the church age are corrupt. Therefore, they must devise a doctrine of preservation that allows for this strange situation. Dr. Stewart Custer of Bob Jones University says, “God has preserved His word in the sands of Egypt” (stated during a debate in Marquette Manor Baptist Church, Chicago, 1984). He is referring to the view held by modern textual critics that the pure New Testament text is “preserved” in a small number of manuscripts from Egypt that owe their preservation to the dry climate and to the fact that they were not used.

#### **ANSWER:**

The Bible does tell us *how* God would preserve the Scriptures. In a nutshell, He has preserved the Scriptures through their use by His people and certainly not through their disuse and neglect.

#### **1. God preserved the Old Testament through the Jews (Rom. 3:1-2).**

- a. It was to the Jews that God assigned the task of preserving the Hebrew Old Testament (Rom. 3:1-2). In Romans 3 Paul describes the Old Testament as the very “oracles of God,” and these oracles were committed to the Jews. Even though they did not always obey the Scriptures, they held them in reverence and believed that each jot and tittle was the inspired Word of God.

- b. In particular, it was the Jewish priests who were responsible to care for the Scriptures (Deut. 31:24-26; 17:18). Every seven years the priests were to gather the people together to teach them the Scriptures (Deut. 31:10-12).
- c. Though there were periods of spiritual backsliding in which the Word of God was almost unknown (2 Chron. 15:3), God preserved His Word in spite of man's failure. The Word of God was never permanently lost (2 Kings 22:8).
- d. After the Babylonian captivity there was a revival within the Jewish priesthood (Ezra 7:10) and the Old Testament Scriptures continued to be preserved. "By Ezra and his successors, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, all the Old Testament books were gathered together into one Old Testament canon, and their texts were purged of errors and preserved until the days of our Lord's earthly ministry. By that time the Old Testament text was so firmly established that even the Jews' rejection of Christ could not disturb it" (Edward Hills, *The King James Bible Defended*, 4th edition, p. 93).
- e. Following the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. and the further scattering of the Jews throughout the nations, it was the scribes called *Tannaim* (Teachers) who guarded the Old Testament Scriptures. These were followed by the *Amoraim* (Expositors). In addition to copying the Old Testament, they produced the Talmud, a commentary on the Jewish traditions. Though they did not believe and obey the Bible, they revered it and continue to preserve it from generation to generation.
- f. Beginning in the sixth century it was the Masoretes who jealously guarded the Hebrew text and passed it down from generation to generation from about 500 to 1000 A.D. The Masoretes were families of Hebrew scholars who had centers in Tiberius, Palestine, and Babylon. The traditional Hebrew Masoretic text gets its name from these scholars. The Masoretes exercised great care in transcribing the Old Testament. Following are some of their stringent rules:
- (1) Each column must have no less than 48 or more than 60 lines. The entire copy must be first lined.
  - (2) No word nor letter could be written from memory; the scribe must have an authentic copy before him, and he must read and pronounce aloud each word before writing it.
  - (3) Strict rules were given concerning forms of the letters, spaces between letters, words, and sections, the use of the pen, the color of the parchment, etc.
  - (4) The revision of a roll must be made within 30 days after the work was finished; otherwise it was worthless. If three mistakes were found on any page, the entire manuscript was condemned.

- (5) Every word and every letter was counted, and if a letter was omitted, an extra letter inserted, or if one letter touched another, the manuscript was condemned and destroyed. (From Herbert Miller, *General Biblical Introduction*, 1937.)

**2. God has preserved the New Testament through the churches by the process of the Great Commission (Mat. 28:19-20; 1 Tim. 3:15; 6:14; 2 Tim. 2:2; 1 Pet. 2:9).**

- a. These passages describe *the process of preservation in the church age*. God preserves His Word among the churches as it is being obeyed and as the Great Commission is being conducted (Mat. 28:19-20). In the Old Testament it was the Jewish priests who preserved God's Word (Deut. 17:18). In the New Testament the priesthood is composed of all believers (1 Pet. 2:9).

- (1) Thus the Scriptures have been preserved in the church age not by "scholars" but by humble believers.
- (2) Christ does not foresee that His Words will need to be recovered; rather, He describes a process of continual preservation that will endure until the end of the age (Mat. 28:19-20). The Lord Jesus, who knows the beginning from the end, assumes here that the Word of God will be available through the church age. Otherwise, it would not be possible for succeeding generations to teach the "all things" of the New Testament faith.
- (3) We see that the Scriptures are not preserved by being hidden away (such as in a remote monastery in the Sinai desert or the Vatican Library or in a cave by the Dead Sea) but by being used. "God did not preserve His Word in the 'disusing' but in the 'using.' He did not preserve the Word by it being stored away or buried, but rather through its use and transmission in the hands of humble believers" (Jack Moorman, *Forever Settled*, 1985, p. 90).
- (4) The witness of the Latin manuscripts and other versions have significance in determining the text of Scripture, because these were even more commonly used by the churches through the Dark Ages than the Greek. Likewise, in this light the lectionaries that were read in the churches and the quotations from church leaders are important witnesses. This is why the Reformation editors looked to the Latin as an important secondary witness after the Greek. Thus in a few places there is more testimony to the preserved text in the Latin than the Greek (i.e., Acts 8:37; 1 John 5:7). Edward F. Hills observed, "... it was not trickery that was responsible for the inclusion of the *Johannine Comma* in the Textus Receptus [referring to the claim that a Greek manuscript was fabricated by Erasmus' contemporaries to support this verse], but the usage of the Latin speaking Church." This is the chief reason that we

reject the Majority Text or Byzantine Text position promoted today by Zane Hodges, Wilbur Pickering, and Maurice Robinson. We cannot ignore the Latin and other versions and concern ourselves strictly with finding a majority of the Greek.

- (5) The purest Bible manuscripts and translations were literally used up in the process of time so that they were replaced with new copies. This is why ancient manuscripts that are in mint condition, such as the Sinaiticus and the Vaticanus, are deeply suspect. They weren't used! The majority of the most ancient manuscripts extant are mere fragments because they were worn out and come down to us only in pieces. The fact that manuscripts such as the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus come down to us relatively intact from ancient times is due to their corruption and disuse. This process continues today. Though I have only been saved 32 years, I have worn out Bibles and replaced them with new ones in this brief period of a mere three decades. Ancient manuscripts would ordinarily have worn out even more quickly than modern Bibles, because they were used not only for reading and study but also for copying.
- c. The churches are to hold to apostolic teaching (and Scripture) in every detail and they also are to pass "the same" along from generation to generation (2 Tim. 2:2). The words "the same" describe the process of the preservation of inscripturated apostolic teaching. Thus we see the role of individual churches in the task of Bible preservation.
  - d. God's people are to be zealous for the details of the Scripture, for the "spots" (1 Tim. 6:14). The lax attitude that characterizes the modern textual criticism position, that the omission of thousands of words is of little significance, is not Scriptural.
  - e. "Faithful men" play an important role in Bible preservation, because it is only such men who will care enough to guard the Word and who will have the spiritual discernment necessary for the task.
  - f. God preserves His Word by His own power (Mat. 19:20). Christ explains how the preservation of Scripture can be possible in light of human frailty and the vicious and unceasing assault of the devil. It is possible because of God's active role in preserving it. We see this in Christ's promise, "lo, I am with you always..." Though men have an important part to play in the process of preservation, it is God Himself who has preserved the Scripture. Modern textual critics focus almost exclusively upon *man's* role in the transmission of the text, but the Bible believer traces the hand of *God*.
  - g. This process has continued down to the end of the church age (Mat. 28:20).
    - (1) It was in operation through the Dark Ages of Rome's rule. This is why we know that the preserved Word of God is found in the majority of Greek and Latin manuscripts and translations thereof that were in common use among the churches during those centuries.

- (2) This process was in operation during the Protestant era when the Reformation editors and translators put the Scriptures into print. They understood that the preserved New Testament was found largely in the Greek Byzantine text that had come down from Antioch in the early centuries of the church age and secondarily in the Latin that was even more widely used than Greek during the Dark Ages (and not so much by Rome as by “dissident” or separatist Bible believers such as the Waldenses, the pre-Reformation Anabaptists, and the Lollards who used Latin or Latin-based versions). In a few instances, such as the Trinitarian statement of 1 John 5:7, the Scripture was preserved more in Latin and in other versions. But always it was preserved in the common usage among the churches.
- (3) This process was in operation in the 19th century, when the Scripture continued to be preserved in the Bible-believing churches that resisted the tide of skepticism coming from Germany. Modern textual criticism was never popular in believing churches in that century. In fact, it was strongly resisted.
- (4) This process is still in operation today. By the late 20th century, the tide of end time apostasy was so powerful that the corrupt critical Greek text and the translations thereof had become a majority, but Bible believing churches continue, in the midst of this apostasy, to love, preach, and defend the preserved Scripture. Most of the staunchly fundamentalist churches today that are boldly resisting the ecumenical tide continue to love the King James Bible and other Received Text versions.

**3. God has preserved the Scriptures through the apostasy (2 Tim. 3:13; Lk. 18:8; Mat. 7:14; Lk. 12:32).**

a. These verses have a direct bearing on the doctrine of Bible preservation, because they teach important truths about the course of the church age.

- (1) Truth is not in the majority in this age. Jesus said “few” find the truth (Mat. 7:14) and He called His flock “little” (Lk. 12:32). Though God preserves His Word, and as we see in Matthew 28:20 and 2 Timothy 2:2, He preserves it among the churches, this does not mean that it will be found in the world at large or even among churches in general.
- (2) The church age overall is characterized by increasing apostasy (2 Tim. 3:13).
- (3) The very end of the age is characterized by a great scarcity of faith and truth (Lk. 18:8).

b. These truths relate to the issue of Bible preservation in several ways.



- (1) This teaches us that preserved Scripture is often found in small pockets. This is what we see in the Dark Ages. The purest Scripture was not preserved in the Greek Byzantine text that was kept within the ever-narrowing borders of the Byzantine Empire and in translations used by smaller groups of believing churches. In our day, at the beginning of the 21st century, we see this truth in play as the corrupt critical Greek text and its translations have become the majority. This should not confuse a Bible believer, because Jesus taught us that we should expect the truth to be in the minority.
- (2) This teaches us to expect that the record of the Bible throughout the church age will be a mixture of truth and error. The Bible is preserved *in the midst of* the enemy's attacks and *in spite of* these attacks, not *from* the enemy's attacks.
  - (a) This is exactly what we see. The true apostolic churches multiplied greatly in the early centuries, but heretical and spiritually compromised churches increased even more quickly, and by the middle of the first millennium, the heretical churches outnumbered sound churches and eventually persecuted and dominated them. For hundreds of years sound New Testament churches were bitterly persecuted and were forced to hide and to conduct their work in great fear and uncertainty. The dominant "church" of the Dark Ages, headquartered in Rome, was filled with gross heresies. Thus we can expect to find a lot of confusion in the record of the Bible as it passes from century to century down through the church age, and this is exactly what we see. Many manuscripts are grossly corrupt, the product of bold heretical attacks, with gross omissions such as the ending of Mark's Gospel. Others are largely pure but contain a few corruptions that slipped in because of the difficult nature of the times and the fact that the believers did not have the luxury of being free enough from persecution to gather the necessary materials and to purify their Scriptures.
  - (b) A purification process occurred in the 16th century as the Scriptures came out of the Dark Ages into the era of printing. The Protestant Reformation represented a changing of the times and seasons (Dan. 2:21) and resulted in great loss of power for the Catholic Church. Believers and their resources multiplied and they had a better opportunity to "dust off" the New Testament Scriptures, correcting the few impurities that had crept in on the Greek and Latin sides. This began an era that lasted for 400 years, and it was a divine and merciful interlude to the age-long growth of apostasy. (We are not saying that apostasy did not increase during the 16th to the 19th centuries, but we are saying that it was not allowed to dominate the churches as it had during the previous era.) During this era, the pure Scriptures again went to the ends of the earth, as it did during the first centuries. The Masoretic Hebrew Old Testament and the Greek Received New Testament and the translations thereof had no serious competition in these centuries.

- (c) In light of Bible prophecy, we could not expect for this interlude to last indefinitely (Lk. 18:8), and it did not. In the 19th century apostasy began to blossom within Protestantism in even more damnable forms than it had assumed in the Dark Ages, by way of theological Modernism and Unitarianism. In the midst of the growth of this end-times apostasy the principles of modern textual criticism were devised from naturalistic disciplines; the much-blessed Greek Received Text was despised and replaced with the Alexandrian text that had been discarded 1,500 years earlier. On the side of the English language, the King James Bible became the target of destruction and beginning with the English Revision of 1881, version after version was put forth in an attempt to dethrone it. By the end of the 20th century, the Alexandrian Greek text and the modern English versions had become dominant.
- (d) Since the end of the church age will be characterized by a great scarcity of faith and truth, we can expect to find sound Bibles and sound churches in the extreme minority as the time of Christ's return draws nearer, and this is exactly what we find today. Europe, for example, is a bastion of apostasy, and it is no surprise that the Bible light has almost gone out in that part of the world and the only Bibles generally available are weak dynamic equivalencies based on a corrupt Greek text.
- (e) This explains why perhaps only one man trained in textual criticism at the doctorate level in the last 75 years approached the Bible text subject by faith, and that was Edward F. Hills. I am not puzzled at this fact; it is actually a fulfillment of the Word of God.

**4. The most important “element” in the preservation of Scripture is the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 2:12-16; 1 Jn. 2:27).**

- a. These verses teach us that the Scriptures have been preserved among believers that have the Spirit.
  - (1) This is how the New Testament Scriptures were recognized as canonical (1 Thess. 2:13). Though we do not have a record of exactly how Israel gathered the canon of the Old Testament or how the early churches gathered the canon of the New Testament, we know that they did this by the Spirit of God and not by natural process.
  - (2) This is why the issue of spiritual regeneracy cannot be overlooked in the issue of Bible texts and versions. There have been exceptions to this rule, such as Balaam (Num. 23:5), but it is an extreme exception to find a Balaam preaching the pure Word of God or being instrumental in its transmission.
- b. These verses also teach that it is the Spirit of God Himself who preserves the Scriptures.

- (1) 1 John 2:27 is in the context of the apostle's warning about heretics and antichrists

that had already infiltrated the churches in John's day. How could the truth be preserved in the midst of such fierce assaults? The answer is not found in the arm of flesh but in the eternal, omniscient, omnipotent Spirit of God. Thus it is by the Spirit that the pure Scripture has been preserved through the dark hours of this age. Man could not keep the Scriptures. The most scripturally sound and zealous church is but weak and undependable flesh apart from the Spirit of God. For long periods in church history, believers have been extremely few and weak, scattered, discouraged, grasping desperately to a few scrapes of Scripture in the face of the seemingly unstoppable onslaught of apostasy and brutal inquisition. During such times, evangelism and Bible translation was accomplished under conditions of extreme difficulty. Entire groups of believing Christians were wiped off of the face of the earth, and their Scriptures and writings were destroyed as well. In many cases the only record that has survived is the scorn that was heaped upon them by their persecuting enemies. This is dramatically true for the first 1,400 years of church history, but it is also true even for Bible believing groups of more recent times up to and during the early days of the Reformation. We know very little about groups such as the Waldenses, the Lollards, and the pre-Reformation Anabaptists, compared to what there is to know.

- (2) The weakness of man has not prevented the Scriptures from being preserved, for though man has a part in its preservation, the job ultimately does not lie on man's shoulders. For "when the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him" (Isaiah 59:17).
- (3) Therefore, when considering the Bible text issue we must not focus on man but on God.

For a more extensive study of the important subject of Bible Preservation, see *Faith vs. the Modern Bible Versions*.

### **WHERE WAS THE PRESERVED SCRIPTURE BEFORE 1611?**

#### **ANSWER:**

This is actually a question geared to "trip up" Ruckmanites who claim that the King James Bible is advanced revelation and that it was *given by* inspiration. If that is true, the purest Scripture didn't exist prior to 1611 when it was allegedly given in its most advanced form.

We don't believe the Bible teaches this. We believe the Scriptures were given by inspiration one time (Ps. 12:6; 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21) and have since been kept by the process of providential preservation (Ps. 12:7).

In this light, when asked where was the preserved Scripture prior to 1611, my answer is as follows:

**1. In English, the Word of God was preserved prior to 1611 with some impurities in the Wycliffe version based on Latin from 1384 and in a more pure form in the Tyndale from 1526 and in the other major English versions that predated the KJV (i.e., the Geneva Bible).** These differed only slightly from the King James Bible. All of these English Bibles from 1526 until 1611 were based on the Greek Received Text over against the Alexandrian text.

**2. The Scripture was preserved in the Traditional Greek New Testament and the translations based on it.** This Greek New Testament was kept in the churches in the Greek Byzantine Empire that lasted from the 5th to the 15th centuries, to the time of the invention of printing; and it is this Greek New Testament that was handed over to the Protestant Reformation in the early 16th century. It contained only a small number of mistakes, such as the omission in most manuscripts of Acts 8:37 and the Trinitarian “comma” in 1 John 5:7 and “tree of life” instead of “book of life” in Rev. 22:19. These few mistakes that had crept in during the Dark Ages were corrected largely from the Latin tradition when the Greek Received Text was published in the 16th century.

**3. The Scripture was also preserved in Latin and in the translations from Latin such as the Waldensian Romaunt, the old German Tepl, and the Wycliffe English Bible.** While there were some textual errors in the Latin, the Latin text preserved a few readings that are not preserved in most of the extant Greek manuscripts. The major examples of these are “their purification” in Lk. 2:22; the omission of Matt. 27:35, Acts 8:37; 9:5-6; 1 Jn. 5:7; “the beginning and the ending” in Rev. 1:8; “I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last” in Rev. 1:11; and “book of life” changed to “tree of life” in Rev. 22:19. Edward F. Hills observes: “The special providence of God is particularly evident in the fact that the text of the Greek New Testament was first printed and published not in the East but in Western Europe where the influence of the Latin usage and the Latin Vulgate was very strong. Through the influence of the Latin-speaking Church Erasmus and his successors were providentially guided to follow the Latin Vulgate here and there in those few places in which the Latin Church usage rather than the Greek Church usage had preserved the genuine reading. Hence the Textus Receptus was a further step in the providential preservation of the New Testament. In it [the Byzantine Greek text] the few errors of any consequence occurring in the Traditional Greek Text were corrected by the providence of God operating through the usage of the Latin-speaking Church of Western Europe” (Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, 4th edition, p. 107).

Please understand that when we talk about the Latin preserving the Word of God we are not talking about the Roman Catholic Church preserving God’s Word (in this we would disagree with Hills); we are talking about the Latin and the Latin-based versions used by Bible believing Christians who were persecuted by Rome, by the Waldenses, the Albigenses, the Hussites, the Lollards, the pre-Reformation Anabaptists, etc.

**4. We must understand, too, that there are many problems with the manuscript record.**

**a. The manuscript record is scant for the early centuries, both for the Greek, the versions, and the quotations from “church fathers.”** The manuscript record has been devastated by time, by pagan persecution, by the Roman Catholic inquisition and crusades against “dissident” Christians, and by the Roman Catholic Church’s habit of re-writing history. Of the ancient Persian translation, which probably dates to the 3rd century, there are no known manuscripts. Of the Nubian translations that probably date to the 6th century, there are only fragments in existence, so that we know almost nothing about the textual basis. Of the Soghdian translation of Central Asia, only fragments exist and “they are too brief” for definite conclusions (Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 214). The extant manuscripts for Old Latin, Ethiopian, Gothic, Coptic and many other ancient versions are slight and fragmentary, allowing only a very imperfect understanding of the textual basis. For example, though the Gothic version “must have been the vernacular Bible of a large portion of Europe” in the 4th to the 5th centuries (Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 377), only a few fragments remain and even those fragments are largely palimpsests, meaning the original Gothic was scraped off and overwritten with something else. These are only a few examples of what we find when we attempt to examine the most ancient versional record. Even when we come to much more modern times, the record is still fragmentary. For example, though there is even a hint of a whole Bible in Anglo-Norman French in England before 1360, “the manuscript vanished long ago” (Daniell, *The Bible in English*, p. 56).

As far as the quotations from early church “fathers,” they too are very limited. “The whole amount of the quotations in the previous writers (from 100-323 A.D.) can hardly be more than would form a single complete copy of the New Testament, and this too very unequally distributed. Some parts may occur two or three times, and many others not at all. Those in the Latin Fathers are much less” (Thomas Birks, *Essay on the Right Estimation of Manuscript Evidence in the Text of the New Testament*, 1878, p. 14; Birks was Knightbridge Professor at Cambridge).

- b. Further, the extant manuscripts many ancient languages commonly date to a later period when the text had possibly been modified from its original form.** Rome’s hand must always be considered when dealing with the manuscript evidence, because she so dominated the Dark Ages. For example, there is strong evidence that the Armenian version was revised in the 13th century by the Latin Vulgate after the Armenian churches submitted to Rome (Scrivener and Miller, *Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament*, vol. 1, p. 408, cited by Moorman, *A Closer Look*, p. 47). “The further one goes in these matters, the more the hidden hand of Rome is seen in the editions. Ten thousand Vulgate manuscripts scattered throughout Europe and the Mediterranean regions have done their leavening work!” (Jack Moorman, *A Closer Look*, p. 49).
- c. Even in much more recent times, thousands of copies of various Scriptures and writings have disappeared from the face of the earth.** Of the Romaunt New Testament,

which was used and distributed widely by the Waldenses in the 12th to 14th centuries, only seven copies have survived. The first printing of the Tyndale New Testament in 1526 is another example. Of the 3,000 or more copies that were printed, only two have survived. This being from recent times, comparatively, we can see the difficulty in studying much more ancient versions.

**d. In light of this, we can learn many things from the manuscript record and it is sufficient to demonstrate the priority of the Traditional Text, but it cannot be used as the ultimate foundation for faith.** The only true and solid foundation is God Himself and His promises.

**e. Why didn't God allow more of the record to be preserved?** I believe it is because we are required to walk by faith not by sight. God gives enough information in the record so that we can know that His Word was preserved and that it was brought out of the Dark Ages intact, ready to be broadcast to the ends of the earth from the 16th to the 19th centuries; but He also leaves enough out so that the unbeliever can stumble. A believer looking at the record is encouraged and sees the hand of God but is also left to stand on faith, whereas the unbeliever looking at the record sees only confusion and contradiction and stumbles at the Stumblingstone, which is Christ and faith in Him.

**5. Why, some may ask, if the Received Text is indeed the original apostolic text, did God not preserve this text precisely in either the Byzantine Greek or the Latin, the two major texts used and translated in the Dark Ages?** Why did the original text have to be purified slightly in the 16th century as it came out of the Dark Ages? This is something I am looking forward to asking the Lord when we get to Heaven, but there are good hints of an answer in Scripture and I will offer the following reply.

**a. FIRST, WE KNOW THAT IT IS GOD'S WILL TO CONFOUND THOSE WHO REFUSE TO BELIEVE HIS WORD, THAT IF AN INDIVIDUAL IS SO FOOLISH AS TO HARDEN HIS HEART TO THE TRUTH, GOD WILL "GIVE HIM THE ROPE TO HANG HIMSELF."** This is why Jesus spoke in parables. Contrary to popular thinking, Christ did not use parables to simplify the truth but to hide the truth from willfully unbelieving minds. In Matthew 13:10, the disciples asked Jesus why He spoke in parables, and He replied, "Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand" (Mat. 13:13; see the entire context in verses 11-17). That most of the Jews did not understand the teaching of Christ was not because they COULD NOT but because they WOULD NOT. Compare Acts 28:25-27. Jesus Christ is both a sanctuary (for those who believe) and a stone of stumbling (for those who will not believe). See 1 Peter 2:6-8; 2 Cor. 2:16. To those who receive the light He gives more light, but to those who harden their hearts against the light He gives darkness and confusion. By allowing for some small uncertainty to appear in the history of the transmission of the Bible (and it is very small indeed and was only temporary), there is

room for an unbeliever to scoff at the divine inspiration and preservation of Scripture or to go off in a fruitless attempt to “recover” the lost text through principles of modern textual criticism. But the believer’s faith ultimately is not in “the record of history”; his faith is in God and in God’s promises. The believer does not stumble in unbelief when faced with human weakness; he is strong in faith giving glory to God, believing that God will perform that which He has promised regardless of how things look to his human eyes (Rom. 4:19-21). The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls illustrates this. One of the key discoveries in the very first cave was a copy of the book of Isaiah dating possibly to about 150 B.C. Prior to that, the earliest copy of Isaiah dated to about 950 A.D. Thus the copy found at the Dead Sea was a millennium older, representing one thousand years of copying. Yet the two manuscripts were basically word for word the same. That is a divine miracle! Thus, for those with eyes of faith, the Dead Sea Scrolls confirmed the Word of God. At the same time, other manuscript fragments found in the caves near the Dead Sea represented some variation from the standard Hebrew Masoretic Text underlying the Reformation Bibles. Also discovered were Gnostic books and material that had been added to the canon of Scripture by heretics. This material has given unbelievers plenty to stumble over. It has given textual critics a reason to “correct” the Masoretic text, and it has given more radical scholars reason to call for a change in the canon of the New Testament.

- b. SECOND, WHILE GOD HAS PROMISED TO PRESERVE HIS WORD AND HAS PRESERVED IT, HE HAS NOT PROMISED THAT MEN IN ANY GIVEN TIME OR PLACE WILL HAVE THE SCRIPTURE OR IF THEY HAVE IT THAT THEY WILL HAVE THE PUREST FORM OF SCRIPTURE.** There are transitional periods in the history of preservation. Men must respond to the light they have before they are given more light. God has ordained that men must seek after Him (Acts 17:26-27; Heb. 11:6). He hides things and requires that men search for them (Prov. 25:2; Jer. 29:13).

We see this in the case of Cornelius. He was a centurion stationed in Israel and in such capacity he had converted to the Jewish religion; he was living up to the light that he had (Acts 10:1-2). God sent an angel to him and instructed him to send for Peter so that Peter would preach the Gospel to him and to his family (Acts 10:3-48). As Cornelius responded to the light that he had, God gave him more.

On the other hand, the Spirit and truth of God can be quenched (Gen. 6:3; Acts 13:46; 1 Thess. 5:19). When people do not respond to the light that they have (the light of creation and conscience and Scripture, Ps. 19:1-4; Rom. 1:20; 2:14-15; 3:1-2), God sends them darkness and delusion. See 1 Sam. 3:1; 28:6; Ps. 74:9; 81:11-12; Prov. 1:23-33; 14:6; Isa. 29:10; 66:4; Ezek. 7:26; Mic. 3:6; 2 Cor. 4:4; 2 Thess. 2:10-12.

God warns that if people reject His Word they will be judged with a famine of His Word (Amos 8:11-12). This is exactly what we see in many parts of the world today, and the cause is found in the past. Europe, for example, is a spiritual wasteland today;

in city after city, town after town, village after village there is no Bible preaching church, no Gospel, no sound Scriptures. This is because when Europe had great light it rejected that light and has descended into spiritual darkness. A similar condition exists in England. Apostasy is the willful rejection of the truth, and spiritual desolation and confusion always follows apostasy.

Consider the example of the English Bible. The first one was translated from Latin by John Wycliffe in the late 14th century. It was a good Bible with plain, powerful language (some of which has passed into the King James Bible, such as “who is this King of glory,” “straight is the gate and narrow the way,” “born again,” “whited sepulchres,” and “what fellowship hath light with darkness”), but it contained imperfections that were brought in from the Latin text. Examples are the omission of “for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever” in Mat. 6:13; “to repentance” in Mat. 9:13 and Mk. 2:17; “spoken by Daniel the prophet” in Mk. 13:14; “Joseph” changed to “father” in Lk. 2:33 and 43; “get thee behind me Satan” omitted in Lk. 4:8; “the Christ” in Jn. 4:42; “according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ” in Acts 2:20; “Christ” in Acts 16:31; “of Christ” in Rom. 1:16; “for us” in 1 Cor. 5:7; “fasting” in 1 Cor. 7:5; “the Lord” in 1 Cor. 15:47; “in Christ” in Gal. 3:17; “by Jesus Christ” in Eph. 3:9; “through his blood” in Col. 1:14; and “God” in 1 Timothy 3:16.

But at that time in England’s history, the Wycliffe was actually a better Bible than the nation deserved. The people were bowed down under the yoke of Roman Catholicism, and few were willing to seek after the truth, most not being willing to risk the wrath of the ecclesiastical authorities, fearing man more than God. The revival produced by the distribution (in hand-written copies) of the Wycliffe Bible, even though it was among an extreme minority of the population, worked to lift up the spiritual condition of the nation and paved the way for the Reformation of the 16th and 17th centuries. As that revival spread and an increasing number of people repented of their idolatry, God, in His mercy, enabled the English people to perfect their Bible. The Tyndale New Testament of 1526 was based on the Greek Received Text and was textually pure. The Tyndale went through some revisions such as the Geneva and in the 17th century was revised even further by the roughly 50 members of the King James translation committee. Thus the English people received the pure Scriptures through a process that lasted more than two centuries. As Eadie observes: “Yet the translation of the Latin Scriptures had been a first step to something higher, an intermediate gift to the nation. The effect had been like the first touch of the Blessed Hand upon its vision—‘it saw men as trees walking;’ and when at length the second touch passed over it, it looked up, and then it ‘saw every man clearly’” (John Eadie, *The English Bible*, 1876, I, p. 101).

When we apply this truth to the first 1,500 years of the church age, it helps us understand the record we find of the transmission of the Scriptures. Men all across Palestine, Asia Minor, Greece, and Europe had the bright light of the apostolic faith in



the first, second, and third centuries, but largely that light was rejected by men in general and even in the churches where faith in Christ was professed the pure faith was corrupted in the majority of cases and the churches loved heresy and apostasy more than the truth (2 Tim. 4:3-4). The result was the formation of a multitude of heretical groups and eventually the evolution of the Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox Churches through the intermingling of paganism and Judaism with Christianity. God did not make churches apostatize; men chose that way. Yes, a small minority remained committed to the faith once delivered to the saints throughout the Dark Ages, but the vast majority was willing to follow the apostasy and even when they did not agree with Roman Catholicism in the secret of the hearts, they were willing to trade temporal peace for a lie. The result was the corruption of the Scriptures as well as the corruption of the Christian faith. Those who had the purest Scriptures during those ages were the small, despised groups who remained committed to the truth at the cost of property, liberty, and life, groups such as the Waldenses in northern Italy and France, the Lollards in England, and the pre-Reformation Anabaptists of Western Europe. During those ages the light was dim.

When men in larger numbers finally rose up against Rome and showed a commitment to the truth at least as pure as Protestantism, God lifted the famine of His Word and gave that generation plentiful light in the Hebrew Masoretic Old Testament and the Greek Received New Testament and the translations thereof that were multiplied in the 16th, 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries. The spiritual light that burned during those centuries, generally speaking, was the brightest that had burned since the days of the apostles and the Word of God was again broadcast literally to the ends of the earth.

The 19th century was a major turning point in this picture, when large numbers of Protestant and Baptist churches adopted Unitarianism and Socinianism (the revival of the ancient heresy of Arianism) and theological Modernism. Here is how George Perkins Marsh described England in 1860: “The acuteness of German criticisms, the speculations of German philosophy, have given rise to a great multitude and diversity of opinions, not on questions of verbal interpretation merely, but of doctrines also, which are but just now beginning to be openly and freely discussed in this country and in England, and the minds of men are now perhaps more unsettled on these topics than they have been at any time before for three centuries. ... the future is more uncertain than the past ... the irreverent and wanton thoughtlessness of an hour may destroy that which only the slow and painful labor of years or of centuries can rebuild” (emphasis added) (Marsh, *Lectures on the English Language*, 1860, p. 630).

We believe that it was at that point that God began again to send a famine of His Word. If professing Christians wanted to trade the preserved Scriptures, purified through the furnace of persecution, for a mess of pottage in the form of a modern textual criticism, that treats the Bible like an ordinary book, and the revival of the Gnostic-influenced

Alexandrian Greek New Testament, He would let them have their way. I believe this event has set the stage for the final explosion of apostasy at the end of the church age that will culminate in Revelation 17. I believe this is what we see before our eyes; consider the more than 300 Protestant denominations associated with the World Council of Churches, with its view that Christ is not the only way to God; and entire denominations composed of practicing homosexuals; and the ecumenical back-to-Rome movement; consider the Christianizing of pagan things such as rock & roll and tattoos and the almost wholesale acceptance of these things within “evangelicalism.” End time apostasy stands before us and one of the glues of this apostasy is the commitment to modern textual criticism and the view that every person is free to pick or create his own Bible from the mass of conflicting texts and versions.

Thus, while God has promised to preserve His Word and *has* preserved it, He has not promised that men in any given time or place will have the Scripture or if they have it that they will have the purest form of Scripture. God is not obligated to give the same light to all people in all places nor is He obligated to give His Word in the purest form at all times.

**c. IT IS THE TASK OF EACH GENERATION OF CHRISTIANS TO KEEP AND PUBLISH THE PRESERVED WORD OF GOD FOR THAT PARTICULAR GENERATION** (Matt. 28:18-20; 2 Tim. 2:2; Jude 3). It is not the task of 21st century Bible believers to identify and keep the preserved Word of God for previous centuries. Our task is to keep and publish the preserved Word of God in the 21st century. Therefore, the question, “Where was the preserved Word of God before 1611” is not a question I am required to answer dogmatically. By faith in God’s promises, I know that He has preserved His Word and I know where it is today, and that is enough.

**d. FAITH DOES NOT HAVE TO ANSWER EVERY QUESTION THE SKEPTIC CAN THROW AT IT. FAITH IS NOT BASED ON THE RECORD OF HISTORY BUT DIRECTLY UPON THE TESTIMONY OF GOD IN THE SCRIPTURE.** We believe the Trinity, though we are at a loss to explain the details of it, and those who do not believe it mock us because we cannot answer all of their questions. We believe the infallible verbal inspiration of the Bible because it is what the Bible itself claims and it is what the Lord Jesus Christ and the Apostles believed and taught; yet there are many questions about biblical inerrancy that we cannot answer. We believe in the canonization of the Bible, though we know very little about how it was accomplished. We have the complete Bible, and that is enough for the man who has faith in God and who believes the Bible is a supernatural book. Yet, those who refuse to accept the Bible as the Word of God mock us because we cannot answer all their questions. Similarly, we believe that the Bible has been divinely preserved because God has said so, though we are at a loss to explain all of the difficulties with this position. Those who reject the doctrine of divine preservation (or claim it is something only “implied” in Scripture and not an actual doctrine) mock us

because we cannot answer all their questions. Let them mock. We have God's promise on these things. We have an infallible Bible we can hold in our hands. They have one in theory only in the nonexistent original autographs. In my estimation, there are far more problems with that position than with mine. Dear friends, believe God and do not allow any man to shake your confidence in His preserved Word. I conclude this section with the words of the late Bruce Lackey, a Bible-believing scholar who studied the Greek New Testament every day but who never taught his students to question the King James Bible: "FAITH WHICH IS BASED ON A CLEAR PROMISE OF GOD IS STRONGER THAN OBJECTIONS WHICH ARE RAISED BY OUR LACK OF INFORMATION. Since God has promised to preserve His Word for all generations, and since the Hebrew and Greek which is represented by the King James Version is the Bible that has been received from ancient tradition, and since God has so singularly used the truth preached from this Bible, I must follow it and reject others where they differ."

**6. This question ("Where was the preserved Scripture before 1611?") is more of a smokescreen than anything.** The more important question is this: If the Alexandrian text is the apostolic text, why was it discarded wholesale by the churches for most of the church age? The text type represented by the modern versions was basically unused in Bible-believing churches prior to the late 1800s, and even then it was not widely used. The English Revised Version of 1885, the American Standard Version of 1901, and the Revised Standard Version of 1952 were never popular in Bible believing churches. It was not until the publication of New International Version in the 1970s that the Alexandrian type text began to be popular to any extent in "evangelical" English-speaking churches. Since textual critics have never demonstrated that the Alexandrian text represented by the Vaticanus was widely popular even in the first four centuries, it is evident that this is a text that took 1900 years to "catch on"! Why is that?

### **ARE THE MODERN VERSIONS OF THE DEVIL?**

#### **ANSWER:**

1. I believe the devil is behind the modern versions in the following ways:

- a. He is the author of the textual corruptions that go back to the first centuries after Christ (removal of the last 12 verses of Mark, etc.) and that are reflected in the Alexandrian text.
- b. He is the guiding spirit behind modern textual criticism with its bold rejection of divine preservation.
- c. He is the author of the wretched method of translation called dynamic equivalency. The dynamic equivalency versions they take liberties with the word of God that renders them unusable. This includes the Living Bible, Today's English Version, The Message, and to a lesser extent, the New International Version.

d. He is the instigator of and benefactor from the confusion wrought by dividing the Bible standard into many competing editions.

2. At the same time, the formal equivalency modern versions contain the Word of God and the Gospel, and I believe God has used them to the extent that they are accurate.

### **AREN'T THE MODERN VERSIONS ACCOMPLISHING GOD'S WORK AROUND THE WORLD?**

#### **ANSWER:**

1. God is using the modern versions to bring people to Christ. A modern version, especially a literal one, contains the gospel even with its textual corruptions; and it is the gospel that is the power of God unto salvation (Rom. 1:16).

2. At the same time, the modern versions are weakening the work of God. The modern versions (the formal equivalence ones) are spiritual swords, but they are weak swords as opposed to sharp swords.

### **ARE THE MODERN VERSIONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE APOSTASY OF THESE DAYS?**

#### **ANSWER:**

Yes, I believe there is a direct connection. The critical Greek text is a product of the rationalistic atmosphere of the 19th and 20th centuries, and the modern versions are further assisting the spread of apostasy because they have weakened the authority of the Bible. Most of the fathers of modern textual criticism were theological heretics, as are its chief proponents today (e.g., the editors of the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament, Bruce Metzger, Kurt Aland, Matthew Black, and Carlo Martini). We have documented this in *The Modern Bible Version Hall of Shame*, available from Way of Life Literature.

### **DON'T ALL OF THE SCHOLARS SUPPORT THE MODERN VERSIONS?**

#### **ANSWER:**

1. While it is true that the bulk of modern biblical scholars in the last century have supported modern textual criticism, it must be understood that since the 19th century, Christian scholarship has been permeated with liberalism and unbelief. Since the 1950s, even evangelical scholarship has been increasingly permeated with skepticism.

a. Consider the following warnings from the pens of evangelicals themselves, proving that evangelical scholarship cannot be trusted today.

- (1) “A GROWING VANGUARD OF YOUNG GRADUATES OF EVANGELICAL COLLEGES WHO HOLD DOCTORATES FROM NON-EVANGELICAL DIVINITY CENTERS NOW QUESTION OR DISOWN INERRANCY and the doctrine is held less consistently by evangelical faculties. ... Some retain the term and reassure supportive constituencies but nonetheless stretch the term's meaning” (Carl F.H. Henry, past senior editor of *Christianity Today*, “Conflict over Biblical Inerrancy,” *Christianity Today*, May 7, 1976).
- (2) “Most people outside the evangelical community itself are totally unaware of the profound changes that have occurred within evangelicalism during the last several years - in the movement's understanding of the inspiration and authority of Scripture ... evangelical theologians have begun looking at the Bible with a scrutiny reflecting THEIR WIDESPREAD ACCEPTANCE OF THE PRINCIPLES OF HISTORICAL AND LITERARY CRITICISM ... The position-affirming that Scripture is inerrant or infallible in its teaching on matters of faith and conduct but not necessarily in all its assertions concerning history and the cosmos-IS GRADUALLY BECOMING ASCENDANT AMONG THE MOST HIGHLY RESPECTED EVANGELICAL THEOLOGIANS. ... ONE MIGHT EVEN SUGGEST THAT THE NEW GENERATION OF EVANGELICALS IS CLOSER TO BONHOEFFER, BARTH AND BRUNNER THAN TO HODGE AND WARFIELD ON THE INSPIRATION AND AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE” (Richard Quebedeaux, “The Evangelicals: New Trends and Tensions,” *Christianity and Crisis*, Sept. 20, 1976, pp. 197-202).
- (3) “I must regretfully conclude that the term evangelical has been so debased that it has lost its usefulness. ... Forty years ago the term evangelical represented those who were theologically orthodox and who held to biblical inerrancy as one of the distinctives. ... WITHIN A DECADE OR SO NEOEVANGELICALISM . . . WAS BEING ASSAULTED FROM WITHIN BY INCREASING SKEPTICISM WITH REGARD TO BIBLICAL INFALLIBILITY OR INERRANCY” (Harold Lindsell, *The Bible in the Balance*, 1979, p. 319; Lindsell was vice-president of Fuller Seminary and editor of *Christianity Today*).
- (4) “WITHIN EVANGELICALISM THERE ARE A GROWING NUMBER WHO ARE MODIFYING THEIR VIEWS ON THE INERRANCY OF THE BIBLE SO THAT THE FULL AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE IS COMPLETELY UNDERCUT” (Francis Schaeffer, *The Great Evangelical Disaster*, 1983, p. 44; this was the last book written by Schaeffer).

(5) "... evangelicalism in the 1990s is an amalgam of diverse and often theologically ill-defined groups, institutions, and traditions. ... THE THEOLOGICAL UNITY THAT ONCE MARKED THE MOVEMENT HAS GIVEN WAY TO A THEOLOGICAL PLURALISM THAT WAS PRECISELY WHAT MANY OF THE FOUNDERS OF MODERN EVANGELICALISM HAD REJECTED IN MAINLINE PROTESTANTISM. ... Evangelicalism is not healthy in conviction or spiritual discipline. Our theological defenses have been let down, and the infusion of revisionist theologies has affected large segments of evangelicalism. Much damage has already been done, but a greater crisis yet threatens" (R. Albert Mohler, Jr., "Evangelical What's in a Name?" *The Coming Evangelical Crisis*, 1996, pp. 32, 33, 36).

b. Consider the example of Bruce Metzger, one of the foremost textual critics alive today. He has been upheld by *Christianity Today* as an evangelical scholar. His books are promoted in evangelical and even fundamentalist circles. Yet Metzger's modernism is evident in the notes to the *New Oxford Annotated Bible RSV* (1973), which he co-edited with Herbert May. It first appeared in 1962 as the *Oxford Annotated Bible* and was the first Protestant annotated edition of the Bible to be approved by a Roman Catholic authority. It was given an imprimatur in 1966 by Cardinal Cushing, Archbishop of Boston, Massachusetts. Metzger wrote many of the rationalistic notes in this volume and put his editorial stamp of approval on the rest. Consider some excerpts from the notes:

(1) Introductory Notes to the Pentateuch: "The Old Testament may be described as the literary expression of the religious life of ancient Israel. ... The Israelites were more history-conscious than any other people in the ancient world. Probably as early as the time of David and Solomon, out of a matrix of myth, legend, and history, there had appeared the earliest written form of the story of the saving acts of God from Creation to the conquest of the Promised Land, an account which later in modified form became a part of Scripture." (Bruce Metzger and Herbert May, *New Oxford Annotated Bible*, Introduction to the Old Testament).

(2) Note on the Flood: "Archaeological evidence suggests that traditions of a prehistoric flood covering the whole earth are heightened versions of local inundations, e.g. in the Tigris-Euphrates basin." (Metzger and May, *New Oxford Annotated Bible*).

(3) Note on Job: "The ancient folktale of a patient Job circulated orally among oriental sages in the second millennium B.C. and was probably written down in Hebrew at the time of David and Solomon or a century later (about 1000-800 B.C.)." (Metzger and May, *New Oxford Annotated Bible*).

(4) Note on Psalm 22:12-13: "the meaning of the third line [they have pierced my hands

and feet] is obscure.” (In fact, it is not obscure; it is a prophecy of Christ's crucifixion!)

- (5) Note on Isaiah: “Only chs. 1-39 can be assigned to Isaiah’s time; it is generally accepted that chs. 40-66 come from the time of Cyrus of Persia (539 B.C.) and later, as shown by the differences in historical background, literary style, and theological emphases. ... The contents of this section [chs. 56-66] (sometimes called Third Isaiah) suggest a date between 530 and 510 B.C., perhaps contemporary with Haggai and Zechariah (520-518); chapters 60-62 may be later.”
- (6) Note on Jonah: “The book of Jonah is didactic narrative which has taken older material from the realm of popular legend and put it to a new, more consequential use” (Metzger and May, *New Oxford Annotated Bible*).
- (7) Notes on 2 Peter: “The tradition that this letter is the work of the apostle Peter was questioned in early times, and internal indications are almost decisive against it. ... Most scholars therefore regard the letter as the work of one who was deeply indebted to Peter and who published it under his master’s name early in the second century.” [Note: Those who believe this nonsense must think the early Christians were liars and fools and the Holy Spirit was on vacation.]
- (8) Notes from “How To Read The Bible With Understanding”: “The opening chapters of the Old Testament deal with human origins. They are not to be read as history ... These chapters are followed by the stories of the patriarchs, which preserve ancient traditions now known to reflect the conditions of the times of which they tell, though they cannot be treated as strictly historical. ... it is not for history but for religion that they are preserved ... When we come to the books of Samuel and Kings ... Not all in these books is of the same historical value, and especially in the stories of Elijah and Elisha there are legendary elements. ... We should always remember the variety of literary forms found in the Bible, and should read a passage in the light of its own particular literary character. Legend should be read as legend, and poetry as poetry, and not with a dull prosaic and literalistic mind.”

c. Thus, the fact that “the scholars of our day” are largely in favor of modern textual criticism does not mean that it is a godly discipline. In fact, if modern biblical scholarship is in favor of some position, that alone is a good reason to be suspect.

2. It is important to understand that the Bible warns of increasing apostasy throughout the course of the church age (i.e., Mat. 24:3-5; Lk. 18:8; 2 Tim. 3:3; 4:3-4; 2 Pet. 2:1-2; 1 John 2:18-19). Since the end of the age will be characterized by a great scarcity of faith and truth, we can expect to find sound Bibles and sound churches in the extreme minority as the time of Christ’s return draws nearer, and this is exactly what we find today.

- a. In the 19th century, apostasy began to blossom within Protestantism in even more damnable forms than it had assumed in the Dark Ages, by way of theological Modernism and Unitarianism.
  - b. In the midst of the rise of Modernism, the principles of modern textual criticism were devised from naturalistic disciplines; the much-blessed Greek Received Text was despised and replaced with the Alexandrian text that had been discarded 1,500 years earlier. On the side of the English language, the King James Bible became the target of destruction and beginning with the English Revision of 1881, version after version was put forth in an attempt to dethrone it. By the end of the 20th century, the Alexandrian Greek text dominated.
  - c. Where apostasy is the strongest, the critical Greek text is prominent. The Roman Catholic is committed to it. The modernistic Protestant denominations are committed to it without exception. The cults are likewise committed to it. Europe is a bastion of apostasy, and it is no surprise that the Bible light has almost gone out in that part of the world and the only Bibles generally available are weak dynamic equivalencies based on a corrupt Greek text. One will look almost in vain for European Bible scholarship that defends the Traditional text. The same is true for England and Canada and Australia.
  - d. The onslaught of end-time apostasy explains why only one man trained in textual criticism at the doctorate level in the last 75 years approached this issue by faith, and that was Edward F. Hills. I am not puzzled at this fact; I believe it is a fulfillment of prophecy.
3. It is important to note that many intelligent, highly educated, and informed Christians have rejected the modern versions. I personally know of many such men, not only those whose mother tongue is English, but also Chinese, Korean, Spanish, French, German, and other languages.
- a. I have documented this extensively in my book *For Love of the Bible: The History of the Defense of the KJV and the Received Text from 1800 to Present* (available from Way of Life Literature, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 41085. <http://www.wayoflife.org>, [fbns@wayoflife.org](mailto:fbns@wayoflife.org)).
  - b. One example is **Dr. Edward F. Hills** (1912-1981), a respected Presbyterian scholar. Though largely ignored by professional textual critics and translators, Hills has encouraged thousands of pastors, evangelists, missionaries, and Bible teachers by his defense of the Received Text and his exposure of the unbelief of modern textual criticism.
    - (1) He was a distinguished Latin and Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Yale University. He also earned the Th.B. degree from Westminster Theological Seminary and the Th.M. from Columbia Theological Seminary. After doing doctoral work at the



University of Chicago in New Testament textual criticism, he completed his program at Harvard, earning the Th.D. in this field.

(2) In 1956, Hills published the first edition of *The King James Version Defended: A Christian View of the New Testament Manuscripts* (available from Bible for Today, 900 Park Ave., Collingswood, NJ 08108. 800-564-6109, BFT@BibleForToday.org). He followed John Burgon in discerning the intimate association between modern textual criticism and the rise of theological liberalism in the 19th century. Key chapters of Dr. Hills' book include "A Short History of Unbelief," "A Christian View of the Biblical Text," "The Facts of New Testament Textual Criticism," "Dean Burgon and the Traditional New Testament Text," and "The Textus Receptus and the King James Version." Hills understood the rationalistic position underlying the modern versions, and he emphasized the importance of the divine preservation of the Scriptures. He saw more in the history of Bible transmission than mere men bumbling around with the text; he saw the hand of God on the Bible through the ages.

(3) Consider this quote from his book: "Has the text of the New Testament, like those of other ancient books, been damaged during its voyage over the seas of time? Ought the same methods of textual criticism to be applied to it that are applied to the texts of other ancient books? These are questions which the following pages will endeavor to answer. An earnest effort will be made to convince the Christian reader that this is a matter to which he *must* attend. FOR IN THE REALM OF NEW TESTAMENT TEXTUAL CRITICISM AS WELL AS IN OTHER FIELDS THE PRESUPPOSITIONS OF MODERN THOUGHT ARE HOSTILE TO THE HISTORIC CHRISTIAN FAITH AND WILL DESTROY IT IF THEIR FATAL OPERATION IS NOT CHECKED. If faithful Christians, therefore, would defend their sacred religion against this danger, they must forsake the foundations of unbelieving thought and build upon their faith, a faith that rests entirely on the solid rock of holy Scripture. And when they do this in the sphere of New Testament textual criticism, they will find themselves led back step by step (perhaps, at first, against their wills) to the text of the Protestant Reformation, namely, that form of New Testament text which underlies the King James Version and the other early Protestant translations" (*The King James Version Defended*, "Introduction," p. 1).

c. Another example is **Dr. Donald Waite**, a Baptist preacher and scholar who has written in the defense of the Received Text and the King James Bible since 1971.

(1) Dr. Waite has 118 semester hours (1,888 class hours) of training in the biblical and other foreign languages, plus countless hours of teaching and personal research in the use of these languages. He obtained a B.A. in classical Greek and Latin from the University of Michigan in 1948; a Th.M. with high honors in New Testament Greek

Literature and Exegesis from Dallas Theological Seminary in 1952; a Th.D. with honors in Bible Exposition from Dallas Seminary in 1955; and a Ph.D. in Speech from Purdue University in 1961. He holds both New Jersey and Pennsylvania teacher certificates in Greek and Language Arts, and has taught Greek, Hebrew, Bible, Speech, and English for over thirty-five years in nine schools.

- (2) Dr. Waite founded the Bible For Today (BFT) ministry in 1971, the year he published his first book on the subject of Bible versions. He has produced over 700 studies, booklets, cassettes, and VCR's that he distributes through BFT, along with hundreds of titles by other men on a wide variety of subjects. [Bible for Today, 900 Park Ave., Collingswood, NJ 08108. 800-564-6109, BFT@BibleForToday.org.]
- (3) Dr. Waite has produced a number of exacting studies in the field of Bible versions. To find out for himself the exact number and nature of changes that have been made in the critical Greek text, for example, Waite compared the Westcott-Hort text with the Received Text, counting every single word difference and weighing its significance. When Waite says there are 9,970 Greek words added, subtracted, or changed from the Received Text in the Westcott-Hort text, he is not merely parroting what he read somewhere. He is citing his own scholarly research. He has also done this with at least three of the modern English versions (the NASV, NIV, and the NKJV), comparing them word for word with the King James Bible and the Received Text, noting the number and significance of the differences. *I can understand how someone might disagree with the King James defender's conclusions, but to gloss over or ignore the diligent research that has been accomplished by men such as this and to pretend that they could not possibly be true scholars is a farce.*

d. Another example is **Dr. Thomas Strouse**, Dean of the Emmanuel Baptist Theological Seminary of Newington, Connecticut.

- (1) Strouse left a teaching position at Maranatha Baptist Bible Seminary in 1988 and founded Tabernacle Baptist Bible Seminary in Virginia Beach, Virginia, under the pastoral oversight of Rodney Bell, heading up the Doctorate Program at Tabernacle until 2000, when he moved to Emmanuel. Strouse has a B.S. in industrial engineering from Purdue University, an M.Div. in theology and Biblical languages from Maranatha Baptist Graduate School of Theology, and a Ph.D. in theology from Bob Jones University.
- (2) Strouse was a founding member of the Dean Burgon Society (1979) and stands firmly for the Received Text and the King James Bible. In a letter to this editor dated March 2, 1995, Strouse said: "I took a course on textual criticism at Maranatha under Dr. M. James Hollowood. He was a close friend to Dr. D.A. Waite

and used some of his materials to defend the *textus receptus* in 1972. In 1974-78, I was at BJU and was exposed to the critical text and I found it inferior to the *textus receptus*. Maranatha was started in 1968 by Dr. Cedarholm who used the *textus receptus* until his successor, Dr. A.Q. Weniger, came in 1983. I left Maranatha in 1988, after trying to preserve the foundational heritage of MBBC in regards to the text, the local church doctrine, and fundamentalism, and failing.”

- (3) Dr. Strouse has authored many publications dealing with Bible defense. His 1992 book “The Lord God Hath Spoken: A Guide to Bibliology” deals with revelation, inspiration, canonicity, illumination, and interpretation. A 1996 publication is entitled “Fundamentalism and the Authorized Version.” In 2001, Dr. Strouse published an excellent book on preservation titled “But My Words Shall Not Pass Away: The Biblical Defense of the Doctrine of the Preservation of Scripture.” He compares a faith position with that of modern textual criticism, which assumes that God’s Word was not divinely kept. Dr. Strouse has also authored a reply to D.A. Carson’s *The King James Version Debate* as well as to *From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man*.
- (4) Emmanuel Baptist Theological Seminary is a ministry of Emmanuel Baptist Church and Dr. J. Michael Bates is Founder and President. The school’s literature emphasizes that “Emmanuel Baptist Theological Seminary is an independent, local-church, Baptist seminary which stands without apology for the Word of God (Textus Receptus/KJV), for our Baptist heritage, for a balance between biblical scholarship and practical application, and for the primacy of preaching.” The school will not seek accreditation with the state of Connecticut or with any secular accrediting association. The seminary currently offers three degree programs: Master of Biblical Studies (32 hours), Master of Divinity (96 hours), and Doctor of Ministry (32 hours). The Master of Divinity requires 12 hours of Greek and 12 of Hebrew. The following is from the school’s doctrinal statement: “We believe in the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Old and New Testaments and the Bible as the only rule of faith and practice. We believe that the process of inspiration ceased with the *autographa*. The Textus Receptus is essentially the preserved *autographa* and the Authorized Version (KJV) is an accurate and trustworthy translation of the TR. Consequently, the Authorized Version is the Word of God in the English language.” Dr. Bates is the author of the 346-page *Syllabus on Inspiration, Preservation, and the KJV* (2000). It covers the nature and transmission of the biblical text from a viewpoint of confidence in God’s promises.

4. The truth will always be found among God’s “common men.”

- a. Mark 12:37 says the common people heard Jesus gladly; yet the scholars of that day rejected Him.

- b. In Matthew 11:25 the Lord Jesus thanked the Father for hiding the truth from the wise and prudent and revealing it unto babes. Thus we would not expect to find the truth among the scholars of this world but among the humble saints who have been regenerated by the Spirit of God.
- c. The apostles and early believers were common men, for the most part (1 Cor. 1:26-31), and they were despised by the religious scholars of their day (Acts 4:13). I am not opposed to godly Bible colleges and I understand that biblical learning is crucial for the ministry. It is required that preachers be taught (2 Tim. 2:2; Titus 1:9), but we must not forget that the apostles did not establish schools as such; they built churches. They did not bestow degrees; they ordained pastors.
- d. The qualifications for church leaders do not include a high level of scholarship (1 Tim. 3; Titus 1). God's qualifications for pastors and teachers mention nothing about scholarship. The requirement, rather, is regeneration, holiness of life, explicit faith (which is based on the Word of God--Rom. 10:14), humility, knowledge of and zeal for God's Word, and the call of God as recognized by the churches. If the apostolic churches did not need ivory tower scholarship, the churches of today do not either.
- e. Do not be deceived by the proud who belittle the common pastor and who erroneously imply that a man must be a trained textual critic to understand where God's Word is today. *WHILE WE PRAISE THE LORD FOR BIBLE-BELIEVING SCHOLARSHIP AND WHILE WE PUT NO PREMIUM ON IGNORANCE, WE ARE NOT DELUDED INTO THINKING THAT WISDOM COMES THROUGH GRADUATE STUDIES.*
- f. Thousands of humble, godly believers have rejected modern textual criticism and have taken a stand for the Masoretic Hebrew and the Received Greek Text and the formal equivalence translations in many languages based upon this Text. I will rather take my stand with the Spirit-taught wisdom of God's "babes" (Mat. 11:25) as opposed to proud religious scholarship.

**WHAT ABOUT THE BIBLE IN OTHER LANGUAGES? IS THE PRESERVED WORD OF GOD ONLY AVAILABLE IN ENGLISH?**

**ANSWER:**

1. Any sound translation from the Masoretic Hebrew and the Greek Received texts is the preserved Word of God in that language.
2. Many good translations were made during the Protestant Reformation. These include German, Spanish, French, Slovenian, Finnish, and Italian. Good translations were also made from the

Received Text into the major languages of Asia, Africa, and elsewhere during the great missionary era of the late 1700s, the 1800s, and the early 1900s.

3. Many good translations are still available today and some new ones are being made. The Trinitarian Bible Society publishes many sound translations. Some independent missionaries such as Bearing Precious Seed are publishing good translations. We have listed foreign language Received Text translations in the Directory of Foreign Language Literature at the Way of Life web site, <http://www.wayoflife.org>.

### **SHOULD FOREIGN LANGUAGE TRANSLATIONS BE BASED ON THE KING JAMES BIBLE?**

#### **ANSWER:**

1. If the translators are sufficiently fluent in Greek and Hebrew, it is good for foreign translations to be made directly from the Hebrew Masoretic and Greek Received texts. Those are the languages that the Holy Spirit chose when He gave the Scriptures to holy men of old.

2. Oftentimes, though, the translators are not fluent in Greek and Hebrew. In that case, they can make a good translation from the King James Bible with the assistance of lexicons and other study tools.

### **IS IT WRONG TO USE OTHER VERSIONS FOR COMPARISON?**

One person wrote with this question: “I use a computer Bible program with the KJV as my main text, but with other versions such as NASB and Young’s Literal translation open in order to compare. Do you never do this?”

#### **ANSWER:**

1. I have looked at other translations from time to time, but I do not commonly recommend this practice for the following reasons:

- a. The modern versions are based on different Hebrew and Greek texts than the KJV and most people are not equipped to know how to test the modern versions against the right Hebrew and Greek texts.
- b. The modern versions cannot be trusted to tell the reader what words are added or changed in English. Dr. Donald Waite, who has spent years comparing the versions, warns: “Let me tell you what the difficulty is in trying to find the Words of God if you are not using the King James Bible. You don’t know which English words are actually found in the Hebrew or the Greek. Unlike the King James Bible, most of the modern versions don’t use italics to tell us what has been supplied for sense, though NOT in the original languages” (Waite, *Defending the King James Version*).

c. Most of the modern versions use dynamic equivalency, and the great liberties taken by dynamic equivalency translators makes it impossible for the reader to know the actual words of God. In an extensive study of the New International Version, for example, Dr. Waite found 6,653 places where it departed from the Hebrew and Greek. The average Bible student has no way to know where these places are. Dr. Waite states, “ It took me two years and eight months to complete, and then there were hundreds and hundreds of examples that were left out due to space and time factors” (Waite, *Defending the King James Version*).

2. My course on “How to Study the Bible” gives extensive instructions on how to study the King James Bible and apply it to one’s life and ministry, and in that course I do not recommend using other versions for the simple reason that I do not believe it is necessary. I show the student how to use the many excellent study tools that are available.

### **WHAT ABOUT THE “OLDEST AND BEST MANUSCRIPTS” THAT I READ ABOUT IN THE MARGIN OF THE MODERN VERSIONS?**

#### **ANSWER:**

The expression “oldest and best manuscripts” refers to a handful of manuscripts from Egypt that is favored by the modern textual critics. The chief two of these are the Sinaiticus (Aleph) and Vaticanus (B). There are a few other Greek manuscripts that are similar to these, including some of the ancient Papyri (though these are mostly fragments). Most of the significant omissions and changes in the modern versions are based on these few manuscripts. An example is the omission of the last nine verses of Mark’s Gospel. See *Faith vs. the Modern Bible Versions: A Course Defending the King James Bible against the Modern Versions* for more about this.

### **DID FUNDAMENTALISTS DEFEND THE KING JAMES BIBLE BEFORE DAVID OTIS FULLER IN THE 1970S?**

It is common to hear the charge that fundamentalists of old did not defend the KJV. Consider this example: “The view that only one Greek N.T. (the *textus receptus*) or only one English translation of it (the King James) is the preserved Word of God was not taught by the majority of past conservative Christian spokesmen” (*Trusted Voices on Translations*, 2001)

#### **ANSWER:**

1. **Most fundamentalist leaders of the past did not devote special study to the subject of texts and versions.** Though there are exceptions, there is no evidence that the average fundamentalist leader, such as T.T. Shields or Harry Ironside or J. Gresham Machen or J. Frank Norris, devoted serious study to the subject of modern textual criticism. They faced many fierce doctrinal battles and they could speak authoritatively on many subjects, but the Bible version

issue was not one of them. Therefore, to quote these men on the subject of Bible texts and versions bears little significance for the simple fact that most of them did not know enough about the subject to make authoritative statements. For example, the pamphlet *Trusted Voices on Translations* quotes Harry Ironside as follows: “The differences are not very important, but are based upon some older texts which were not in evidence when the Authorized Version was being translated” (*Trusted Voices on Translations*, p. 9). Ironside was a man of God who loved the Scriptures, but in this particular statement he was wrong and is doubtful that he had looked into the matter very carefully for himself. This brief statement encompasses two serious errors. Ironside said the differences are not very important, whereas the differences between the texts and versions are, in fact, dramatic. He also said the textual differences were not known when the AV was translated, but this is not true. From the time of Erasmus forward, the Reformation editors and translators were aware of the textual differences; they even had more than 300 of the readings from the Vaticanus; but they rejected them as corrupt. Had Ironside read the works of men such as John Burgon, Edward Miller, Herman Hoskier, Frederic Scrivener, Robert Dabney, or Philip Mauro, he would have known better than to have made such a statement; but it is obvious that he was merely repeating the opinion of others. Statements by an ill-informed man have no weight, and every man, regardless of how godly or scholarly, is ill-informed in many areas.

## **2. Even if many fundamentalist leaders of past and present did defend the modern texts, it means almost nothing.**

- a. First, our authority is not human leaders, but the Word of God itself (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Some men seem to think that if John Rice or J. Frank Norris or Bob Jones did or believed something, I am obligated to follow them. I don't understand that mindset. I don't unquestioningly follow fundamentalist leaders, past or present, in any matter. I appreciate all of the good things they stood for, but they were only men.
- b. Furthermore, fundamentalism has never been a homogenous thing; it has always been extremely divided. Fundamentalists have never agreed even on the doctrine of baptism or on eschatology, not to speak of the doctrine of preservation. Even Baptist fundamentalists are divided on many issues. The men who wrote *The Fundamentals* in the 1920s represented an extremely wide variety of doctrine and practice. In fact, some of them held serious error. For example, James Orr of Scotland denied the verbal inspiration of Scripture and allowed for theistic evolution. J. Campbell Morgan denied the literal fire of hell and believed that men could be saved even if they do not hear of or exercise personal faith in Christ. Thus, to uphold fundamentalist leaders of old as a standard will not do.

**3. Many fundamentalists of bygone days did renounce textual criticism and held to the Received Text and the KJV.** I have documented this in the 460-page book *For Love of the Bible*, available from Way of Life Literature. Following are three examples, and the position

held by these men was held by thousands of other fundamentalists.

a. **Benjamin Franklin Dearmore** (1897-1969)

- (1) Dearmore was chairman of the faculty at the Bible Baptist Seminary (J. Frank Norris's school in Ft. Worth) until 1948, when he co-founded the Worth Bible College. He was also co-founder of Trinity Valley Seminary in the South Fort Worth Baptist Temple. For many years he edited an independent Baptist paper called *The Message*.
- (2) His son, James Dearmore (M.D.), described the position of B.F. Dearmore on the Bible version issue: "There was a very heavy emphasis on the KJV-AV Bible and a rejection of all other versions as 'per-versions.' ... [Worth Bible College] always consistently defended the KJV-AV Bible. ... None could have graduated without strong teachings and belief in the defense of, and acceptance of, the KJV-AV as the ONLY acceptable English version of the Bible" (Letter from James Dearmore, May 24, 1995).
- (3) Benjamin Dearmore's paper *The Message* "only recognized the KJV as truly God's Word in the English language, rejecting all other (per)versions." Following are two statements from a 1959 edition of this paper: "As for me, I will take the King James translation as the very Word of God for the English people. I believe it is without error. It is 100 percent correct. ... I do positively state that people who do not know a word of Greek can become real Bible scholars. Many times their understanding is far greater than the Greek scholars." (B.F. Dearmore, *The Message*, May 28, 1959).
- (4) This opens a window into many churches during the first half of the twentieth century in the south central and southwestern United States. There were hundreds of independent Baptist churches in Texas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas in those days that stood exclusively for the King James Bible and opposed the modern versions.

b. **William Aberhart** (1878-1943)

- (1) Aberhart was Premier of Alberta from 1935-43. He was also a Bible preacher and expounded the Bible in weekly lectures attended by hundreds on Sunday afternoons in Calgary. In the late 1920s Aberhart separated from the Regular Baptists over issues such as Bible inspiration and prophecy. In 1924 he established the Calgary Prophetic Bible Institute, and in November 1925, he began his pioneer radio broadcasts that were beamed across Alberta. The first student enrolled in Aberhart's Bible Institute was Ernest Charles Manning, who eventually became the premier of Alberta. He also founded the Bible Institute Baptist Church, which seated 1,250 and



was a prominent church in Calgary in those days. Many well-known fundamentalist leaders, such as W.B. Riley and Harry Rimmer, preached there.

- (2) A summary of Aberhart's teaching was given to me by Pastor Mark Buch (1910-1995), who was educated by Aberhart in the 1930s. Buch was the founder and pastor of the People's Fellowship Tabernacle in Vancouver, British Columbia, a stronghold for biblical fundamentalism in western Canada from the time it was founded in 1939. Buch knew and preached with many of the well-known fundamentalist leaders of that century, including J. Frank Norris, G. Beauchamp Vick, and Bob Jones Sr. Mark Buch testified: "Aberhart's teaching opened the subject of Divine Inspiration and preservation. My mind was saturated with new confidence as we followed the pure stream of the divinely inspired Bible, back, back to the divinely inbreathed autographs. I saw that the Authorized Version was an accurate translation of the preserved Scriptures."
- (3) In his 1925 booklet entitled *What About the Revised Version of the Bible*, which was widely distributed, we can see what William Aberhart taught on the Bible version issue: "Here and there and everywhere men are rising up above the Scriptures to correct them. The tables are being turned today Instead of the Bible correcting men and men's opinions, some are correcting the Bible. ... To propose that we need a new Bible is to declare that God has not spoken. ... Pity should be our feeling toward those young preachers who cry, 'See my new theology! See my latest Revision!' The Authorized Version is reliable." (Aberhart, *What About the Revised Version of the Bible*, 1925)

**c. Philip Mauro (1859-1952)**

- (1) Mauro was a famous patent lawyer who argued before the bar of the United States Supreme Court. He wrote the legal brief that was used by William Jennings Bryan at the famous "Scopes Trial" to defend the Tennessee law prohibiting the teaching of evolution in public schools. Converted in 1903, at age 45, he became a bold testimony for Christ. He witnessed to Thomas Edison, the famous inventor. Mauro was aboard the *Carpathian* when it rescued survivors from the ill-fated *Titanic* in 1912. He wrote many books on various themes, including *The Truth about Evolution*, *The Progress of the Apostasy*, *The Seventy Weeks and the Great Tribulation*, *The Wonders of Bible Chronology*, and *Speaking in Tongues*. Mauro wrote articles for *The Fundamentals*, the books that gave the fundamentalist movement its name in the 1920s.
- (2) Mauro's position on the Bible version issue was no secret. In 1924 he published *Which Version? Authorized or Revised?* (This was reprinted 50 years later in David Otis Fuller's *True or False*.) Mauro leaned heavily upon the research of John

Burton. Note the following statement: “In view also of the leading part the English speaking peoples were to play in shaping the destinies of mankind, we are justified in believing that it was through a providential ordering that the preparation of that Version was not in anywise affected by higher critical theories in general, or specifically by the two ancient Codices we have been discussing [Vaticanus and Sinaiticus]” (Mauro, *Which Version?*).

**4. It is important to understand that there have always been two aspects to fundamentalism: the scholars and the common people.** And the common people, who have made up the vast majority of fundamentalism, have always stood for the KJV. See Mk. 12:37. This is a fact that is recognized by historians of fundamentalism. Consider this from James Barr:

“For fundamentalist society as a whole the Authorized Version functioned as the direct and immediate expression or transcript of divine revelation” (Barr, *Fundamentalism*, p. 210). Likewise, Robert Gromacki, in his *New Testament Survey*, observed that the King James Bible is “the text of fundamentalism.” Peter Thuesen stated: “Yet many, if not most, fundamentalists of the fifties and sixties still regarded the King James Version as the only real Bible, save for the autographs themselves” (Thuesen, *In Discordance with the Scriptures: American Protestant Battles over Translating the Bible*, p. 112).

**5. It is also crucial to understand that the Bible version issue was not a prominent issue among fundamentalists until the 1970s.** Other battles were more pressing. Between 1920 and 1950, fundamentalists were preoccupied with fighting theological modernism. Between 1950 and 1970, they were preoccupied with fighting New Evangelicalism and ecumenism. It was not until the 1970s that the King James Bible had any serious competition in fundamentalist churches. Prior to this there were many modern versions, such as the ASV of 1901, the RSV of 1952, and the NASV of 1960, but these were never popular among fundamentalists and never presented a serious challenge to the KJV. Though modern textual criticism was used in some fundamentalist seminaries, it was something that was isolated, for the most part, among the “scholars.” Even seminaries that accepted modern textual criticism in the Greek department used the King James Bible in the pulpit so that the average fundamentalist was simply not faced with the issue. This changed in the 1970s with the publication of the popular New International Version, which was adopted widely among evangelicals. It is no accident, then, that it was in the 1970s that fundamentalists began to publish books on a large scale opposing modern texts and versions. When you find a body of apologetic material in church history, you can be sure that there was a theological attack that produced it.

#### **HOW DOES THE DEFENSE OF THE KJV DIFFER FROM ROME’S POSITION TOWARD THE LATIN VULGATE?**

Many charges have been made against today’s defenders of the Authorized Version, but one of the most despicable I have seen appeared in a paper presented to The Evangelical Theological Society Southern Region by Dr. James Price, March 22, 1986. The paper was entitled *Textual*

*Emendations in the Authorized Version.* Dr. Price teaches Hebrew at Tennessee Temple Theological Seminary in Chattanooga, Tennessee. He is also the General Editor of the Old Testament portion of Thomas Nelson's New King James Version. Consider an excerpt from Dr. Price's paper:

"The historic doctrine of the infallibility and inerrancy of Scripture ascribes final authority to the original autographs. Thus the validity and authority of any translation of the Scripture is measured by its conformity to the Greek and Hebrew texts. At times in the past, some have departed from this historic doctrine. ... The Roman Catholic Church declared the Latin Vulgate of Jerome to be more authoritative than the Greek and Hebrew texts of the Bible. A modern departure from this historic doctrine places final authority in the English Authorized Version otherwise known as the King James Version" (Price, *Textual Emendations*, p. 1).

**ANSWER:**

While there are certain vague similarities between the position of Rome toward the Latin Vulgate and the modern defense of the King James Bible, in reality, the two could not be more different. I have an extensive library of authorities on Roman Catholicism, both antiquarian and contemporary, written by Catholic, Protestant, and Baptist authors. I also have a large library of materials on the history of the Bible, both from Rome's perspective and otherwise. I have written two major books touching on this subject, *Rome and the Bible*, which traces the history of the Roman Catholic Church in relationship to the Bible, and *For Love of the Bible*, which traces the history of the defense of the King James Version and its underlying Hebrew and Greek texts for the past 200 years. And I am convinced that it is slanderous to compare the defense of the King James Bible in general to Rome's "defense" of the Latin Vulgate.

There is only one narrow sphere of "King James Onlyism" that could possibly fall into such a category, and that is Peter Ruckman's position that sees the King James Bible as "advanced revelation." Yet Dr. Price did not make any clear distinction between various positions among those who defend the KJV.

Consider four key differences between the defense of the KJV and Rome's defense of the Latin Vulgate:

**First, Rome did not merely believe its Latin Vulgate was a sound translation of the preserved Hebrew and Greek texts; it wanted to *replace* the Greek and Hebrew with its Latin version.**

J.A. Wylie, an authority on Romanism in the Reformation era, dedicated two chapters of his book *The Papacy; Its History, Dogmas, Genius, and Prospects* (London: Hamilton Adams, 1888) to describing Rome's attitude toward the Bible. Wylie states: "The Latin Vulgate is the authorized standard in the Church of Rome, and that to the disparagement of the original Hebrew

and Greek Scriptures. These are omitted in the decree [of the Council of Trent], and a translation is substituted. All Protestant translations, such as our authorized English version, Luther's translation, &c. are prohibited" (Wylie, p. 181).

In describing Catholic history, Albert Gilmore observed: "The languages of the early Bibles, Hebrew and Greek, were no longer of interest. So marked did this lack of interest become that when, after the Renaissance, Cardinal Ximenes published his Polyglot edition with the Latin Vulgate between the Greek and Hebrew versions of the Old Testament, he stated in his preface that it was "like Jesus between two thieves'" (Gilmore, *The Bible: Beacon Light of History*, Boston: Associated Authors, 1935, p. 170).

This is not the position held by the general body of KJV defenders today. I believe I can speak with some authority on this issue. I have done extensive firsthand research into the defense of the King James Bible. I have communicated with hundreds of men from around the world, interviewed many key spokesmen, and read most of the materials on the subject. I have written the only extensive history on this subject in print. I say all of this for only one reason, and that is to demonstrate that I know more about so-called "King James Onlyism" than its detractors. And I say that that James Price is grossly misrepresenting most defenders of the Authorized Version by lumping them in with 16th century Papists.

Consider, for example, the Dean Burgon Society (DBS) in America and the Trinitarian Bible Society (TBS) in England. Hundreds of pastors are associated with these organizations. I have been a member of the DBS in the past. And they do not hold anything like a Council of Trent position toward the King James Bible. They believe that the KJV is an accurate translation of the preserved Hebrew and Greek texts. They are opposed to the modern versions because they are based on what they believe to be the wrong Greek text (the same reason that men such as Dr. Price hold to versions such as the NASV over the KJV.)

And there are large numbers of pastors who hold the same position though they have no affiliation with the DBS or the TBS. I have heard from them personally through the years and have preached in hundreds of these churches in 15 different countries.

To identify such defense of the King James Bible with medieval Rome is a treacherous slander.

**Second, Rome wanted to keep the Word of God from the people by locking it into a dead language and making the people dependent on its priesthood.**

I don't believe I have to prove this for most of my readers. The history is plain for anyone who cares to look into it. The Council of Trent (1545-1564) placed the Bible on its list of prohibited books, and forbade any person to read the Bible in vernacular translations without a license from a Roman Catholic bishop or inquisitor. The Council added these words: "That if any one shall dare to read or keep in his possession that book, without such a license, he shall not receive

absolution till he has given it up to his ordinary.” Rome’s attempt to keep the Bible from men has continued to recent times. Pope Pius VII (1800-1823) denounced the Bible Society and expressed shock at the circulation of the Scriptures. He said, “It is evidence from experience, that the holy Scriptures, when circulated in the vulgar tongue, have, through the temerity of men, produced more harm than benefit.” Pope Leo XII called the Protestant Bible the “Gospel of the Devil” in an encyclical letter of 1824. Pope Gregory XVI (1831-1846) railed “against the publication, distribution, reading, and possession of books of the holy Scriptures translated into the vulgar tongue.” Pope Leo XII, in January 1850, condemned the Bible Societies and acknowledged the fact that the distribution of Scripture has “long been condemned by the holy chair.”

Defenders of the Authorized Version, on the other hand, do not want to keep the Word of God from anyone. They are among those at the forefront of carrying the Gospel to the ends of the earth. Our desire is not to lock up the Word of God, but to keep it pure.

Do I hear someone protest that to “keep the Word of God locked up in antiquated English” is the same as keeping it locked up in Latin? This is nonsense. The difficulty of understanding the mild antiquation of the King James Bible is nothing to be compared with that of understanding a foreign language. Most people in the 16th century could not understand Latin. It was a foreign language to them. Rome wanted to keep the Scripture locked up in Latin because she did not want the people to understand the Bible. On the other hand, the KJV defender stands behind the King James Bible not because it is difficult to understand and not because he wants to keep the Bible from the people but because he is convinced that it is the most accurate and authoritative English Bible. He is concerned about accuracy first and readability second.

Let me speak for myself. We have spent 14 years on the foreign mission field, and during that time we have done everything possible to make the Word of God available and understandable to the people we are working with. We have gone to great expense to produce Bible study tools and commentaries in that language. And we have done the same in the English language. I have spent a large portion of my life producing Bible dictionaries and commentaries and Bible courses in the English language so that English-speaking people can understand the Scriptures.

This zeal for making the Word of God available and understandable to the common man is characteristic of countless King James Bible defenders that I know, and to compare this to the godless attitude of medieval Rome is a treacherous slander.

**Third, the Roman Catholic Church, in authorizing the Latin Bible, exalted its own traditions and apocryphal books to the place of authority equal to the Bible.**

The Council of Trent, which authorized the Latin Vulgate, also canonized the apocryphal books and announced curses upon any man who does not accept Rome’s extra-biblical traditions.

Today's defenders of the Authorized Version have added nothing to the canon of Scripture. In fact, they are at the forefront of the battle against Romanism and Charismaticism and Cultism and every other claim of extra-biblical authority in this present hour.

**Fourth, it is a gross error to compare the King James Version with Rome's Latin Vulgate.**

Let me offer three important distinctions between the KJV and the Latin Vulgate. Many others could be mentioned.

One, the Latin Vulgate was not in a settled state until long after Rome had pronounced it authentic. In spite of the pontifications of the Council of Trent, it was not until more than forty years later that an authentic edition of the Latin Vulgate appeared. A papal commission worked for more than 40 years after Trent, but failed to produce an authentic edition. Frustrated by the slow progress of this commission, Pope Sixtus V took matters into his own hands and produced his own revision, which appeared in May 1590. He died three months later. There was a small problem. The Sixtus Latin Vulgate was full of errors, "some two thousand of them introduced by the Pope himself" (Janus, *The Pope and the Council*, Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1870). In September 1590 the College of Cardinals stopped all sales and bought up and destroyed as many copies as possible! Another edition appeared in 1592 and became the official Bible of the Roman Catholic Church (H. Wheeler Robinson, *Ancient and English Versions of the Bible*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940, p. 120). The Authorized Version, on the other hand, has been in a mature, settled state for more than three centuries.

Two, the Latin Vulgate was the product of an apostate ecclesiastical system. It was founded upon the translation of heretic Jerome and was authorized by the blasphemous Council of Trent, which hurled hundreds of curses upon Bible-believing Christians. In his masterly history of Roman Catholicism, James Heron, Professor of Ecclesiastical History at General Assembly's College, Belfast, noted that Jerome engaged in violent controversies, popularized unscriptural monasticism, venerated bones and relics, invested departed saints with omnipresence, taught that Mary was instrumental in redemption, and justified putting "heretics" to death (Heron, *The Evolution of Latin Christianity*, London: James Clarke, 1919). The Authorized Version and its Greek Received Text, on the other hand, is the product of a Bible-believing stream of Christianity. Many of the editors of the Received Text hazarded their lives for the sake of the Truth. The KJV is founded to a large degree upon William Tyndale's version, and Tyndale was a Bible-believing Christian who was martyred by Roman Catholic authorities for his faith. The KJV's immediate predecessor, the Geneva Bible, was produced by men who had been forced to flee England because of their biblical faith.

Three, Rome's Latin Vulgate was not considered an excellent version by anyone other than the Papists. One large portion of the Latin Vulgate, the Psalms, was translated from a Greek translation of the Hebrew rather than directly from Hebrew itself. The Authorized Version, on the other hand, has been considered an excellent version for almost four centuries by thousands upon thousands of scholarly men of God.

I repeat, it is slanderous to compare the Roman Catholic Church and its attitude toward the Latin Vulgate with the modern defense of the King James Version.

Fellow King James Bible defenders, I believe Dr. James Price owes us a public apology.

### **I HAVE READ THAT THE KJV DEFENDERS MAKE A LOT OF MISTAKES; IS THAT TRUE?**

I received a letter in 1996 from a fundamental Baptist seminary professor. He listed what he alleged were six errors in a book written by a well-known King James Bible defender and charged KJV defenders in general with carelessness and error. This charge is repeated often.

#### **ANSWER:**

1. Many of the alleged errors that are proposed by critics of King James Bible defenders are errors only in the eye of the critic. Repeatedly I have found that it is the critic of King James Bible defenders who is in error.

2. Admittedly, King James defenders do make mistakes. I certainly make mistakes. I have had to correct many things in my writings through the years. The most prominent of modern textual critics make mistakes by their own admissions. Their books, too, contain lists of “errata” in which they correct mistakes made in earlier editions. Consider Bruce Metzger, for example. In the 3rd edition of his book *The Text of the New Testament*, he admitted that he had been wrong in stating in earlier editions that Erasmus had promised to include 1 John 5:7 if one Greek manuscript were found that contained it. The following is Metzger’s admission that this was wrong: “What is said on p. 101 above about Erasmus’ promise to include the Comma Johanneum if one Greek manuscript were found that contained it, and his subsequent suspicion that MS 61 was written expressly to force him to do so, NEEDS TO BE CORRECTED in the light of the research of H. J. DeJonge, a specialist in Erasmian studies who finds no explicit evidence that supports this frequently made assertion” (Metzger, *The Text of The New Testament*, 3rd Edition, p 291, footnote 2). The problem is that this serious error continues to be paraded as truth by modern version defenders. The professors of fundamentalist seminaries also make mistakes. In fact, every modern version defender makes mistakes, as does every KJV defender. It is the nature of man to be imperfect.

3. At the same time, I regret to say that it is true that the writings of some King James defenders contain an inordinate number of mistakes. It is one thing to be prone to make a mistake, which is the lot of mankind as a whole; it is another thing to be so careless that one’s writings are filled with mistakes and so carnal that one is not open to correction. I have found that some men are not interested in the truth so much as in promoting their position. I have written to some King James defenders in an attempt to point out mistakes and either have been completely ignored or have been treated with great disrespect.

I must hasten to say that the same thing can be said for those who defend the modern versions. Books such as *From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man* edited by J.B. Williams (1999), *One Bible Only: Examining Exclusive Claims for the King James Bible* by Roy Beacham and Kevin Bauder (2001), *Bible Preservation and the Providence of God* by Sam Schnaiter and Ron Tagliapietra (2002), and *God's Word in Our Hands: The Bible Preserved for Us* edited by J.B. Williams (2003) are filled with mistakes and though men of God have pointed out these errors in published critiques, there is no evidence that the authors are even listening. Second editions have perpetrated the same mistakes. The authors of these books have demonstrated that they are not interested in anything other than promoting their opinions and discrediting the defense of the King James Bible.

4. The subject of Bible texts and versions is complicated. It comprehends multitudes of foreign languages, ancient manuscripts, two thousand years of church history, Satanic deception, obscure theories, world missions, the age-old warfare between God and Satan. It is very easy to make a mistake when dealing with these matters.

5. God's truth has always been held largely among the common people (Mat. 11:25; 1 Cor. 1:26-28). The apostles, for the most part, were not brilliant scholars. They were ordinary men, and we can be assured that as such they tended to make mistakes when speaking and writing apart from divine inspiration. Their enemies looked down upon them as "unlearned and ignorant men" (Acts 4:13). Most God-called pastors are ordinary men. Pastors must have a firm grasp of the Bible and of apostolic truth, and they must have a high degree of practical, Spirit-taught wisdom, but they are not usually "scholars." In fact, God's qualifications do not call for extraordinary scholarship (1 Tim. 3). Pastors make mistakes. They tend to pass on things that they get from someone else without always checking it, things that might not be completely accurate. Did God make a mistake in choosing ordinary men to pastor his churches?

One of the New Evangelical's chief errors is his lust for intellectual respectability. I believe many fundamental Baptist schools today are filled with teachers who are New Evangelical at heart in this matter. They love the titles; they love the prestige. They become puffed up. They become blind to their own humanity. They focus on man rather than on God, man's uninspired writings more than the inspired Scripture. They judge everything on the basis of ivory tower scholarship. That is not where the truth is found.

"For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence" (1 Corinthians 1:26-29).

David Otis Fuller, who was a graduate of Princeton and no stranger to scholarship, described this



pitfall as “scholarolatry.”

6. A mistake in a man’s writing or sermon does not of itself discredit the man’s position. It depends on the nature of the mistake and whether that mistake undermines the heart of his argument. Jesus warned of “straining at gnats and swallowing camels.” Defenders of the modern versions have often been guilty of this. They strain at the gnat of Erasmus, who was admittedly weak in the faith but was also an exception in the field of the Received Text over the past half millennium and swallow the camel of the fact that theological modernism, skepticism, and unitarianism is *the rule* among the fathers of modern textual criticism, that apostasy is an intimate companion of modern textual criticism. They strain at the gnat of David Otis Fuller’s use of the writings of Seventh-day Adventist Benjamin Wilkinson and swallow the camel of modern textual criticism’s blatant denial of divine preservation. They strain at the gnat of the extremely minor revisions of the KJV and swallow the camel of the dramatic doctrinal issues associated with the Alexandrian text. They strain at the gnat of Peter Ruckman’s peculiarities and swallow the camel of the 500 years of reasonable, godly defense of the Received Text and the 200 years of the same type of defense of the King James Bible (as documented in *For Love of the Bible*). They strain at the gnat of the mistakes and foibles of King James Bible defenders and swallow the camel of the blatant heresies of modern textual criticism, such as the alleged historical recension whereby the original text of Scripture was replaced in the 4th century with a corrupt one and not recovered until 1,500 years later. They strain at the gnat of the slight variety among the various editions of the Greek Received Text and swallow the camel of how modern textual criticism treats the Bible like an ordinary book. They strain at the gnat that 1 John 5:7 in the Received Text lacks majority Greek manuscript support and swallow the camel that MOST of their critical text readings have but slight manuscript support, in many cases less than that for 1 John 5:7.

### **CAN A PERSON BE SAVED THROUGH READING THE MODERN VERSIONS?**

**ANSWER:**

1. Yes, people can be saved through the modern versions, especially the more literal ones, because salvation is through the gospel, and they contain the gospel (Rom. 1:16).
2. These same versions, though, can become a hindrance to spiritual growth.

### **WHAT HAS THE MODERN BIBLE VERSION ISSUE DONE TO BIBLE MEMORIZATION?**

**ANSWER:**

1. The multiplicity of versions has hindered Bible memorization. The following statement is from *The Word of God in English: Criteria for Excellence in Bible Translation* by Dr. Leland

Ryken (Wheaton: Crossway books, 2002): “We have lost a common Bible for English-speaking Christians. The Christian community no longer speaks a universal biblical ‘language.’ And with the loss of a common Bible we have lost ease in memorization of the Bible. After all, when a common Bible exists, people hear it over and over and ‘memorize’ it virtually without consciously doing so, but this ease is lost when translations multiply. Furthermore, with the proliferation of translations, churches and organizations find it difficult to know which translation to choose for purposes of memorization; and even after they choose, there is such variety that a person faces the prospect of having to memorize from different translations in different settings” (Ryken, *The Word of God in English*, p. 62).

2. The modernity of the dynamic equivalency and paraphrase versions has hindered Bible memorization. “What a literary scholar said of one modern translation is generally true of all dynamic equivalent and colloquial translations: it ‘does slip more smoothly into the modern ear, but it also slides out more easily; the very strangeness and antique ceremony of the old forms make them linger in the mind.’ It is not only the proliferation of translations that has made Bible memorization difficult, if not actually a lost cause. ... These translations are inherently deficient in the qualities that make for memorability” (Ryken, p. 284).

### **WHAT ARE SOME OF THE BOOKS THAT YOU RECOMMEND ON THE BIBLE VERSION ISSUE?**

*Defending the King James Bible* by Donald A. Waite. Dr. Waite is a Baptist scholar who has written in the defense of the Received Text and the King James Bible since 1971. Dr. Waite has 118 semester hours (1,888 class hours) of training in the biblical and other foreign languages, plus countless hours of teaching and personal research in the use of these languages. He holds a Th.M. with high honors in New Testament Greek Literature and Exegesis from Dallas Theological Seminary in 1952; a Th.D. with honors in Bible Exposition from Dallas Seminary in 1955; and a Ph.D. in Speech from Purdue University in 1961. Dr. Waite has written in defense of the King James Bible since 1971, and in our estimation his 1992 book *Defending the King James Bible* is a masterpiece. In this book, Dr. Waite presents a four-fold superiority of the King James Bible: It is superior in its Greek and Hebrew texts, superior in its translators, superior in its translation technique, and superior in its theology. 352 pages, 5X8, hard bound. Available from Bible for Today, 900 Park Ave., Collingswood, NJ 08108, 800-564-6109, [www.BibleForToday.org](http://www.BibleForToday.org).

*Evaluating Versions of the New Testament* by Everett w. Fowler (1906-1990). Fowler was a deacon in the famous First Baptist Church of New York City, a center of fundamentalism from its inception in 1711. He sat under the ministry of and served with the respected Fundamentalist leader Dr. Isaac M. Haldeman (1845-1933), who pastored the First Baptist Church from 1884 to 1933. By profession Fowler was an engineer, with a degree from Worcester Polytechnic Institute. Mr. Fowler’s faithful heart for Christ was witnessed by a long life of faithful service in this church—deacon (over 45 years), Sunday School teacher (more than 40 years), trustee (37

years), church treasurer (more than 21 years), church clerk (25 years). As a young man, Fowler made a commitment to the Lord to rise before breakfast for personal devotions. He read the Bible through twice a year in English for some 40 years. This was in addition to his study of the Greek New Testament. Fowler's concern for the issue of texts and versions began in 1953, when he enrolled in the New Testament class at his church with the goal of reading the Greek New Testament. As his study progressed, he became increasingly concerned about the differences he was seeing between the modern critical Greek text and the Received Text underlying his King James Bible. He began a diligent comparative study of the two, noting the exact differences between the various editions of the critical Greek text and the Received Text, as well as the differences between the modern English versions and the King James Bible. The fruit of this prodigious labor was his book *Evaluating Versions of the New Testament*. Its chief feature is a series of charts showing the significant theological differences between the texts and versions. Table I lists the whole verses omitted or enclosed in brackets in the new versions. Table II lists significant portions of verses omitted. Table III lists the omissions of names of Jesus Christ omitted. Table IV lists other differences that have a substantial effect on the meaning. Table V lists the total word differences between the United Bible Societies text and the Received Text. Table VI is a summary of the differences that affect translation. 8.5 X 11 format, 70 pages. Available from Bible for Today, 900 Park Ave., Collingswood, NJ 08108, 800-564-6109, [www.BibleForToday.org](http://www.BibleForToday.org).

***Faith vs. the Modern Bible Versions: A Course on Bible Texts and Versions and a 10-Fold Defense of the King James Bible*** by David Cloud. To our knowledge, this is the most comprehensive course on this topic in print. The author has researched this issue for 25 years, having built a large personal library on this subject, having read more than 600 books and pamphlets and 2,000 articles on this topic, and having done on-site investigation in many parts of the world, including Great Britain, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland, Slovakia, and Italy. This course contains information that has not appeared in any other book defending the King James Bible and breaks new ground in several areas -- such as the importance of the ancient separatist versions in the defense of 1 John 5:7; an exposition of the doctrine of Bible preservation from 43 passages of Scripture; documentation of the corruption of evangelical scholarship over the past 50 years and of the apostasy that enveloped the 19th century as modern textual criticism was devised and that further enveloped the 20th century as modern textual criticism became entrenched; and documentation of the role played by Unitarians in the development of modern textual criticism, to name a few. The course features 783 sectional review questions to reinforce the teaching. A separate teacher's test book is available containing sectional and final tests with answer sheets. 791 pages, 5X8, perfect bound. Available from Way of Life Literature, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061. 866-495-4143, [fbns@wayoflife.org](mailto:fbns@wayoflife.org), <http://www.wayoflife.org>.

***For Love of the Bible*** by David Cloud. This book traces the history of the defense of the KJV and the Received Text from 1800 to present. The book includes hundreds of testimonies and biographies; sketches of churches, schools, and organizations that have defended the KJV; a digest of reviews and condensations of major books and articles written in defense of the KJV in the past 200 years; excerpts from rare books on this subject which are no longer available; a

comprehensive overview of the varied arguments in favor of the KJV. *For Love of the Bible* also gives a history of the modern English versions, beginning with the English Revised of 1881. Also included is a history of textual criticism, revealing that most of the textual scholars from the 19th-century on were rationalists who denied the infallible inspiration of Scripture. The 33-page bibliography is the most extensive in print on the subject, to our knowledge. A detailed index is also included. The author spent several thousand dollars researching the book and has written several hundred letters in this connection, communicating with men from around the world who stand for the KJV today. Michael Maynard, author of *A History of the Debate over 1 John 5:7,8*, wrote: “*For Love of the Bible* is a masterpiece. It ought to be in every academic, public, and special library in the world.” 460 pages, 5X8, hard cover. Available from Way of Life Literature, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061. 866-495-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org, <http://www.wayoflife.org>.

***The Gnostics, the New Versions, and the Deity of Christ*** by Jay P. Green, Sr. (1918- ). This study traces the doctrinal corruptions in the modern critical Greek text to heresies that plagued churches in the 2nd and 3rd centuries. Available from Sovereign Grace Trust Fund, P.O. Box 4998, Lafayette, IN 47903. 800-447-9142; 765-447-4122 (voice), jgreenxx@iquest.net, <http://www.chrlitworld.com/http://www.sovgracepub.com>.

***The King James Version Defended*** by Edward F. Hills. Dr. Hills (1912-1981) was a professionally trained textual scholar as well as a godly Christian. He was a distinguished Latin and Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Yale University. He also earned the Th.B. degree from Westminster Theological Seminary and the Th.M. degree from Columbia Theological Seminary. After doing doctoral work at the University of Chicago in New Testament textual criticism, he completed his program at Harvard, earning the Th.D. in this field. Though largely ignored by professional textual critics and translators, Hills has encouraged thousands of pastors, evangelists, missionaries, and Bible teachers by his defense of the Received Text and his exposure of the unbelief of modern textual criticism. In 1956, he published the first edition of *The King James Version Defended: A Christian View of the New Testament Manuscripts*. It was enlarged through the years. Key chapters include “A Short History of Unbelief,” “A Christian View of the Biblical Text,” “The Facts of New Testament Textual Criticism,” “Dean Burgon and the Traditional New Testament Text,” and “The Textus Receptus and the King James Version.” Hills devastated the Westcott-Hort textual theories and exposed the rationalistic foundation of the entire modern version superstructure. Unlike most modern textual scholars, Dr. Hills approached his topic with humility and with confidence in God’s promise to preserve the Scriptures. Most of the questions which are raised today in the Bible version debate were already answered by Dr. Hills 50 years ago. 280 pages, 5X8, hard bound. Available from Bible for Today, 900 Park Ave., Collingswood, NJ 08108, 800-564-6109, [www.BibleForToday.org](http://www.BibleForToday.org).

***The Modern Bible Version Hall of Shame*** by David Cloud. This book documents the apostasy of some of the most influential names in the field of modern textual criticism and modern Bible versions from the past 250 years. There are articles on 110 influential modern textual critics and 40 modern version translators, including Simon, Bengel, Wettstein, Griesbach, Lachmann,

Tregelles, Tischendorf, Westcott, Hort, Schaff, Thayer, Gregory, Briggs, Driver, Brown, Nestle, Liddle, Scott, von Soden, Kittel, Conybeare, Kenyon, Burkitt, Robinson, Lake, Souter, Clark, Moffatt, Goodspeed, Dodd, Bratcher, Taylor, Colwell, Kilpatrick, Elliott, Phillips, Epp, Nida, Ehrman, Childs, Wikgren, Aland, Martini, Metzger, and Karavidopoulos. Included are reports on some of the key evangelical popularizers of modern textual criticism, such as Tregelles, Hodge, Warfield, Robertson, Black, and Carson. 292 pages, 5X8, perfect bound. Available from Way of Life Literature, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061. 866-495-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org, <http://www.wayoflife.org>.

***The Revision Revised*** by John Burgon, one of the greatest textual scholars of the last 200 years. This is Burgon's masterly refutation of the Westcott-Hort theories of modern textual criticism. Though published in 1883, it nearly as relevant to the Bible text issue now as the day it first appeared. 549 pages, hard bound. Available from Bible for Today, 900 Park Ave., Collingswood, NJ 08108, 800-564-6109, [www.BibleForToday.org](http://www.BibleForToday.org).

***Seventy-Five Problems with Central Baptist Theological Seminary's Book "The Bible Version Debate"*** by Lloyd Streeter. This excellent book is helpful for three categories of believers: (1) It is helpful for those who defend the King James Bible, because the author provides almost a handbook for answering the challenges of the modern Bible version defenders and for clearing up misconceptions pertaining to this important subject. (2) It is helpful for those who are confused by the Bible version issue and do not know who to believe. By using this book, the reader can analyze for himself the modern version position side-by-side with the King James Bible position. (3) It is helpful to those who are leaning toward the critical text, because they will see that many of the standard arguments in its favor are indefensible, or at the very least, they will see that "King James onlyism" is not what they thought it was. Though written from a non-technical position and for a general audience, it is obvious that Pastor Streeter has studied this issue diligently for many years. He is passionate about his subject, zealous for the Word of God, and unhesitating in its defense, while at the same time kindly and patient toward those who are opposed to his view. I believe this attitude pleases the Lord. The author is blessed with the ability to get to the heart of an issue and to simplify difficult concepts. Following are some of the questions that are answered in the book: Do the textual variants impact theology? Have most fundamentalists been KJV only? Do we believe that all non-English Bibles must be translated from the KJV? Is a good new English version possible? Are inspired translations possible? Were any miracles involved in Bible preservation? Is "baptism" a mistake in the KJV? Who owns the term fundamentalist? Is something wrong with the Masoretic Hebrew text? Do historical negative factors make a perfect KJV impossible? Is modern textual criticism destructive? Was Erasmus a Catholic humanist? Does God depend on natural processes for preservation? Was the Traditional Text in the majority throughout history? Was the first Traditional Text version made at the end of the Fourth Century? Do we believe in "reinspiration"? Do we opt for simplistic answers? Do Dead Sea Scrolls vindicate emendations on the basis of conjecture? Didn't the KJV have the Apocrypha? Has the KJV been revised? Is the NASB the best translation? Is the NIV a good translation? Is the KJV hard to read? Is there ever a time to separate over Bible versions?

Pastor Streeter concludes the book with two appendixes. The first contains an insightful 29-page review of "From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man." The second edition of Pastor Streeter's book (2003) contains a new appendix critiquing Central Seminary's second book entitled *One Bible Only?* Order from Lloyd Streeter, First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 1043, LaSalle, IL 61301, fbc-1pc@core.comm.net.

***Touch Not the Unclean Thing*** by Dr. David Sorenson. The following review first appeared in *The Fundamentalist Digest*, Nov.-Dec. 2001: "This 'explosive new' book is a powerful defense of the KJV, as well as a thoroughly documented expose of the modern versions and their inextricable links to religious apostasy. In the reviewer's opinion, this book is not only the newest release on the market on this important issue, it is the most logical presentation and most thoroughly documented treatise since the publication of Dr. D.A. Waite's excellent treatise several years ago *Defending The King James Bible*. This book fills a much-needed void because it centers on a vital theme that has been vastly neglected in many otherwise excellent studies in this area: the application of the Scriptural doctrine of separation to the Bible textual/translation issue. Because of its logical order, reading format style and extensive documentation, this book can be equally used in a seminary classroom, as a college or Bible institute text, or as resource for church adult training unions. The 296-page book contains 11 information-packed chapters, plus five extensive appendixes, a selected biography divided into two sections citing books and articles. Sorenson has superbly woven the difficult twins of scholarship and simplicity into a treatise that can be readily grasped not only by full-time Christian vocational workers, but also by the average layman in the pew if he will seriously ponder the book's contents. In the book's introduction, (chapter one), the author indicates that he is a 'convert' to the TR/KJV position, having accepted the critical text without question during his college and seminary training. He began his pastoral ministry adhering to that position. After a friend gave him a copy of Dr. David Otis Fuller's book *Which Bible*, however, Sorenson began to see that 'the critical text had connections with apostasy' which made him, as a Fundamentalist, 'quite ill at ease.' The crux of the book is stated on pp. 4-5 when the author relates that the history of the Received Text is associated with 'persecuted, martyred brethren,' while the 'lineage of the critical text' is 'linked to apostasy at virtually every step of its history.' As the book unfolds it becomes readily apparent 'that one lineage is linked with apostasy, and the other with true believers.' On p. 7, Sorenson makes a potent statement that zeroes in on the heart of the issue. Sorenson's quote is the reason why the *Fundamentalist Digest* (FD) editor has become so vitally involved in this issue: It is because leading fundamentalists are standing now at apostasy's door but are seemingly unaware of where they stand! Sorenson discerningly writes: 'As the debate regarding the textual issue continues, those supporting the critical text come perilously close to the position of "thought" inspiration.' Sorenson staunchly believes 'the integrity of the Word of God is at stake' (p. 9) over this matter, a statement with which the reviewer heartily concurs! Another timely observation by Sorenson is that he believes that loyalist graduates of Fundamentalist schools that promote the critical texts are in danger of moving in a direction that violates Biblical Principles. For Sorenson, as well as this reviewer, 'the issue at hand is the 'integrity, accuracy, and trustworthiness' of 'the Word of God' (p. 13)." Order from Northstar Baptist Ministries, 1820 West Morgan Street, Duluth, MN 55811. Phone: 218-726-0209).

***Modern Bible Versions--The Dark Secret*** by Jack Moorman. In my estimation, this 48-page booklet contains one of the best concise presentations in print today refuting the modern versions and defending the King James Bible. Using the popular New International Version as his basis, Pastor Moorman notes the serious omissions in the modern versions, the attack upon the Deity of Jesus Christ, and many other doctrinal corruptions. Some defenders of the modern versions, such as James White, have denied that the modern Bibles weaken the doctrine of Christ's deity, but they are dead wrong. In the 19th century, the Unitarians readily observed that they could support their doctrinal errors much more easily from the critical Greek text than the Received Text. The Unitarians in the first half of the 19th century were among the first to call for the removal of the word "God" in 1 Timothy 3:16 and for the obliteration of 1 John 5:7 from the Bible. The Unitarians could see what James White and D.A. Carson other defenders of the modern versions today claim they cannot see, that the critical Greek text is more in conformity with heretical theology. In *Modern Bible Versions--the Dark Secret*, Pastor Moorman also refutes the Westcott-Hort theory of textual criticism, gives much helpful information about the history of the Bible text, and presents an outline of the all-too-neglected doctrine of Bible preservation. Pastor Moorman has a gift of making the complicated subject of Bible texts and versions understandable to the average Christian. Available from Bible for Today, 900 Park Ave., Collingswood, NJ 08108, 800-564-6109, [www.BibleForToday.org](http://www.BibleForToday.org).

***A Closer Look: Early Manuscripts and the Authorized Version*** by Jack Moorman. This is a brilliant and groundbreaking piece of believing research. By careful and discerning analysis of the four major areas of extant textual evidence -- uncials, minuscules, versions, and quotations, Moorman demonstrates that the Traditional Text underlying the Reformation Bibles has much greater support than the critical text underlying the modern versions. Along the way he destroys many of the myths of modern textual criticism. The last section of the book deals with 365 doctrinal passages that are corrupted in the modern texts and versions, listing the support both for and against the Traditional Text. Pastor Moorman spent countless hours developing this very practical Manuscript Digest that should be in the library of every Bible defender. The book explodes the myth that there is the textual debate is not a doctrinal issue and that doctrine is not affected by the omissions and changes in the critical Greek text. We thank the Lord for the wisdom that God has given to this brother in Christ. Available from Bible for Today, 900 Park Ave., Collingswood, NJ 08108, 800-564-6109, [www.BibleForToday.org](http://www.BibleForToday.org).

### **ARE THERE ANY BIBLE COLLEGES TODAY THAT STAND FOR THE KING JAMES BIBLE?**

People frequently ask us for the names of schools that stand for the King James Bible. The following schools use only the Received Text in their Greek courses and have an open and clear conviction that the KJV is an accurate translation of the preserved Greek and Hebrew text. The listing of these schools does not mean that we recommend them on all issues of doctrine and practice, of course.

Before I get to the list, I need to make the following comments:

1. There are other schools that stand for the KJV, but I refuse to add them to my list because of some serious problem or issue related to the institution or to the men who govern and/or founded them. For example, we do not support Peter Ruckman nor do we knowingly support schools that take his position or support him or use his materials. We also do not support the late Jack Hyles nor do we knowingly support churches and institutions that follow his philosophy and methodology. Further, many independent Baptist schools are moving gradually in the contemporary direction, and when we discern such a direction in a church or a school we stop recommending it immediately.

2. I am publishing this list in an attempt to help those who are searching for such information. The list is merely a suggested starting point. If you are interested in any of these schools, it is your responsibility to check them out prayerfully by the Word of God (1 Thess. 5:21).

3. I have no official association with any of these schools. I receive no money for publishing this list. It is strictly a labor of love on my part to attempt to help God's people. About the only thing I receive from publishing a list like this is a hard time from those who disagree with my judgment! In fact, I stopped publishing it for a few years because of this and more especially because it difficult to decide exactly which schools to list.

4. Please note, too, that institutions change, and sometimes they change quickly. A school that takes a certain stand today might drop (or weaken their conviction on) that stand tomorrow. In regard to the Bible Version issue, we have seen many schools change their position over the past 30 years, some strengthening their conviction about the KJV and some weakening. An example of the latter is Maranatha Baptist Bible College in Watertown, Wisconsin, which stood unhesitatingly for the KJV when the late Myron Cederholm was President. In those days Maranatha had a Dean Burgon Society branch on campus and published the excellent book "Evaluating Versions of the New Testament" by Everett Fowler (available now from Bible for Today, 900 Park Ave., Collingswood, NJ 08108, 800-564-6109, [www.BibleForToday.org](http://www.BibleForToday.org)). Sadly, when the school changed leadership some years ago, it changed its position on this and other things, though it is still a good school in many ways. On the other hand, some schools which once did not have a strong conviction on the Received Text and the KJV have changed their position and have adopted this stand.

5. One of the important considerations in choosing a fundamentalist Christian college is, of course, the student's goal. If a young person desires training in a field such as nursing his options are much more limited than in the fields of preaching or Christian education. A school such as PENSACOLA CHRISTIAN COLLEGE (25 Brent Lane, Box 18000, Pensacola, FL 32523. 877-787-4723, [www.pcci.edu](http://www.pcci.edu)) offers more degree programs (e.g., pre-pharmacy, pre-physical therapy, computer science and software engineering, political science, arts in media communication, masters degree in nursing or business admin., etc.) than the ones in the following list, which are geared more specifically to training preachers, missionaries, and Christian school teachers; and if a student desires training in one of the fields offered by Pensacola but not offered in the other schools that are listed, I recommend Pensacola



6. I do not recommend Bob Jones University. Not only does BJU *not* stand for the King James Bible it has taken a strident stand in recent years against those who do. On a visit to the BJU bookstore in March 2005, I counted at least 10 books that tear down the King James Bible and its underlying Greek text and that attack its defenders, including *One Bible Only: Examining Exclusive Claims for the King James Bible* edited by Beacham and Bauder; *Bible Preservation and the Providence of God* edited by Schnaiter and Tagliapietra; *From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man* edited by J.B. Williams; *God's Word in Our Hands* edited by J.B. Williams and Randolph Shaylor; *The King James Version Controversy* by James White; *Facts on the Kings Only Debate* by Ankerberg and Weldon; and *The King James Version Debate* by D.A. Carson. In the introduction to *From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man*, the editor, J.B. Williams, calls the defense of the KJV a “cancerous sore” that has resulted in “a deplorable condition in Fundamentalism.” He describes the defense of the KJV as a “mass of misinformation.” There were at least five books for sale at BJU by Bruce Metzger, who believes that the Old Testament is filled with myth, including his book *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, which by its very title denies the divine preservation of Scripture. This school has a lot to answer for before Almighty God for promoting the heresy of modern textual criticism which is predicated upon the principle that the Scripture was “corrupted” and had to be “restored” and therefore was not divinely preserved in any reasonable, practical sense. Though the aforementioned books claim to hold to some sort of position on preservation, it is a position that is not based upon the Bible’s own testimony but is fashioned by the authors’ commitment to the Westcott-Hort-Metzger-Aland brand of textual criticism. BJU claims to love the King James Bible, but with friends like this the KJV needs no enemies. Edward F. Hills, who had a doctorate in textual criticism from Harvard, refuted the teaching found in the aforementioned books that are sold in the BJU bookstore in his *The King James Bible Defended*, which was first published in 1956, long before Peter Ruckman dipped his acrid pen into the ink well on this topic. What I have said about Bob Jones University also goes for Central Baptist Theological Seminary, Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary, and some others who have determined to defend the indefensible.

#### THE FOLLOWING ARE SCHOOLS THAT I KNOW SOMETHING ABOUT AND THAT I CAN RECOMMEND

NOTE: This is all I will say about the schools, and I will not give any further information pro or con even if you contact me personally. If you need more information, please contact the school itself.)

#### AMBASSADOR BAPTIST COLLEGE

101 Stockton St., P.O. Box 158, Lattimore, NC 28089. 704-434-0303 (voice), 704-434-8331 (fax), [www.ambassadors.edu](http://www.ambassadors.edu) (web site), [AmbassadorBaptistCollege@hotmail.com](mailto:AmbassadorBaptistCollege@hotmail.com) (e-mail), [clsurrett@juno.com](mailto:clsurrett@juno.com) (e-mail).

Ron Comfort, Founder and President/ Charles Surrett, Assistant to the President

#### **BAPTIST BIBLE TRANSLATORS INSTITUTE**

P.O. Box 1450, Bowie, TX 76230. 940-872-575 (office), <http://www.baptisttranslators.com> (web site), [info@baptisttranslators.com](mailto:info@baptisttranslators.com) (e-mail). The goal of BBTI is to provide Linguistic/Cross-cultural training for missionaries that is universal to any language, any culture anywhere in the world. Note that this is a short-term training institute that specializes in linguistics. It is not a general Bible college.

Rex Cobb, Director, [rexcobb@baptisttranslators.com](mailto:rexcobb@baptisttranslators.com)

#### **BIBLE WAY INSTITUTE OF NEW ENGLAND**

Bible Way Baptist Church, 70 James St., Worcester, MA 01603. 508-757-3003 (voice), 800-242-5314 (voice), 508-756-3989 (fax), <http://www.invitation.org> (web site), [bibleway@invitation.org](mailto:bibleway@invitation.org) (e-mail).

Arthur Belanger, Pastor. Extension courses.

#### **CROWN COLLEGE**

Temple Baptist Church, 1700 W. Beaver Creek Drive Powell, TN 37849, 865-938-8186 (phone), [admissions@goforthecrown.com](mailto:admissions@goforthecrown.com) (e-mail), [www.goforthecrown.com](http://www.goforthecrown.com) (web site). Also a graduate school and seminary programs.

Clarence Sexton, Pastor, President

#### **EMMANUEL BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**

Emmanuel Baptist Church, 296 New Britain Ave., Newington, CT 06111. 860-666-1055 (voice), 860-666-0146 (fax), [www.emmanuel-newington.org/seminary/](http://www.emmanuel-newington.org/seminary/) (web site), [seminary@emmanuel-newington.org](mailto:seminary@emmanuel-newington.org)

Michael Bates, Pastor/President; Thomas Strouse, Dean

#### **FAIRHAVEN BAPTIST COLLEGE**

Fairhaven Baptist Church, 86 E. Oak Hill Road, Chesterton, IN 46304. 800-733-3422, 219-926-6636 (voice), 800-733-3422 (toll free), 219-926-1111 (fax), <http://www.fairhavenbaptist.org> (web site), [info@fairhavenbaptist.org](mailto:info@fairhavenbaptist.org)(e-mail).

Roger Voegtlin, Pastor/President

#### **FAITH BAPTIST BIBLE COLLEGE**

Faith Baptist Church, Rt. 1 Box 464, Horsecreek Rd., Seneca, PA 16346. 814-677-5172 (voice), 814-678-2910 (fax), <http://www.csonline.net/fbbc> (web site), [fbbc@csonline.net](mailto:fbbc@csonline.net) (e-mail).

Larry Williams, Pastor/President

#### **HERITAGE BAPTIST UNIVERSITY AND SEMINARY**

1301 W. County Line Rd., Greenwood, IN 46142. 317-882-2327 (voice), [Info@hbuonline.edu](mailto:Info@hbuonline.edu) (e-mail), [www.hbuonline.edu](http://www.hbuonline.edu) (web site).

Russell Dennis Jr., President

#### **LANDMARK BAPTIST COLLEGE AND SEMINARY**

Landmark Baptist Church, 2222 East Hinson Ave., Haines City, FL 33844. 800-700-5322, 863-

422-6493(voice), 863-421-2956(fax). <http://landmarkbaptistchurch.org> (web site),  
[tim@landmarkbaptistchurch.org](mailto:tim@landmarkbaptistchurch.org) (e-mail).  
Mickey Carter, Pastor/President

#### MARYLAND BAPTIST BIBLE COLLEGE

Maranatha Baptist Church, P.O. Box 66, 4131 Old Neck Elk Road, Elkton, MD 21922. 800-226-0869 (voice), 410-398-6667 (voice), 800-226-0869 (toll free), [mbbc@dol.net](mailto:mbbc@dol.net) (e-mail),  
[www.mbcmin.org/mbbc](http://www.mbcmin.org/mbbc) (web site).  
Allen Dickerson, Pastor/ Robert Hitchens, President

#### MASSILLON BAPTIST COLLEGE

Massillon Baptist Church, 1219 Overlook Ave., SW, Massillon, OH 44647. 330-830-5902 (voice), 330-830-5980(fax), [mbcoffice@mbcaf.org](mailto:mbcoffice@mbcaf.org) (e-mail), [www.mbcaf.org](http://www.mbcaf.org) (web site).  
Bruce Cummons, Founder (1924-2004)/ Thomas Crowley, Dean.

#### SOUTHEASTERN FUNDAMENTAL BAPTIST COLLEGE

Madison Baptist Church, 840 Balch Rd., Madison, AL 35758, 256-830-6224 (voice), [broallison@madisonbaptist.com](mailto:broallison@madisonbaptist.com) (e-mail), [www.madisonbaptist.com](http://www.madisonbaptist.com) (web site). Madison Baptist Church offers two Bible training programs. The Madison Bible Institute is a three-year program consisting of 288 lessons encompassing Theology and Old and New Testament surveys. Southeastern Fundamental Baptist College is a four-year program. Courses are taught at night.  
Mike Allison, Pastor and President/ Bill Boruff, Dean

#### SYDNEY BIBLE BAPTIST COLLEGE

214 Pennant Hills Road, Oatlands, N.S.W. 2177 Australia. 02 96834244 or 02 96201148, [metro@ihug.com.au](mailto:metro@ihug.com.au) (e-mail), [www.metropolitanbaptist.net](http://www.metropolitanbaptist.net). A ministry of Metropolitan Baptist Church, Sydney.  
Mario Schiavone, Pastor and President/ Pastor R.L. Hester, Principal

# QUESTIONS PERTAINING TO THE KING JAMES VERSION

## WAS THE KING JAMES BIBLE AUTHORIZED?

Was the King James Bible Authorized? This point has been debated aggressively, because no record of authorization has survived. (All of the documents from the Privy Council from 1600-1613 were destroyed in the Whitehall fire of 1619.) Whether or not it was actually authorized by a king is not really important, of course, as there can be no doubt that God put His stamp of approval upon it, and that is what matters. But since this is a point that is debated, I will give four reasons why I am confident that it is proper to refer to the King James Bible as authorized.

### ANSWER:

1. At the Hampton Court conference in 1604 King James I made a formal decision to approve the new translation for use in all the churches. It was done by royal order and under royal watchcare. It has never been explained to my satisfaction why this in itself does not constitute “authorization.” William Barlow’s report of the Hampton Court conference (Barlow was one of the KJV translators and was present at Hampton Court in 1604), stated that the decision was made by the king not only that a new translation would be made but also that it be “ratified by his Royal authority; and so his whole Church to be bound unto it, and none other” (Barlow, *The Sum and Substance of the Conference*, reprinted in Alfred Pollard, *Records of the English Bible*, pp. 46, 47). Barlow’s report was published with the king’s approval.

2. The crown of England has held the copyright to the King James Bible from the beginning.

3. The title page to the first edition of the King James Bible stated, “Appointed to be read in Churches.”

4. In 1616 the king issued a command that only the King James Bible was to be printed in England.

The King James Bible was created by royal order, was printed by authority of the Crown of England, and was appointed to be read in all the churches. I see no reason why this does not constitute formal “authorization.”

## DIDN’T THE ORIGINAL KJV INCLUDE THE APOCRYPHA?

### ANSWER:

1. Early editions of the English Bible (as well as other Reformation Bibles, including the German Luther and the Olivetan French) contained the Apocrypha, but these books were included for historical reference only, not as additions to the canon of Scripture. Alexander

McClure, a biographer of the KJV translators, says: "... the Apocryphal books in those times were more read and accounted of than now, though by no means placed on a level with the canonical books of Scripture" (McClure, *Translators Revived*, p. 185). He then lists seven reasons assigned by the KJV translators for rejecting the Apocrypha as canonical. (1) Not one of them is in the Hebrew language, which was alone used by the inspired historians and poets of the Old Testament. (2) Not one of the writers lays any claim to inspiration. (3) These books were never acknowledged as sacred Scriptures by the Jewish Church, and therefore were never sanctioned by our Lord. (4) They were not allowed a place among the sacred books, during the first four centuries of the Christian Church. (5) They contain fabulous statements, and statements which contradict not only the canonical Scriptures, but themselves; as when, in the two Books of Maccabees, Antiochus Epiphanes is made to die three different deaths in as many different places. (6) It inculcates doctrines at variance with the Bible, such as prayers for the dead and sinless perfection. (7) It teaches immoral practices, such as lying, suicide, assassination, and magical incantation.

2. The Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England clearly state that the Apocryphal books have no scriptural authority. "... [the Church of England] doth not apply to them to establish any doctrine."

3. It is important to understand that in the early King James Bibles, the Apocryphal books were placed by themselves between the Old and New Testaments rather than intermingled among the canonical O.T. books as is done in Catholic Bibles. In the Jerusalem Bible (a Catholic Bible), for example, Tobit, Judith, and the Maccabees follow Nehemiah; the Book of Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus follow Ecclesiastes; Baruch follows Lamentations; etc. Thus the very location of the apocryphal books denotes the canonical authority (or lack thereof) attributed to them by a Bible's publisher.

4. It is not true that the Geneva Bible excluded the Apocrypha. One of the authors of the book *From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man* (published in 1999 by Ambassador-Emerald International, Greenville, SC and Belfast, N. Ireland) claims that the Puritans and Separatists rejected the KJV in favor of the Geneva Bible because the latter excluded the Apocrypha (pp. 45-46). Dr. Jeffrey Khoo observes: "Dr. Errol F. Rhodes and Dr. Liana Lupas who edited *The Translators to the Reader: The Original Preface to the King James Version Revised*, present a more accurate picture: "The books of the Apocrypha were included in the King James Version from the first as a matter of course, as they had been in all versions of the English Bible from the time of Wycliffe (c. 1384), including the Calvinist Geneva Bible of 1560. ... The deliberate omission of the Apocrypha from an English Bible is first noted in the 1640 edition of the Geneva Bible. ... Not until the nineteenth century, however, did the omission of the Apocrypha in Protestant Bibles become normal'" (Khoo, *Kept Pure in All Ages*, 2001, p. 143).

5. Of Bibles printed in America, David Daniell testifies: "The present writer's experience of examining Bibles printed in America throughout the nineteenth century is that in the first half more of them than not included the Apocrypha" (*The Bible in English*, 2003, p. 600).

6. Thus, in conclusion, the Apocrypha was never considered canonical by the Church of England or by the KJV translators. It was commonly included in Reformation Bibles in many languages until the 19th century for historical reference only, much as extensive notes and comments are included in modern study Bibles.

### **WAS THE KING JAMES BIBLE EVER COPYRIGHTED?**

#### **ANSWER:**

1. The King James Bible was produced under the direct authority of the British Crown and is owned and “copyrighted” by the crown of England.
2. The British government still licenses all printings of the text in Great Britain, typically by designating one printer as the authorized publisher and requiring other printers to obtain a sublicense from that one.
3. The universities of Oxford and Cambridge also possess the right to print editions of the crown copyrighted Bibles.
4. “Annotated study Bibles escape the monopoly by being labeled as ‘Bible commentaries,’ and can also use the text” (Freedictionary.com).
5. Effectively, there is no copyright outside of Britain. The KJV has been published without restriction in America, for example, since its founding in the late 18th century.

### **HASN'T THE KJV BEEN UPDATED IN THOUSANDS OF PLACES?**

#### **ANSWER:**

1. There were corrections of printing errors, typographical changes, and spelling updates. These were done by the British publishers of the KJV and can be grouped into two time periods.
  - a. There were updates made between 1613 and 1639 for the purpose of correcting printing errors. The revisers included Samuel Ward and John Bois, two of the original translators. “Some errors of the press having crept into the first edition, and others into later reprints, King Charles the First, in 1638, had another edition printed at Cambridge, which was revised by Dr. Ward and Mr. Bois, two of the original Translators who still survived, assisted by Dr. Thomas Goad, Mr. Mede, and other learned men” (Alexander McClure, *The Translators Revived*, 1855).
  - b. An update was made between 1762-69 to correct any lingering printing errors and to update the spelling, enlarge and standardize the italics, and increase the number of cross references and marginal notes. The revision was begun in 1762 by Dr. F.S. Paris of Cambridge University and completed in 1769 by Dr. Benjamin Blayney of Hertford College, Oxford

University. “The edition in folio and quarto, revised and corrected with very great care by Benjamin Blayney, D.D., under the direction of the Vice-Chancellor of Oxford, and the Delegates of The Clarendon Press, in 1769” (McClure, *The Revision Revised*). The revision was made by collating the then current editions of Oxford and Cambridge with those of 1611 and 1701.

2. All of the changes were of a minor nature, such as the following:

a. Printing errors were corrected. This was almost exclusively the nature of the corrections made in the 28 years following the first printing. Consider some examples:

Psalm 69:32 -- “seek good” was a printing error in the 1611 that was corrected to “seek God” in 1617

Ecclesiastes 1:5 -- “the place” was a printing error in the 1611 that was corrected to “his place” in 1638.

Matthew 6:3 -- “thy right doeth” was a printing error in the 1611 that was corrected to “thy right hand doeth” in 1613.

Consider some famous printing errors that have appeared in printings of the King James Bible:

The Wicked Bible (1631) omitted “not” in “Thou shalt not commit adultery” in Exodus 20:14.

The Printer’s Bible (1702) read “printers have persecuted me” instead of “princes” in Psalm 119:161

The Vinegar Bible (1717) read “The Parable of the Vinegar” instead of Vineyard.

The Ears to Ear Bible (1810) read “who hath ears to ear let him hear” in Mat. 14:43.

The Rebekah’s Camel’s Bible (1823) read “And Rebekah arose, and her camels [should be damsels]” in Gen. 24:61.

b. The use of italics was more standardized and its use was expanded.

c. Spelling and punctuation were updated. For example, old English had an “e” after the verb (i.e., feare, blinde, sinne, borne), used an “f” for the “s” except at the end of words (also instead of also) and “u” for the “v” (euil instead of evil). Consider how 1 Corinthians 14:9 was written in 1611: “So likewise you, except ye vtter by the tongue words easie to be vnderstood, how shall it be knowen what is spoken? For ye shall speak into the aire.” Or Genesis 1:1-2: “In the beginning God created the Heauen, and the Earth. And the earth was without forme, and voyd, and darknesse was vpon the face of the deepe: and the Spirit of God mooued vpon the face of the waters.”

d. A large number of new marginal notes and cross-references were added.

3. Donald Waite of Bible for Today compared every word of the 1611 KJV with a standard KJV in publication today (the 1917 Scofield which uses an Oxford text). Dr. Waite's study is entitled "KJB of 1611 Compared to the KJB of the 1917 Old Scofield" (BFT1294) and can be obtained from Bible for Today, 900 Park Ave., Collingswood, NJ 08108, <http://www.biblefortoday.org/>. He counted all of the changes that could be heard. The largest number of changes were spelling (e.g., "blinde" to "blind"), but as these have no real significance he did not count them.

a. Waite found only 1,095 changes\* that affect the sound throughout the entire 791,328 words in the King James Bible. Of these, the vast majority are minor changes of form, such as "towards" changed to "toward," "burnt" changed to "burned," "amongst" changed to "among," "lift up" changed to "lifted up," and "you" changed to "ye." Obviously these are not real changes of any translational significance. [\* Waite's original report stated that he found 421 changes that affect the sound, but he later revised that to 1,095 changes.]

b. Dr. Waite found ONLY 136 SUBSTANTIAL CHANGES (out of 791,328 words) between the original KJV of 1611 and the contemporary Oxford edition. Most of these changes were made within 28 years after the original publication of the KJV and were the simple correction of printer's errors. Following are some of the 136 substantial changes:

1 Samuel 16:12 -- "requite good" changed to "requite me good"  
Esther 1:8 -- "for the king" changed to "for so the king"  
Isaiah 47:6 -- "the" changed to "thy"  
Isaiah 49:13 -- "God" changed to "Lord"  
Isaiah 57:8 "made a" changed to "made thee a"  
Ezekiel 3:11 -- "the people" changed to "the children of thy people"  
Naham 3:17 -- "the crowned" changed to "thy crowned"  
Acts 8:32 -- "shearer" changed to "his shearer"  
Acts 16:1 -- "which was a Jew" changed to "which was a Jewess"  
1 Peter 2:5 -- "sacrifice" changed to "sacrifices"  
Jude 25 -- "now and ever" changed to "both now and ever"

c. Further, there are a few differences between the Oxford and the Cambridge corrected editions that can still be found in current editions of the KJV. Following is one example:

Jeremiah 34:16 -- Cambridge has "whom YE had set at liberty" while Oxford has "whom HE had set at liberty"

4. The most thorough study ever done on the various editions of the King James Bible was by Frederick Scrivener in the late 19th century. He was the author of the *Cambridge Paragraph Bible*, which was an "elaborate attempt to publish a trustworthy text of King James' version." It first appeared in 1873 and was republished in 1884 accompanied by Scrivener's valuable Introduction and Appendices as *The Authorized Edition of the English Bible (1611): Its Subsequent Reprints and Modern Representatives* (Cambridge: University Press, 1884). One of



the Appendices is a “List of original readings of the Bible of 1611 examined and arranged” and another is a “List of wrong readings of the Bible of 1611 amended in later editions.” Scrivener also analyzed the KJV’s underlying Greek text and tabulated the number of times that it varied from the Stephens and the Beza editions of the Received Text. A reprint of Scrivener’s important book is available from Bible for Today. It is also available on CD from Sola Scriptura Publishing, 1118 SW Orleans St., Topeka, KS 66604. <http://www.solascripturapublishing.com>, [mlangleyl@cox.net](mailto:mlangleyl@cox.net).

5. What is the significance of these facts?

- a. First, we see that the KJV has gone through such a strenuous purification process that the reader can have complete confidence in its accuracy.
- b. Also, any idea that the KJV was “given by inspiration” is disproved. If it were “given by inspiration” in 1611 it would not have needed any sort of correction or refinement, because it would have been infallible in every detail. Those who teach that the KJV is more than an accurate translation, that it is given by inspiration and perfect and inerrant in itself and advanced revelation and such must show us exactly which edition they are referring to.

### **WAS KING JAMES I A HOMOSEXUAL?**

#### **ANSWER:**

1. The accusation that King James I was a homosexual has often been made, but we need to be cautious about accepting it.

- a. Actually, since he fathered eight children, he couldn’t have been much of a homosexual! He wrote love letters to his wife and obviously enjoyed her most intimate company. He referred to her as “our dearest bedfellow” (Gustavus Paine, *The Men Behind the King James Version*, p. 4). When John Rainolds questioned the phrase in the Anglican marriage service, “with my body I thee worship,” King James replied: “... if you had a good wife yourself, you would think that all the honor and worship you could do to her would be well bestowed” (Ibid.).
- b. In a book that the king wrote for his son Henry (entitled *Basilikon Doron, or A King’s Gift*), he made the following statements about the importance of sexual purity:

“But the principal blessing [is] in your marrying of a godly and virtuous wife ... being flesh of your flesh and bone of your bone. ... Marriage is the greatest earthly felicity” (p. 43).

“Keep your body clean and unpolluted while you give it to your wife whom to only it belongs for how can you justly crave to be joined with a Virgin if your body be polluted?” (p. 44).

“When you are married, keep inviolably your promise made to God in your marriage” (p. 45).

“Abstain from the filthy vice of adultery; remember only what solemn promise ye made to God at your marriage” (p. 54).

c. The king wrote plainly against the sin of homosexuality.

“Especially eschew to be effeminate” (*Basilikon Doron*, p. 46).

“There are some horrible crimes that ye are bound in conscience never to forgive: such as witchcraft, willful murder, incest, and sodomy” (p. 48).

d. The charge of homosexuality was made by the king’s enemies and only after his death. The book *King James I Unjustly Accused* by Stephen A. Coston, Sr., makes the case that the charge was slanderous and untrue (KONIGSWORT Inc., 2528 65th Ave. N., St. Petersburg, FL 33702. 813-892-5351). The charge was first made by Anthony Weldon, who had been expelled from his office by James for political reasons and had sworn that he would have his day of vengeance. Weldon not only hated James, he hated the entire Scottish race. Historian Maurice Lee, Jr., warned, “Historians can and should ignore the venomous caricature of the king’s person and behavior drawn by Anthony Weldon” (*Great Britain’s Solomon: James VI & I in His Three Kingdoms*, 1990, pp. 309-310). See also David Wilson, *King James VI & I* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956) and Christopher Durston, *James I* (London: Routledge, 1993).

e. That was an age in which intimate but non-sexual relationships between males was common. While at Cambridge, William Sancroft, the future Archbishop of Canterbury, had such a relationship with his roommate Arthur Bonnest. “They lived together, read together and slept together.” When Bonnest contracted TB and had to leave the school, the two continued to correspond. Bonnest wrote: “Thou art oftener in my thoughts than ever; thou art nearer me than when I embraced them. Thou sayest thou lovest me; good, well repeat it again and again.” Adam Nicholson, who records this from Sancroft’s personal correspondence, observes: “The age was at ease with unbridled but apparently quite unsexual love between men” (*God’s Secretaries*, p. 132).

2. While we doubt that King James was a homosexual, we do not defend his character very far. He was a profligate, conniving, deceitful man, and he was a persecutor of Baptists and other separatists who refused to submit to the state church. In fact, the last person burned alive in England for his faith was burned during the reign of James, and many others died in their cruel prison cells for no crime other than following the Bible according to the dictates of their own conscience. It was because of the persecution poured out during James’ reign that the Puritans fled England and sailed for America in 1607 and the Pilgrims followed in 1620.

3. The bottom line is that the character of King James I has no relevance to the King James Bible itself. Though he set the project in motion and there is evidence that he maintained an interest in keeping it moving along, he had no role in the translation. He did not even finance the project.

### **WERE THE KING JAMES TRANSLATORS UNIVERSALLY GODLY AND WITHOUT DOCTRINAL BLAME?**

#### **ANSWER:**

1. The answer to this question, of course, is no.
  - a. The lives of the King James translators were not universally godly. Some of the men were truly godly and some were less so. One of them was intemperate in the consumption of alcoholic wine, especially in the latter part of his life.
  - b. When judged from a Baptist perspective, they were certainly not without blame. As Anglicans, they held many doctrinal errors. To a man, they held the error of pedobaptism. Even the Puritans among them held to state churchism.
2. While we don't make light of these errors, it is also true that the writers of the Bible were not blameless in their lives, either. The sweet Psalmist David was an adulterer and murderer. Solomon, the wisest man, displayed the grandest lack of wisdom in marrying 1,000 women and becoming an idolater. Peter boldly denied his Lord and later played the hypocrite. Each and every child of Adam can be thankful that God, in His grace, uses deeply blemished people.
3. In approaching the history of the Bible, we must look more to God than to man. Had man alone (or even largely) been responsible, we would not have an infallibly inspired original text nor would we have a preserved text. It is interesting to wonder why God did not use baptistic churches to make our standard English Bible, but the fact remains that He didn't. The fathers of the English Bible, John Wycliffe (the first entire English Bible) and William Tyndale (the first English New Testament from Greek), never formally left the Catholic Church and probably remained pedobaptists all their lives. These are matters that we have to leave with God.

### **SINCE THE KJV TRANSLATORS WERE SO FLAWED, HOW DO THEY DIFFER FROM THE AUTHORS OF MODERN TEXTUAL CRITICISM THAT YOU REJECT?**

#### **ANSWER:**

1. It is the difference between disobeying the Bible and disbelieving the Bible. A true child of God can disobey the Bible but he cannot disbelieve it. Though the KJV translators held many errors and deep imperfections, they did not deny the infallible nature of the Bible. They upheld it as the perfectly inspired Word of God. The "Translators to the Reader" contains their statement of faith: "The original thereof being from heaven, not from earth; the author being God, not man;

the enditer [composer], the holy spirit, not the wit of the Apostles or Prophets; the Pen-men such as were sanctified from the womb, and endued with a principal portion of God's spirit..." King James held the same position, as expressed in a letter to his son, Prince Henry: "The whole Scripture is dictated by God's Spirit ... to instruct and rule the whole church militant to the end of the world. It is composed of two parts, the Old and the New Testaments. The ground of the former is the Law, which sheweth our sin, and containeth justice: the ground of the other is Christ, who pardoning sin containeth grace" (reprinted from Adam Nicholson, *God's Secretaries*, 2003, p. 78). There was a dramatic change in the times during the 19th century and the Bible's inspiration began to be denied by biblical scholars in ever widening circles, and from its inception modern textual criticism has been deeply infected with this spirit of unbelief. Very few of the recognized names in this field have escaped the taint of rationalism.

2. It is the difference between a wrong doctrine and a damnable doctrine. A true child of God can hold wrong doctrine, such as in eschatology or ecclesiology; but he cannot hold damnable doctrine. A damnable doctrine (2 Pet. 3:1) is a one that damns the soul to eternal judgment. These are doctrines particularly pertaining to the Person of Jesus Christ, the Gospel, and the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 11:3-4). Another damnable doctrine pertains to the nature of the Scripture. The prophets taught that there is "no light" in those who speak not according to God's Word (Isa. 8:20); Christ taught that "the Scripture cannot be broken" (Jn. 10:35); and the apostles taught that "All scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Tim. 3:16). Thus, there is no "wiggle" room here. The doctrine of the infallible inspiration of Scripture is foundational to every aspect of Christian life and belief and those who question it are not Spirit taught.

3. It is the difference between interpreting the Bible and denying the Bible. While I can disagree with a fellow believer over various interpretations of Scripture and still accept him as a brother in Christ, I cannot accept a person as genuinely saved if he denies such things as the deity of Jesus Christ and the infallible nature of the Bible.

### **WAS THE SCHOLARSHIP OF THE KJV TRANSLATORS INFERIOR?**

A recent e-mail debate on the Bible Version issue contained the following statement attacking the scholarship of the translators of the 1611 Authorized English Version:

"In the realm of linguistics alone, the KJV translators were completely ignorant of numerous languages that shed important light on the OT, including Ugaritic, Phoenecian, Moabite, Old Aramaic, Akkadian, Old Persian (and more remotely, Egyptian, Hittite, Hurrian and Sumerian). And the KJV men were wholly ignorant of the nature of NT Greek as being *koine*. And we could add their ignorance of (or ignoring of) the so-called Sharp's rule, which demonstrates that Titus 2:13 and 2 Pet. 1:1 do with certainty affirm the deity of Christ--a fact obscured in the KJV. Beza wrote concerning this Greek construction and understood it correctly viz a viz Titus 2:13, but the KJV missed it. Scholarship was not mysteriously suspended in 1611, and somehow all further accumulation of knowledge ceased. No, scholars today have 4 more centuries of research and writing to build upon, and can see more clearly and accurately at many points than was even possible in 1611" (e-mail, Dec. 20, 2000, sent to betbapt@flash.net).

## **ANSWER:**

If this statement is true, it follows that the King James Bible is an exceedingly weak translation that should have gone by the wayside centuries ago. Men such as the author of the above statement pretend that they are not enemies of the King James Bible. They profess that they actually love the KJV; they are merely opposed to “extremism in the Bible version debate.” I don’t believe it for a minute. If they are friends of the KJV, it needs no enemies! Consider what they are saying: The Greek text underlying the King James Bible was rudimentary and weak. The best Greek text, they say, did not come to prominence until roughly three centuries later. Furthermore, the 17th century translators were infants in their scholarship, lacking even the most basic tools and skills necessary for the task, for the simple fact that those tools and skills (say they) were not available until centuries later.

Where does that leave the King James Bible? It leaves it in a mess. It would mean that the King James Bible is literally filled with error, both textually and translationally. It would mean it is COMPLETELY untrustworthy. If that is the case, why do most of these same KJV critics still use the KJV at least in the pulpit and in their classrooms and chapels? Either it is a good translation or it is not. If it is not; if it is what they are saying it is; it should have been discarded centuries ago. If it is what they are saying it is, and if it is also true that “fundamentalists have never defended the King James Bible but have accepted modern textual criticism,” I want to know why fundamentalists of old almost always used the KJV? And that includes Bob Jones, J. Frank Norris, John R. Rice, you name it. What type of hypocrisy was that? If they really thought that the Westcott-Hort Greek text was the accurate text, why did they cleave to an antiquated, miserable old Bible like the King James? If the modern versions are better, why didn’t they use them?

The fact is that the scholarship of the 17th century translators was not mediocre. It was excellent and it was sufficient to produce excellent versions of Scripture. We have documented the exalted qualifications of the KJV translators in the book *Faith vs. the Modern Bible Versions*.

Consider the following comments by three men who understand these matters:

### **Reply by Dr. Donald Waite:**

I wrote to Dr. Waite, director of Bible for Today, and asked him to give a reply to this challenge. Dr. Waite has 118 semester hours (1,888 class hours) of training in the biblical and other foreign languages, plus countless hours of teaching and personal research in the use of these languages. He obtained a B.A. in classical Greek and Latin from the University of Michigan in 1948; a Th.M. with high honors in New Testament Greek Literature and Exegesis from Dallas Theological Seminary in 1952; a Th.D. with honors in Bible Exposition from Dallas Seminary in 1955. He holds both New Jersey and Pennsylvania teacher certificates in Greek and Language Arts, and has taught Greek, Hebrew, Bible, Speech, and English for over thirty-five years in nine schools. Following is Dr. Waite’s response to the previous challenge.

Dear Brother Cloud:

Let me answer partially by referring you to Chapter III of my book *DEFENDING THE KING JAMES BIBLE* (pp. 62-83) on the Translators' Superiority. Though it is brief, and McClure goes into even more detail, yet it shows clearly how the KJB translators were cognizant of all of the "cognate" languages germane to their endeavors in the translation of the Hebrew/Aramaic and Greek. [Dr. Waite is referring to Alexander Wilson McClure (1808-1865), *Translators Revived: Biographical Notes of the KJV Bible Translators*. A reprint of this book is available from Bible for Today, 900 Park Ave., Collingswood, NJ 08108. 800-564-6109 (orders), 856-854-4452 (voice), 856-854-2464 (fax), BFT@BibleForToday.org (e-mail).] Dr. Andrews was conversant with 15 languages (pp. 67-68). So far as Dr. Andrews' ignorance of the Greek language is concerned, he wrote an entire *Manual of Private Devotions* wholly in the Greek language. (p. 67).

Dr. Bedwell knew thoroughly both the Arabic and the Persian languages and left documents for study in these languages, even a Persian dictionary (pp. 68-69). Dr. Bedwell was conversant with all of the cognate or sister languages that had anything to do with understanding the Hebrew O.T. (pp. 68-69). If the 10 languages listed [by the writer first quoted] have anything to do with an understanding of the Hebrew O.T., Dr. Bedwell and others on the translating team knew them and used them in their task. That's what "cognate" languages means. If they have nothing germanely connected with the Hebrew translation task, why should the translators need to know them. Dr. Bedwell definitely had a firm grasp of Arabic, Persian, Aramaic, Coptic, and various other cognate languages. (p. 69).

Dr. Miles Smith was expert in Chaldee, Hebrew, Syriac and Arabic (p. 70).

I seem to remember in the e-mail correspondence of ----- that he railed at the KJB translators because they didn't leave any of their works to this day. That's not because they didn't write any. It's because we haven't re-printed them. Chapter III [of *Defending the King James Bible*] is replete with various scholarly works written by them.

As for his charge that they knew nothing of Greek grammar and made errors in the KJB translation of Titus 2:13 and 2 Peter 1:1, this is false. Both these passages teach the deity of Christ in the KJB just as it stands. Their translation of all of the Greek and Latin Fathers certainly is indicative of their strong comprehension of the grammars of Greek and Latin.

As to the four more centuries of evidence and work we have today, so what! What are we doing with the learning of those four centuries? Have we stopped watching sports or other TV trivia? He is trying to say that we in our generation are intellectual giants and the KJB translators were pygmies, whereas exactly the opposite is the case. Remember this, "a man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still." And that is the epitaph of [the author of the above challenge to the scholarship of the KJV translators] and hundreds of others like him. I say with my Saviour in Matthew 15:14, "Let them alone. They be blind leaders of the blind and if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch."

As to the Hebrew tools, the Trinitarian Bible Society in their April-June 1979 *Quarterly Record* compiled a list of the books at the disposal of the KJB translators--44 in all. Some of them are as follows:

Hebrew Old Testaments (complete and portions) by A. ben Chavim, Faro, Soncino, Hajar, Pesaro, Daniel Bomberg, etc.

The Hagiographa

Hebrew Grammar compiled by Pellican

Hebrew Grammar and Dictionary by Reuchlin

Hebrew Dictionary and Chaldee Grammar by Munster

Hebrew Dictionary by Pagninus

Translations and Commentaries by Abravanel, Kimchi, Salonika, Luther, Zwingli, Pellican, Leo Juda, Pagninus, Oecolampadius, Tremellius, Munster, Diodati, etc.

Complutensian Polyglot (complete with O.T. Hebrew and Chaldee texts, lexicon, and grammar)

The Antwerp Polyglot by Montanus (containing an interlinear of the Pagninus Hebrew text)

French Geneva Bible edited by B.C. Bertram, a distinguished Hebraist

Regarding the 17th century information on Greek, even Beza (whose 5th edition, 1598) knew all about such a Granville Sharp rule in his day. Does ----- think the gigantic scholars of the KJB didn't know about that rule and more? All the rule says basically is if only one Greek article is used before two nouns connected by an "and" (kai), both nouns refer to the same person in two aspects.

In both Titus 2:13 and 2 Peter 1:1 that was cited, the KJB uses the "and" just as the "kai" should be used in many instances, as "even," thus identifying the two nouns as referring to one and the same.

We have our Bible For Today #60 entitled "PROVING THE DEITY OF CHRIST" which discusses this Granville Sharp rule. Even in this study (by Dr. Richard D. Durham, a friend of mine) (page 10) he also recognizes that Theodore Beza knew of this rule in his day (1598 and before).

It seems strange indeed for the KJB translators to do so much more writing from Greek, Latin, Persian, Arabic and other languages (many times more than our current know-it-all's of academia) when in fact they were so ignorant of all of the nice rules of the grammars of these languages which (allegedly) only the modern critics know.

I agree with your diligent pursuit of truth in these areas and with your knowing that the little people you listed will not be moved. Your audience is those who might be swayed by the half-truths, lies, falsehoods, distortions, and deception of some of the spiritual spin-doctors.

In Christ

Dr. D. A. Waite

## **Reply by Dr. Jason Call:**

The following reply is from Jason Call, who obtained his doctorate from Tabernacle Baptist Theological Seminary, Virginia Beach, Virginia. He is founder and president of Providence Baptist Bible College & Theological Seminary, Chesapeake, Virginia.

Dear Brother Cloud,

It is saddening to see the sound, orthodox work of the KJV translators increasingly trashed in debate over the Word of God. To make matters worse, unregenerate, unorthodox scholars like Westcott and Hort are increasingly “resurrected” from their apostasy and given credibility.

I do not believe that ----- has an intellectual problem. However, his spiritual discernment is lacking. The Words of God must be received and believed (John 12:48, Acts 17:11). Why must men wrestle with the Words of God (2 Peter 3:16)? I would like ----- to use his linguistics, mathematics, and rationalism to explain how God can be three and one at the same time. It does not make “sense” in our minds, but we must simply believe. How do we reconcile the Person of Christ--both finite (human) and infinite (God); or the sovereignty of God in election and the responsibility of man to repent? The answer is: We do not reconcile, we believe.

Scholarship was suspended in 1611? Mr. ----- needs to study the qualifications of the KJV translators further. The sad truth is that he has probably already made up his mind. He does not like the KJV, so he does not like the translators.

Scholars have four more centuries of research and writing? If Mr. ----- is referring to the rationalistic works of the liberals, he is correct. There are multitudes of worthless, anti-supernatural, unorthodox works available (and more every day). However, these “scholars” can never produce a version that is better than its underlying text and since they all insist on using the corrupted CT, their work will never equal the KJV.

Mr. -----, as with the host of KJV-bashers, casts doubt upon the proven KJV. However, what does he offer? He and the rest of the Bible-bashers can offer nothing but promises of a better work someday in the future. Who is trusted with this crucial task? Bruce Metzger and other “scholars” that are churning out modern translations right and left. We know the modern “scholars” and their “work.” We know that it is worthless.

Praise God that in spite of the hardness of heart of many concerning the Words of God, there are a few that have open minds to the simple truths of God’s inspired, Inerrant, and Intact (preserved) Words. It is a joy to minister to some of the faithful few at Providence.

God bless you and your ministry of the Truth.

Dr. Jason Call



## Reply from John Krinke:

Mr. Krinke teaches Greek at Heritage Baptist College, Greenwood, Indiana. Heritage was founded in 1955 by Ford Porter, author of the widely used Gospel tract *God's Simple Plan of Salvation*. From the beginning, Porter used and supported the KJV. In 1975, the college moved from the downtown area of Indianapolis to the south suburban area under Dr. Clinton Branine (1926- ), who led the school for ten years. At that time, with the matter of Bible texts becoming more of an issue, the school took the position of the Dean Burgon Society. This remains the school's position today under the direction of Russell Dennis, Jr., the son of the late Dr. Russell Dennis (1932-1998), who was president from 1985, when Indiana Baptist College was merged with the Heritage Baptist University, until his death in 1998. Dr. Dennis had a Ph.D. from Bob Jones University.

Dear Brother Cloud:

Just a prefatory note; it is interesting that the neo-textualists, who in the main have been recently denigrating Sharp's Rule (regarding uses of *kai* re deity particularly), are now interested in using Sharp's Rule authoritatively to instead denigrate the scholarship of the KJB translators! Who knows what their agenda and methodology will be at any one time, except to ALWAYS attack the King James Bible.

It is sufficient to say that I find NO problem with the KJB in those areas. It is never wrong to exegete for more detailed clarity. Whether one translates with Sharp in mind or not, it is always possible to wrongly wrest the Scriptures, or to edifyingly translate, exegete, preach, teach, etc., in accordance with an accurate Bible Doctrine, paying close attention to the contextual usage of the grammar.

In a brief overview of the chief verses cited, I find no errors in the KJB. I do find good preaching material concerning Christ's Deity! Without knowing exactly what the KJB translators had in hand as to rules of grammar and related languages to the Koine, Hebrew and Aramaic, PLUS the fact that we have imperfect knowledge of English idiomatic constructions of the 1600s, I am certainly in no position to criticize the KJB translators. But I do know that modern scholars regularly miss the boat on English etymology and usage, so why should I cite them as authorities on English translations?

Interestingly, according to Dan Wallace, Sharp wrote his only Greek grammar work to refute "wrong translations" in the KJB. If Sharp did write his book to denigrate the KJB, why did he do it? Could he not have taken the same grammatical research to explain how the exact Greek construction proves the Deity of Christ, and exhort preachers to so teach and preach. The KJB needs no revision, but simply needs to be expounded more fully in many, if not all cases. If only a reading of the Scriptures is all that is ever needed, then why did the Ethiopian eunuch ask for an exposition of what he had been reading? [I]t pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. (1 Cor. 1:21). ["foolishness" -- what is considered foolish, intellectually weak, or irrational foolishness, nonsense.]

John Krinke

**ISN'T IT A DETRIMENT THAT THE TRANSLATORS RETAINED  
ECCLESIASTICAL TERMINOLOGY FROM THE BISHOPS BIBLE? (e.g., “baptize”  
instead of “immerse” or “church” instead of “congregation”)**

**ANSWER:**

1. It is true that the KJV translators were instructed not to change “old ecclesiastical words.” Rule #3 said, “The old ecclesiastical words to be kept, as the word *church*, not to be translated congregation.” On this rule I agree with the 19th century Baptist pastor John Dowling, who said: “Without expressing an opinion in relation to the particular word mentioned here as an instance of one of a class of words, the author would take this opportunity of stating his solemn conviction that the conscience of a translator should be left perfectly free and untrammelled by any rules, except that of giving the exact meaning (as nearly as he can ascertain it, by earnest prayer and diligent study) of the original text” (Dowling, *The Burning of the Bibles: Defence of the Protestant Version of the Scriptures against the Attacks of Popish Apologists for the Camplain Bible Burners*, 1843, p. 57).

2. At the same time, I do not think that this did any harm to the Word of God. The word “church” is not a wrong translation. Bible words must be interpreted first and foremost by their context, and when “church” is so interpreted, there is no confusion. The term “church” was an ancient English word by the time that the KJV translators used it, and beyond that it was an ancient word in Anglo-Saxon (*circ*), Scottish (*kirk*), German (*kirche*), and other languages. Some linguists believe it was derived from the Latin “curia,” which in turn was from the Greek “kuriakon,” meaning “the Lord’s house” (*McClintok and Strong Cyclopedia*). Wycliffe used “church,” as did the Geneva Bible. Tyndale, on the other hand, used “congregation.” This might be deemed better, but even this is not a complete translation of the Greek word “ecclesia,” meaning “a called out assembly.” The term “church” in the KJV is easily interpreted by the Bible itself. I have never been tempted to become an Anglican because the KJV has the word “church” instead of “congregation.”

3. As for the term “baptism” I see no problem whatsoever. It was already an ancient English word by the time of 1611. All of the English versions from the time of Wycliffe, including the Geneva, used “baptize,” which is simply a transliteration of the Greek word “baptizo.”

- a. At the time when the King James Bible was translated, the Church of England still practiced baptism by immersion, so the mode of baptism was not an issue. “If *baptism* was one of the old ecclesiastical words which were to be retained, it certainly could not have been because any partiality for infant sprinkling was detected in that term. It had been, up to the time when king James’ version was made, the uniform and invariable understanding, that to baptize signified to dip or plunge into water. It was the common understanding and practice at that time, and after that time. ‘Dipping,’ says [William] Wall [*A Defence of the History of Infant Baptism*, 1705], ‘must have been pretty ordinary during the former half of king James’ reign, if not longer.’ The same historian mentions a pamphlet written by a Mr. Blake in 1645,—that is, nearly forty years after the publication of king James’ Bible,—

showing clearly what must have been the common opinion and usage at that time. This Mr. Blake was a clergyman of the Church of England. In reply to his opponent, who had objected to the baptism of infants, the fact, that they were not dipped, but sprinkled, he says, ‘I have been an eye-witness of many infants dipped, and know it to have been the constant practice of many ministers in their places for many years together. I have seen several dipped; I never saw nor heard of any sprinkled.’ It would thus appear, that up to 1645, immersion was the prevailing practice in the English Church, and that the custom of sprinkling was introduced subsequent to that period. There can be little doubt, that the famous assembly of Westminster divines were the first to impart countenance and currency to the practice of sprinkling in lieu of baptism” (William Brantly, *Objections to a Baptist Version of the New Testament*, 1837, pp. 21-22).

- b. Some American Baptists in the 19th century proposed a new English translation that would render “baptizo” as “immerse.” The project didn’t get very far, because most Baptists were opposed to changing the Authorized English Bible and understood that “baptize” is a good translation. Baptist leaders who opposed changing “baptize” to “immersion” included William Brantly, Octavius Winslow, and John Dowling. The latter published “The Old-Fashioned Bible, or Ten Reasons against the Proposed Baptist Version of the New Testament” (1850). One of the ten reasons was “because the word *Baptize* is itself to all intents and purposes an English word.” This is correct, for the fact that it has appeared in the English Bible from the very first and thus passed into common usage among all English-speaking churches since the 14th century. Dowling said: “I formerly entertained the opinion that the translators of King James’ version ought to have translated the word *Baptize*, immerse or dip. Since examining more fully the age of the English word *Baptize*, and its use when that version was made, I have come to a different conclusion. I am now fully satisfied that when the translators selected *Baptize* as the word descriptive of the ordinance, they made the best choice that could then be made.”
- c. Even the words “immerse” or “dip” do not carry the full meaning of “baptizo.” The word “dip,” which is used in many German Bibles, is a much better translation than “immerse” because “baptizo” has the idea not only of putting something under but also of bringing it up again. The word “immersion” carries only half of the meaning of the Greek “baptizo.” Further, though, “baptizo” not only involves dipping in water but also carries the idea of death, burial, and resurrection of which the dipping is merely a picture (Rom. 6:3-4; Col. 2:12). No English word other than “baptism” has all of the biblical meaning.

### **ISN’T IT WRONG TO TRANSLATE “LOVE” AS “CHARITY”?**

#### **ANSWER:**

1. The Greek word translated “charity” in 1 Corinthians 13 in the King James Bible is “agape.” Strong defines it as “love, i.e. affection or benevolence; specially (plural) a love-feast.” It appears 106 times in the New Testament and the King James usually translates it as “love” but

also translates it “charity” 27 times, “charitably” one time (Rom. 14:15), and “dear” one time (Col. 1:13).

2. Either word (whether “charity” or “love”) must be interpreted by its context and by comparing Scripture with Scripture. The Bible is a self-interpreting book. If we take the context of 1 Corinthians 13, we are given a clear definition of the Greek word “agape.”

3. “Charity” is an excellent translation of “agape” when it is not allowed to assume its more narrow 20th century definition of benevolence to the poor and needy (e.g., giving to social organizations such as the Red Cross). Webster’s 1828 dictionary defined “charity” thusly: “In a general sense, love, benevolence, good will; that disposition of heart which inclines men to think favorably of their fellow men, and to do them good. ... In a more particular sense, love, kindness, affection, tenderness, springing from natural relations; as the charities of father, son and brother.” That is precisely the meaning of the Greek word “agape.”

4. The term “love” has changed even more in meaning than “charity” since the 17th century, having assumed a more emotional, sensual definition.

### WHAT ABOUT PETER RUCKMAN?

Peter Ruckman is the author of many books in defense of the King James Bible. His headquarters is in Pensacola, Florida. Following are some warnings about his ministry:

#### 1. Ruckman believes that the KJV is advanced revelation.

a. Consider some of his statements to this effect:

“The A.V. 1611 reading, here, is superior to any Greek text” (Peter Ruckman, *The Christian’s Handbook of Manuscript Evidence*, Pensacola Bible Press, 1970, p. 118).

“Mistakes in the A.V. 1611 are advanced revelation!” (Ruckman, *Manuscript Evidence*, p. 126).

“A short handbook, such as this, will not permit an exhaustive account of the marvelous undesigned ‘coincidences’ which have slipped through the A.V. 1611 committees, unawares to them, and which give advanced light, and advanced revelation beyond the investigation of the greatest Bible students 300 year later” (Ruckman, *Manuscript Evidence*, p. 127).

“A little English will clear up the obscurities in any Greek text” (Ruckman, *Manuscript Evidence*, p. 147).

“If all you have is the ‘original Greek,’ you lose light” (Ruckman, *Manuscript Evidence*, p. 336).

“If you are able to obtain a copy [of Ruckman’s proposed new book] you will have, in your hands, a minimum of 200 advanced revelations that came from the inerrant English text, that were completely overlooked (or ignored) by every major Christian scholar since 90 A.D.” (*Bible Believers’ Bulletin*, Jan. 1994, pp. 2, 4).

“We shall deal with the English Text of the Protestant Reformation, and our references to Greek or Hebrew will only be made to enforce the authority of that text or to demonstrate the superiority of that text to Greek and Hebrew” (Peter Ruckman, *Problem Texts*, Preface, Pensacola Bible Institute Press, 1980, p. vii).

“Observe how accurately and beautifully the infallible English text straightens out Erasmus, Griesbach, Beza, Nestle, Aland, Metzger, Trench, Vincent, Davis, Wuest, Zodhiates, Elzevir, and Stephanus with the poise and grace of a swan as it smoothly and effectively breaks your arm with one flap of its wings. Beautiful, isn’t it? If the mood or tense isn’t right in any Greek text, the King James Bible will straighten it out in a hurry” (Ruckman, *Problem Texts*, pp. 348, 349).

“The original Hebrew had nothing to do with Genesis 1:1-3 at all [referring to Ruckman’s heresy that the flood of 2 Peter 3:5-6 speaks of a flood that took place in Genesis 1:2]. It only muddied the issue. Hebrew is of no help at all in understanding the passage” (Peter Ruckman, *The Unknown Bible*, Bible Baptist Bookstore, 1984, p. 67).

“The King James test is the last and final statement that God has given to the world, and He has given it in the universal language of the 20th century ... The truth is that **GOD SLAMMED THE DOOR OF REVELATION SHUT IN 389 BC AND SLAMMED IT SHUT AGAIN IN 1611”** (Peter Ruckman, *The Monarch of Books*, Pensacola, 1973, p. 9). [Brother Cloud: In fact, God slammed the door of revelation shut in about 90 A.D. with the completion of the New Testament.]

- b. If Ruckman is right, where was the inspired Word of God prior to 1611? What did the churches do from the time of the apostles until the 17th century? And what did they do before Ruckman came upon the scene to create this doctrine, because it is certain that no one taught it at an earlier date?

**2. Ruckman believes that the KJV was given by inspiration.** In *The Christian’s Handbook of Biblical Scholarship*, pp. 271-272, Ruckman claims: “The King James Bible was ‘given by inspiration of God.’”

- a. This is to confuse inspiration, which is a process whereby the Scriptures were given through holy men of old, with preservation, which is the process whereby God has kept the Scriptures since their original inspiration. 2 Timothy 3:16 refers to the original giving of the Scripture. The process of inspiration is further described in 2 Peter 1:20-21: “Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” These passages do not describe either the copying of Scripture texts or the making of translations.
- b. It is the doctrine of *preservation* that guarantees that God would watch over the inspired Scriptures to preserve them for future generations (Ps. 12:6-7; 100:5; Matt. 5:18; 24:35; etc.). This is the process whereby God preserved the Scripture in the Hebrew and Greek texts and in accurately translated versions. The King James Bible is an accurate translation of the preserved Word of God and as such is the preserved Word of God in English. The King James Version is the inspired Word of God in English because it accurately translates the text that was given by inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

**3. Dr. Peter Ruckman has been divorced twice and married thrice, yet he was a pastor all along and he defends his unscriptural marital status in his book on divorce and remarriage.**

- a. His first marriage was before his salvation, and it ended in 1962 when his wife left him and filed for divorce. He began pastoring the Brent Baptist Church in Pensacola, Florida, soon after that. In 1972 Ruckman married the divorced wife of one of his former students. When a vote was taken in Brent Baptist as to whether they supported his second marriage, 200 voted for it and 100 opposed it. He resigned and started the Bible Baptist Church in Pensacola in 1974 with 17 people. In 1988 the second marriage ended when his second wife walked out and sued for divorce. Ruckman’s third marriage was to a member of his church, a mother of three.
- b. Divorces do not take place in a vacuum. They take place in an environment filled with anger, carnality, hostility, bitterness, and sin. That is not judgmentalism; it is fact. Some of my godly divorced friends confess this as strongly as I do. In fact, consider how Ruckman himself describes his family life in days gone by: “I have had two wives desert me after fifteen years of marriage ... I have been in court custody cases, where seven children’s futures were held in the balance; in situations where Gospel articles were being torn out of typewriters, Biblical artwork torn off the easels, women trying to throw themselves out of cars at fifty m.p.h., mailing wedding rings back in the middle of revival services, cutting their wrists, threatening to leave if I did not give my church to their kinfolk; deacons threatening to burn down my house and beat me up; children in split custody between two domiciles two hundred miles apart, and knock-down, drag-out arguments in the home sometimes running as long as three days” (*The Last Grenade*, p. 339). That is what the man admits took place. That is only a small glimpse into the sin and confusion surrounding

those years. Friends, you can label me a judge if you want, but a man with that type of family life has no business in the pastorate. Let him preach on the streets. Let him preach in the jails. Let him preach in the nursing homes. Let him preach in other ways, but we must obey the Bible and reserve the pastorate for men who have godly homes as described in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 and can thus be the examples to the flock that God intends the pastor to be (1 Pet. 5:3).

- c. Ruckman mocks those who call for high standards for the pastorate and who don't believe a divorced man fits God's requirements for the office. He calls them hypocrites and Pharisees. Consider how he describes his third marriage: "... we got married in a regular Sunday night service after the offering was taken up: bridesmaids, wedding cake, rice, shaving cream on the car, the whole works. Standing room only. I WAS FLAUNTING MY FAITH IN THE FACE OF THE APOSTATE FUNDAMENTALISTS WHO WERE GOING TO 'CASH IN' ON MY MARRIAGE" (Peter Ruckman, *The Full Cup*, p. 280). On page 211 of his biography, Dr. Ruckman says that those who ask the question, "Do you think a divorced preacher is qualified for the ministry," are "SELF-RIGHTEOUS PHARISEES." This mocking, ungodly attitude has encouraged other men that it's O.K. to be divorced and remain in the pastorate and even to flaunt the same before anyone who disagrees. Yes, sadly, many have followed Ruckman's lead.

#### **4. Ruckman teaches that men are saved in different ways in different ages.**

- a. He believes men were saved by blood plus works in the Old Testament, by faith plus works in the Tribulation, and by works alone in the Millennium. In *Millions Disappear: Fact or Fiction?* Ruckman says: "If the Lord comes and you remain behind, then start working like a madman to get to heaven, because you're going to have to. ... You must keep the Ten Commandments (all of them, Ecclesiastes 12:13), keep the Golden Rule (1 John 3:10), give your money to the poor, get baptized, take up your cross, hold out to the end of the Tribulation, wait for Jesus Christ to show up at the Battle of Armageddon, and be prepared to die for what you believe. In the Tribulation you cannot be saved by grace alone, like you could before the Rapture."
- b. Romans 4:1-8 plainly states that both Abraham before the law and David under the law were saved *by faith without works*. This is the only plan of salvation God ever has had and ever will have--salvation by grace alone through faith alone based upon the shed blood of Jesus Christ alone. The Old Testament saints did not know what the New Testament saint knows, but Romans 4 makes it plain that the Old Testament saints were saved by faith without works. Like Abraham, they believed God and it was counted unto them for righteousness.
- c. Those that are saved in the Tribulation will be saved through the blood of Jesus Christ and through His blood alone. "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Rev. 7:14).

- d. For more on this topic, see the articles “Salvation Is the Same in the Old Testament and the New Testament” by Bruce Lackey and “Salvation in the O.T. and the N.T. Follow-up.” They are available at the Way of Life Literature web site -- <http://www.wayoflife.org/fbns/fbns-index/versfbns.htm>. They are also available in the booklet *What About Ruckman?* which can be obtained from Way of Life Literature.

## 5. Ruckman’s writings are filled with strange, fleshly, name-calling.

- a. Some of the choice names Ruckman calls men who disagree with him are “jackass,” “poor, dumb, stupid red legs,” “silly asses,” “apostolic succession of bloated egotists,” “two-bit junkies,” “two-faced, tin-horned punks,” “incredible idiots,” “egotistical jack legs,” “conservative asses whose brains have gone to seed,” “cheap, two-bit punks,” and “stupid, little, Bible-rejecting apostates.” Dr. Ruckman can get pretty vulgar. He calls the New American Standard Version “more of the same old godless, depraved crap” (*Satan’s Masterpiece--the New ASV*, p. 67). In *The Unknown Bible*, p. 100, Ruckman says, “You see how people get all screwed up?”
- b. Ruckman believes it is God who has called him to speak like this: “God called me to sit at this typewriter and pour forth VINEGAR, ACID, VITRIOL, AND CLEANING FLUID on the leading conservative and fundamental scholars of 1900 through 1990. ... God is in charge. He ... destines me to sit at this typewriter and LAMBAST, SCALD AND RIDICULE these Bible rejecting fundamentalists who ‘believe the Bible is the Word of God,’ ... I hereby dedicate myself anew to the task of DESTRUCTIVE CRITICISM AND NEGATIVE BLASTING against every adversary of that Holy Book...” (*The Bible Believers Bulletin*, Dec. 1985).
- c. Ruckman’s spirit and language is not that of the Bible. Ruckman is fighting for a holy Book in an unholy manner, and it is confusion.

James 3:13-17 says: “Who is a wise man and endowed with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works WITH MEEKNESS OF WISDOM. But if ye have BITTER ENVYING AND STRIFE in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first PURE, then PEACEABLE, GENTLE, AND EASY TO BE INTREATED, FULL OF MERCY AND GOOD FRUITS, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.” My friends, this passage from the King James Bible condemns Ruckmanism. This passage from the King James Bible tells me that Ruckman’s spirit is earthly, sensual, and devilish. Enjoying Ruckman because he “gets after those Bible perverters” is the same carnal spirit as enjoying a good dog fight when the dog you have betted on is the biggest, meanest one around. “Sic ‘em, Pete, sic ‘em!” It is entertaining, and it is immensely satisfying to the flesh, but God says bitter envying and strife is earthly, sensual,



devilish. God says heavenly wisdom is peaceable, gentle and full of mercy.

2 Timothy 2:24-26 says: “And the servant of the Lord **MUST NOT STRIVE: BUT BE GENTLE UNTO ALL MEN**, apt to teach, **PATIENT, IN MEEKNESS** instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.”

- d. Didn't the Lord Jesus and the apostles use some strong language? I know what Jesus called the Pharisees in Matthew 23. I have read how Paul, filled with the Spirit, spoke of the false teacher in Acts 13:9-10. I know the severe plainness with which the Spirit of God speaks of false teachers in passages such as 2 Peter 2 and Jude. But there is a world of difference between the language used in the Bible and the language used by Peter Ruckman. There is a world of difference between the spirit of a Peter and a Paul or a Jude and the spirit of Peter Ruckman.
- e. There is also a distinct difference between the way the Spirit of God deals with a saved but erring man and the way He deals with an unregenerate corrupter of the gospel. There is a vast difference between the way the Lord Jesus Christ dealt with His own disciples and the way He dealt with the Pharisees. The same distinction is evident in the way that Paul dealt with Peter's hypocrisy in Galatians 2 and the way he dealt with the unsaved false teacher in Acts 13. Yet Ruckman makes no difference between the Pope, a theological Christ-denying Modernist, or an erring fundamental Baptist brother in Christ. He lumps men such as John R. Rice and Stewart Custer together with John Paul II and Karl Barth and treats them in the same ridiculous fashion.

**6. Ruckman holds many peculiar doctrines and has a proud, cultic attitude that he alone has truths that no one else in church history has known.**

- a. In bragging up his book *The Salient Verses*, Mr. Ruckman makes these comments: “If you are able to obtain a copy [of Ruckman's proposed new book] you will have, in your hands, a minimum of 200 advanced revelations that came from the inerrant English text, that were completely overlooked (or ignored) by every major Christian scholar since 90 A.D. This would include all of the modern Bible revisers (1800-1999), all of the faculty members and staffs of every major 'Fundamental' (Conservative and Evangelical) seminary, university, and college in Europe and America since 1500, and every Greek and Hebrew scholar (or teacher) since 1611. ... Actually, if a Bible believer has this work he will have the accumulated knowledge of Cornelius Stam and Ethelbert Bullinger ... Clarence Larkin and C.I. Scofield, Ewing, Osborne, Tilton, and PTL ... Pember, Peters, Gaebelien, Pentecost, Lindsey, Kirban, Rockwood, Webber, and Van Impe ... plus the Puritans, Reformers, major evangelists (Moody, Sunday, Finney, Torrey, Wesley, etc.) and all that ANY Greek and Hebrew scholar ... ever found out--that was SO--in the last 200 years” (Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believers' Bulletin*, Jan. 1994, pp. 2, 4).

b. In *The Unknown Bible*, Ruckman claims to hold to 14 “biblical truths” which all other Bible teachers have overlooked. On page 347, Ruckman modestly claims: “Do you realize that in these last two chapters, you have learned a dozen things that were unknown to the greatest Bible teachers in the world? In 2000 years of church history, they haven’t even been able to find the passage which dealt with these things we have been talking about.”

c. Some of Ruckman’s long-overlooked “biblical truths” include the following:

- (1) Angels are thirty-three year old males without wings; and all women in the Church Age will receive thirty-three year old male bodies at the Rapture.
- (2) The plan of salvation for Tribulation saints is faith plus works and the plan of salvation in the Millennium is works alone.
- (3) When the believer is born again, his soul is literally cut loose from the inside of his fleshly body. (Ruckman takes spiritual circumcision very literally!)
- (4) Demons are winged creatures ranging in size from those of flies and mosquitoes to eagles and vultures.
- (5) Sexual unions constitute marriage in God’s sight.
- (6) The soul is an invisible bodily shape. “The problem is the word ‘soul,’ but since there isn’t one pre-millennial, soul-winning, fundamentalist who knows what a soul is (see the entire library of books published by Eerdmans, Baker, Zondervan, and the Sword of the Lord before 1970) ... The soul in the Bible is an invisible BODILY SHAPE. In the Old Testament, the soul is almost synonymous with the body, for it is STUCK TO IT till death” (Ruckman, *Problem Texts*, p. 145).
- (7) The flood mentioned in 2 Peter 3 is not Noah’s flood but is one that supposedly occurred at the judgment of the earth, when Satan was cast out of Heaven. He admits that no other Bible teacher has held this view: “Now who could get a message so simple all muddled up? Answer: Every major fundamental Bible scholar and teacher in the United States, without one exception. If you were to ask Henry Morris what the verses refer to he’d say Noah’s flood: ditto Harry Rimmer, Clarence Larkin, J. Vernon McGee, Swindle (sic), MacArthur, Bob Jones III ... the Scofield Board of Editors” (Ruckman, *The Unknown Bible*, p. 67).
- (8) “God has ordained on this earth 12 boundaries, with 12 nations, who are destined to leave this earth (transported by angels--Luke 16:22), and populate outer space infinitely and forever, beginning with the 12 constellations that are seen on the earth once every 12 months” (*The Unknown Bible*, p. 588).

(9) “In eternity, the Christian is in New Jerusalem ... He is called out on trips, and these trips take him to Mars, Jupiter, Venus, Saturn, Uranus, etc. transporting couples into gardens placing them down and saying, ‘be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth’“ (Ibid., p. 592).

(10) “I know they [demons] have to be small. ... there’s two little animals that have wings. One’s a fly and the other’s a mosquito. Know what these things are? They’re pictures of demons. THE THINGS HAVE WINGS” (Ruckman, *Demons and Christians*, Bible Baptist Bookstore, 1976, side 1).

d. Some Ruckmanites have challenged me to refute the Ruckman doctrines we have cited. I don’t have to refute them; they are self refuting for the simple fact that they have no biblical authority, just as Rome’s dogmas of purgatory and the papacy are self refuting. Why should we have to refute nonsense? The Bible instructs us to avoid the foolish and unlearned questions of heretics (2 Tim. 2:23; Titus 3:9-11), and Ruckman’s new doctrines certainly fall into this category.

**In conclusion**, let me say that while I have some problems with Dr. Ruckman, I also have serious problems with many of his detractors. Many of Peter Ruckman’s most bitter enemies are trying to discredit the idea that there is an authoritative Bible anywhere in the world. They have their own rotten agenda, undermining men’s faith in a preserved Bible and attempting to pollute their minds with the strange, unscriptural, convoluted theories of modern textual criticism. “Who, then, can we trust?” some might be thinking? The Word of God says, “*Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm ... Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is*” (Jer. 17:5, 7). Man is defiled even at his best. Our confidence must be in Jesus Christ and in His eternal Word, and let no man shake your confidence in that.

### **WHAT ABOUT THE TERM “GOD FORBID”?**

The term “God forbid” is used in 24 verses in the King James Bible, nine times in the Old Testament (i.e., Gen. 44:7) and 15 times in the New. Ten of those are in the book of Romans (i.e., Rom. 3:4, 6, 31; 6:2, 15; 7:7, 13; 9:14; 11:1, 11).

1. The Greek phrase translated “God forbid” is “*me ginomai*” which means “may it not be” in the most emphatic sense.

2. The translation “God forbid” did not begin with the King James of 1611. It began with the revised Wycliffe version of the late 1300s. It continued to be used in the Tyndale Bible, the Coverdale, the Matthews, the Bishops, the Great, the Geneva, and the King James. It was also translated that way in the Revised Version of 1881. Thus “*me ginomai*” was translated “God forbid” in English Bibles from the 14th through the 19th centuries.

3. It is an acceptable translation because it brings out in English the strong meaning of the Greek. It is not strictly literal, but when rightly understood, it carries the literal meaning. It means “may God forbid that this should be.” The Greek phrase ‘me ginomai’ “is something more than a direct negation, such as ‘no verily.’ It is a vehement expression of the indignant aversion, reprobating and abominating such a notion as that by which it is evoked. And therefore the English ‘God forbid’ properly understood, is a fit rendering of it” (Christopher Wordsworth, *The New Testament ... in the Original Greek: with Notes and Introductions*, London: Rivingtons, 1879, Paul’s Epistles, p. 52).

4. The modern versions are weaker and no more literal here than the King James Bible. The RSV has “by no means!” The NIV has “not at all” and “by no means!” The NASV has “may it never be!” The NKJV has “certainly not!”

5. In an attempt to justify the modern versions that incorporate the loose translation methodology called “dynamic equivalency,” some have argued that the King James translators themselves used this methodology. Even if we would agree that “God forbid” is a type of “dynamic equivalency,” it must quickly be noted that this is one of those rare passages that is not translated strictly literally in the Authorized Version. The King James translators were not dynamic equivalency translators. While this one example is “a little something like” that which is called dynamic equivalency today, the KJV as a whole is so far removed from the unscriptural and ungodly theories of modern dynamic equivalency that I personally would not apply that term to any portion of the KJV. The KJV translators most assuredly believed in and used “formal equivalency.” The few exceptions to that do not break the rule and do not give support the modern heretical theories of dynamic equivalency that have produced such corruptions of God’s Word as the Today’s English Version, the New International Version, and The Message.

### **SINCE THE KJV HAD A LARGE NUMBER OF MARGINAL READINGS, WHY DO YOU CONDEMN THIS IN THE MODERN VERSIONS?**

Some modern version defenders point to the marginal notes in the 1611 KJV and claim that it is inconsistent for King James Bible defenders to make something of the critical textual notes in the modern versions while ignoring the ones in the original KJV. James White does this in his popular but shallow and misguided book *The King James Only Controversy* (p. 77).

#### **ANSWER:**

This is to compare apples with oranges. Both the 1611 KJV and the modern versions have marginal notes, but the nature of those notes is very different.

1. The KJV marginal notes did not offer its readers a bewildering array of alternative textual readings. Of the more than 8,422 marginal notes in the King James Bible, only 104 (37 in the New Testament) offered a variant textual reading. The marginal notes were there to edify the readers and help them understand the text, not to cause confusion.

2. The KJV marginal notes did not cast continual doubt upon the text, but that cannot be said of the modern versions. For example, the marginal notes in the New King James Version question the authenticity of 45 entire verses and portions of 95 other verses. Pertaining to the marginal notes in the modern versions, Jay Green, a biblical scholar and Bible translator, says, “Deceitful footnotes often throw doubt on the words of the text, such as may be found at Mark 1:1; Romans 9:5, etc. Worse, yet, in other places when words that witness to the Godhead of Christ are removed from the text, seldom is there a footnote to call attention to it. And when there is a footnote purporting to give evidence for the change, a false impression is often given by an incomplete presentation of the facts” (Jay Green, Sr., *The Gnostics, The New Versions, and the Deity of Christ*, Lafayette, Indiana: Sovereign Grace Publishers, 1994, p. 5).

3. The KJV marginal notes were not misleading, but the ones in the modern verses are. A common statement found in the marginal notes of modern versions reads something like this: “The oldest and best manuscripts omit this verse.” In fact, the translators are referring to the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus manuscripts and a handful of similar ones that show every sign of corruption upon their very faces, as we have documented in the book *Faith vs. the Modern Bible Versions*. The readers of these Bibles are not told that these “oldest and best manuscripts” were rejected in the early centuries after the apostles and were, for all practicality, put on a shelf for 1,500 years of church history.

4. The KJV marginal notes were not deceptive, but the ones in the modern versions are. For example, at 1 Timothy 3:16 the New International Version has a note indicating that “some manuscripts” have the word “God” in this verse, when, in fact, most extant Greek manuscripts have it. Another example of a deceptive note is the one in the New International Version after Mark 16:8: “The most reliable early manuscripts and other ancient witnesses do not have Mark 16:9-20.” In fact, the vast majority of all extant manuscripts and ancient versions contain these verses.

To pretend that the marginal notes in the King James Bible are the same in nature as those of the modern versions is to ignore the facts.

### **WHY DOES THE KING JAMES BIBLE USE THE WORD “EASTER” IN ACTS 12:4**

#### **ANSWER:**

1. The word “Easter” in Acts 12:4 was not a creation of the King James translators but goes back to William Tyndale’s translation of 1534. All of the English Bibles from Tyndale to the KJV 1611 (the Cranmer, Coverdale, Matthews, Bishops, Geneva, Great) use the word “Easter” in Acts 12:4. What did those great biblical scholars of old know that modern version defenders do not know? They knew that the English term “easter” was a legitimate way to translate the Hebrew word *pesach*. Before Tyndale’s version, the Hebrew word was merely transliterated. In fact, the Greek word *pascha* is merely a transliteration of the Hebrew. The Latin Bibles transliterated this word as *passk* or *paske*. This is how John Wycliffe rendered the word in his

translation of 1380. Tyndale was the first to attempt to translate the word, and he incorporated five different English terms for the purpose: *passover*, *easter*, *esterlambe*, *esterfest*, and *paschall lambe*, using the words interchangeably. He used *passover* in the Old Testament Pentateuch and the other terms in the New Testament. Martin Luther, in his German translation, also used the terms *Ostern*, *Osterlamm*, and *Osterfes*, which mean *easter*, *easter lamb*, and *easter fest*. Succeeding English translators who revised the Tyndale version gradually reduced the usage of “Easter,” replacing it with “passover.” The 15 references to “Easter” in the Great Bible were reduced to one in the King James Bible of 1611, and that is the one in Acts 12:4.

2. Why did the KJV translators leave the term *Easter* in that one passage? We will let Dr. Donald Waite of Bible for Today answer: “This passover was apparently a travesty on what should have been done at that season and the pagan feast ISHTAR, which is a very pagan feast, was a proper picture for what they were doing. Now, I take issue that Easter is something new. ISHTAR was a pagan festival which went way back in the Old Testament times to the Phoenician and various pagan cultures. Ashteroth is the origin of the term Easter--a feminine Baal. . . . That is one translation some have asked about, and I would say certainly that ‘passover’ would not be a wrong rendering; yet since they were carrying on as they were, ‘Easter’ would be a good rendering also because it was at the same time. As you know, our pagan feast of Easter and our festival of Easter, with the egg-rolling and other things, is extremely pagan” (D.A. Waite, *Defending the King James Bible*, p. 247).

3. Tyndale, Coverdale, Rogers, Cranmer, and the King James translators were not trying to produce a dynamic equivalency rendering of Acts 12:4; they were seeking to be completely faithful to the meaning of the Greek text. Regardless of what one thinks of the rendering of *easter* in Acts 12:4 in the KJV, it is not a justification for the extreme and frightful looseness with which the modern dynamic equivalency translators treat the Scriptures.

### **DIDN'T THE KING JAMES TRANSLATORS SAY ALL VERSIONS ARE GOOD?**

The book *From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man*, which was published in 1999 by associates of Bob Jones University and the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship, is filled with errors pertaining to the subject of Bible texts and versions. One of the oft-repeated but misguided statements is the charge made on page 141 that the King James translators gave their recommendation to all versions and refused to condemn any Bible translation. John Mincy (one of the authors of *From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man*) argued that the KJV translators themselves “viewed even the worst English versions as the Word of God” (p. 141). He quoted them as saying, “Now to answer our enemies; we do not deny, rather we affirm and insist that the very worst translation of the Bible in English issued by Protestants contains the word of God, or rather, is the word of God.”

#### **ANSWER:**

1. The Puritans among the KJV translators had appealed to the king for a new English version because they considered the Bishops’ Bible “a most corrupted translation.” It is obvious that

they did not accept all translations as accurate and profitable.

2. Mincy misquotes what the KJV translators actually said. Mincy's quotation of the KJV translators is taken from Rhodes and Lupas's paraphrase (published by the American Bible Society in 1997) of the original statement of the translators found in "The Translators to the Readers."

- a. Here is the original version: "Now to the latter we answer, that we do not deny, nay, we affirm and avow, that THE VERY MEANEST TRANSLATION of the Bible in English set forth by men of our profession (for we have seen none of theirs of the whole Bible as yet) containeth the word of God, nay, is the word of God: as the King's speech which he uttered in parliament, being translated into French, Dutch, Italian, and Latin, is still the King's speech, though it be not interpreted by every translator with the like grace..."
- b. The word "meanest" does not mean worst. It does not refer to a translation that is corrupt in meaning; it refers to one that is lowly in literary style. The KJV translators would not have supported a translation either of the king's words or of God's words that was corrupt in meaning. In his zeal to discredit the defenders of the KJV, Mincy has actually turned the words of the King James translators on their head.

3. We know for sure that the KJV translators rejected the critical Greek text. From the time of Erasmus in the early 1500s to 1611, the Greek editors and Reformation Bible translators were aware of the alternate readings of manuscripts such as the Vaticanus. They knew that some manuscripts removed the word "God" from 1 Timothy 3:16, for example. In 1533, Sepulveda furnished Erasmus with 365 such readings from the Vaticanus, but these were rejected not only by Erasmus but also by Stephenus, Beza, Luther, Reina and Valera, Olivetan, Tyndale, Whittingham, and by all of the 50 translators on the KJV committee. Beza owned a famous old Greek manuscript containing some of the readings preferred by the modern textual critics, but he considered it of little value and gave it away.

4. In reality, there is no evidence whatsoever that the KJV translators would have accepted either the modern critical Greek text or a modern "dynamic equivalency" translation such as the New International Version (not to speak of corruptions such as the Today's English Bible and The Message). The KJV translators called the Scriptures "a fountain of most pure water springing up unto everlasting life" (*The Translators to the Readers*). It is obvious that they would not look lightly upon a translation that polluted that fountain.

5. It is important also to note that the King James translators are not our authority. Even if they had said that all versions are valid and none to be condemned (and they did not), this does not mean that we should follow them in such a position. We believe that the KJV translators were wrong in many of the things that they believed and put into print. Do the authors of *From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man* and the professors of Bob Jones University believe that all versions are valid and none to be condemned? Of course not. Stewart Custer, for example, has

warned about loose paraphrases such as the Today's English Version. Thus we see that their misquotation of what the KJV translators said about "the very meanest translation" is merely a polemic.

For some of the previous information we are indebted to Jeffrey Khoo's review of *From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man*. Dr. Khoo is the Academic Dean of the Far Eastern Bible College in Singapore. His review is available in the booklet "Reviews of the book *From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man*" by Thomas Strouse and J. Khoo, Pensacola Baptist Seminary, Pensacola, Florida.

### **IS THE KING JAMES BIBLE INSPIRED?**

#### **ANSWER:**

1. The King James Bible was not given by inspiration. The term "inspiration" is used only one time in Scripture and that is in 2 Timothy 3:16. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." This describes the original process of the giving of Scripture. The same process is described in 2 Peter 1:19-21. "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Inspiration was the supernatural process by which the Holy Spirit gave chosen words to holy men of old so that what they wrote was the inerrant Word of God. No translation can lay claim to this process. No translation is "given by inspiration."

2. Translation is the process whereby men render the Spirit-inspired words of Scripture into other languages. If it is done prayerfully and carefully and properly by godly, capable believers, under submission to the Holy Spirit, the words of Scripture can be rendered accurately into another language and such a translation can be called the Word of God in that language. It can even be called the inspired Word of God in that language. But no translation is given by inspiration.

### **COULD THE KING JAMES BIBLE BE REVISED AGAIN?**

#### **ANSWER:**

1. I do not believe that a better English language translation of the Masoretic Hebrew and the Greek Received Text could be made in our day. A clear turning point in church history was made in the 19th century with the blossoming of theological liberalism and in the 20th century with the rapid growth of the ecumenical movement. The book *The Modern Bible Version Hall of Shame* contains extensive documentation of this, and it is available from Way of Life Literature.



2. As for a new revision of the King James Bible, we are not opposed to it in theory if it were done after the fashion of the previous revisions in the 18th century. Language changes and it is not wrong to update the language, for example, to change “wot” to “know” and “noised” to “reported” and “quick” to “living.” This type of revision has been made to the KJV before, and we see no reason in theory why it could not be done again.

3. It is doubtful that a new revision will be made in these days that is both minor after the fashion of the former revisions and that will also be acceptable to the majority of users so that it could replace the existing KJV.

4. The best-known attempt to revise the King James Bible in recent decades was the *New King James Bible*, but it was not a minor revision after the fashion of the former ones. It was a wholesale revision in order to allow Thomas Nelson to obtain a new copyright. It even dropped the distinction between the second person singular and plural (replacing the singular thee, thy, and thine with the modern and non-precise “you” in all places). Another revision is the *Modern King James Bible* or *King James Bible II* by Jay Green. This, too, in my estimation, takes far too many liberties. Dr. Green even proposes to make hundreds of textual changes based on the so-called Majority Greek text, changes which he lists in the back of his *Interlinear Bible*. I, for one, do not accept these revisions and I do not believe that such revision is needed.

5. Finally, I do not believe that a revision is necessary. Admittedly, the antiquated language in the KJV is difficult for new readers and especially for those who read English as a second or third language, but this difficulty can be overcome by the use of tools such as the *Concise King James Bible Dictionary* published by Way of Life Literature. See the next question.

### **ISN'T THE KING JAMES BIBLE TOO ANTIQUATED AND DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND?**

#### **ANSWER:**

1. The KJV does have some antiquated words and forms of speech, but there are not too many of these. The Trinitarian Bible Society publishes a list of 618 antiquated words. It is called *Bible Word List*. Most of these can be understood by considering the context. There are only about two hundred words in the KJV that have become so antiquated that they have changed meanings or have dropped entirely out of common usage, so that you really need a dictionary to understand them. Following are some examples:

carriages (Acts 21:15) = baggage  
charger (Mk. 6:25) = platter  
devotions (Acts 17:23) = objects of worship  
conversation (Gal. 1:13) = conduct  
do you to wit (2 Cor. 8:1) = make known to you  
fetched a compass (Acts 28:13) = circled

leasing (Ps. 4:2) = lying  
let (2 Thess. 2:7) = restrain  
meat (Mat. 3:4) = food  
prevent (1 Thess. 4:15) = precede  
room (Lk. 14:7) = seat  
scrip (Mat. 10:10) = bag  
take no thought (Mat. 6:25) = be not anxious  
noised (Acts 2:6) = reported  
quick (Heb. 4:12) = living

2. The overall reading level of the KJV is not very high.

- a. The KJV is written on an 8th to 10th grade level. This was proven in the 1980s by a computer analysis made by Dr. Donald Waite. He ran several books of the KJV through the *Right Writer* program and found that Genesis 1, Exodus 1, and Romans 8 are on the 8th grade level; Romans 1 and Jude are on the 10th grade level; and Romans 3:1-23 is on the 6th grade level. I would guess that many parts of the four Gospels are on that same level if not lower.
- b. The KJV was rated as “very easy prose” by Dr. Rudolf Flesch. In the book *The Art of Plain Talk* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1946), Dr. Flesch analyzed the reading level of various documents and rated them on a scale from Very Easy to Very Difficult. He testified, “The best example of very easy prose (about 20 affixes per 200 words) is the King James Version of the Bible...” Dr. Flesch is most famous for the book *Why Johnny Can't Read*.

3. The KJV has a small vocabulary. While Shakespeare used a vocabulary of roughly 21,000 English words, the vocabulary of the King James Bible is composed of only 6,000 (Albert Cook, *The Authorized Version of the Bible and Its Influence*, 1910). This compares favorably to the vocabulary of the Hebrew Old Testament, which is 5,642 words, and the vocabulary of the Greek New Testament, which is about 4,800 words.

4. The KJV uses simple words; most are only one or two syllables. “The entire KJV averages 1.31 syllables and 3.968 letters per word. This word length puts the KJV in the same readability category as the children’s books” (D.A. Waite, Jr., *The Comparative Readability of the Authorized Version*, Bible for Today, Collingswood, NJ, 1996).

- a. Consider Psalm 23, for example: “The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and

mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.”

Of the 119 words in this Psalm, only 24 are more than two syllables and only 5 are three.

- b. Consider the Parable of the Rich Man in Luke 12:15-21. “And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”

Of the 157 English words in this passage, only 22 are more than two syllables.

5. The most important thing in a Bible translation is not simple language but faithfulness to the original.

- a. Dr. Donald Waite has made the following excellent comments on this subject: “The Bible is not a first grade primer. It is God’s book. It is a book that must be diligently read. It is only by ‘searching the Scriptures’ that we find what pertains to life and death. It tells of creation, of the mighty universe, of the future or the past, of the Mighty God and His wonders, of the Holy Spirit’s ministry among Christians, of the Son of God’s great sacrifice for sin, of home in Heaven for the believer, and of a fiery hell for the unsaved. How dare we assume that His Word can be capsulated in a comic book [or a version that reads ‘like the morning newspaper’]. Some people say they like a particular version because ‘it’s more readable.’ Now, readability is one thing, but does the readability conform to what’s in the original Greek and Hebrew language? You can have a lot of readability, but if it doesn’t match up with what God has said, it’s of no profit. In the King James Bible, the words match what God has said. You may say it’s difficult to read, but study it out. [At times it’s] hard in the Hebrew and Greek and, perhaps, even in the English in the King James Bible. But to change it around just to make it simple, or interpreting it instead of translating it, is wrong. You’ve got lots of interpretation, but we don’t want that in a translation. We want exactly what God said in the Hebrew or Greek brought over into English” (Waite, *Defending the King James Bible*, p. 242).
- b. Also consider this statement by Leland Ryken, a professor of English at Wheaton College: “An English Bible translation should strive for maximum readability only within the parameters of accurately expressing what the original actually says, including the difficulty inherent in the original text. The crucial question that should govern translation is what the

original authors actually wrote, not our speculations over how they would express themselves today or how we would express the content of the Bible. The fact that the New Testament was written in *koine* Greek should not lead translators to translate the Bible in a uniformly colloquial style. Finally, a good translation does not attempt to make the Bible simpler than it was for the original audience” (Leland Ryken, *The Word of God in English*, pp. 100, 101).

6. Part of the antiquated feel of the King James Bible is its usage of the second person singular pronominal forms, “thee,” “thou,” and “thine.”

- a. These should be retained because their use allows the distinction in English between singular and plural pronouns. In other words, “you” and “ye” are plural, while “thou” and “thine” are singular. The singular forms have disappeared from contemporary English, so that there is no difference today between “you” plural and “you” singular. The Hebrew and Greek languages, though, have both a singular and plural form of the pronoun, and the King James Bible was able to pass this distinction along to the English reader.
- b. The use of *thee*, *thou*, *thine* was already antiquated when the King James Bible was translated. The King James translators did not adopt *thee*, *thou*, *thine* because those forms were common to their day, but because they wanted to faithfully translate the original Scripture text into English.

(1) These expressions had already dropped out of common English by 1611 when the King James Bible was published. We can see this by reading the translator’s Preface and other writings by the translators. The distinction between the singular and plural in English began in the late 13th century and continued commonly until the 1500s.

(2) The British biblical scholar J.B. Lightfoot wrote, “Indeed, we may take courage from the fact that the language of our English Bible is not the language of the age in which the translators lived, but in its grand simplicity stands out in contrast to the ornate and often affected diction of the literature of the time” (*The Divine Original*, Trinitarian Bible Society, London, England).

(3) “It is often asserted or assumed that the usage of the AV represents the speech of 300 years ago, and that now, three centuries later, it should be changed to accord with contemporary usage. But this is not at all a correct statement of the problem. The important fact is this. THE USAGE OF THE AV IS NOT THE ORDINARY USAGE OF THE EARLY SEVENTEENTH CENTURY: IT IS THE BIBLICAL USAGE BASED ON THE STYLE OF THE HEBREW AND THE GREEK SCRIPTURES. The second part of this statement needs no proof and will be challenged by no one. It is undeniable that where the Hebrew and Greek use the singular of the pronoun the AV regularly uses the singular, and where they use the plural it uses the plural. Even in Deuteronomy where in his addresses, and

apparently for rhetorical and pedagogical effect, Moses often changes suddenly, and seemingly arbitrarily, from singular to plural or from plural to singular, the AV reproduces the style of the text with fidelity. THAT IS TO SAY, THE USAGE OF THE AV IS STRICTLY BIBLICAL” (Oswald T. Allis, “Is a Pronominal Revision of the Authorized Version Desirable?” This article is available in the Bible Version section of the End Times Apostasy Database at the Way of Life Literature web site - <http://www.wayoflife.org>).

- (4) Linguistic scholar A.T. Robertson made the following important observation about the King James Bible: “No one today speaks the English of the Authorised Version, or ever did for that matter, for though, like Shakespeare, it is the pure Anglo-Saxon, yet unlike Shakespeare IT REPRODUCES TO A REMARKABLE EXTENT THE SPIRIT AND LANGUAGE OF THE BIBLE” (*A Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, p. 56).
  - (5) The style of the King James Bible goes back to the masterly work of William Tyndale in the early 16th century. British historian James Froude observes: “The peculiar genius—if such a word may be permitted—which breathes through it—the mingled tenderness and majesty—the Saxon simplicity—the preternatural grandeur—unequaled, unapproached in the attempted improvements of modern scholars—all are here, and bear the impress of the mind of one man—William Tyndale. Lying, while engaged in that great office, under the shadow of death, the sword above his head and ready at any moment to fall, he worked, under circumstances alone perhaps truly worthy of the task which was laid upon him—his spirit, as it were divorced from the world, moved in a purer element than common air” (Froude, *History of England from the Fall of Wolsey to the Defeat of the Spanish Armada*, III, p. 84).
- c. Following are some examples of how important it is to retain the distinction between second person singular and plural. These examples (excepting Isaiah 7:14) are adapted from the book *Archaic or Accurate: Modern Translations of the Bible and You versus Thee in the Language of Worship*, edited by J.P. Thackway, and published by The Bible League of England:

Exodus 4:15. “THOU shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth; and I will be with THY mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach YOU what YE shall do.” THOU and THY refer to Moses, but YOU refers to the nation.

Exodus 29:42. “This shalt be a continual burnt offering throughout YOUR generations at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD where I will meet YOU, to speak there unto THEE.” YOU, referring to the children of Israel, is explained in the following verse, but THEE refers to Moses, who had the holy privilege of hearing the words of God directly (Leviticus 1:1).

2 Samuel 7:23. “And what one nation in the earth is like THY people, even like Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people to himself, and to make him a name, and to do for YOU great things and terrible, for THY land, before THY people, which THOU redeemedst to THEE from Egypt.” Here David is in prayer to God, thus accounting for the singular words THY and THOU, referring to God. David turns his attention to the people Israel when he uses the plural YOU. If “you” were used throughout, the reader would not understand who David was addressing.

Isaiah 7:14. “Therefore the Lord himself shall give YOU a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.” There is a long-running debate by liberal and even New Evangelical scholars that Isaiah 7:14 is only secondarily a Messianic prophecy and that its primary fulfillment was in Isaiah’s day. For example, the note in the *NIV Study Bible* says of the word virgin: “May refer to a young woman betrothed to Isaiah (8:3), who was to become his second wife (his first wife presumably having died after Shear-jashub was born).” In fact, the prophecy is not directed to Isaiah personally but to the nation Israel as a whole, and this is clear in the KJV, because it indicates properly that “YOU” is plural, not singular. This important information is lost in the modern English versions, including the New King James.

Matthew 26:64. “Jesus saith unto him, THOU hast said: nevertheless I say unto YOU, Hereafter shall YE see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.” The singular THOU refers to the high priest, but the plural YOU refers to all who will see Christ in the day of His glory (Rev. 1:7).

Luke 22:31-32. “The Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have YOU, that he may sift YOU as wheat: but I have prayed for THEE, that THY faith fail not: and when THOU art converted, strengthen THY brethren.” Satan’s desire was directed to all the apostles (YOU), but the Lord prays for each individually and for Peter specifically (THEE, THY).

John 3:7. “Marvel not that I said unto THEE, YE must be born again.” The message was spoken to an individual (THEE), Nicodemus, but the message encompassed all men (YE). The same thing occurs in verse 11, where we read, “I say unto THEE ... that YE receive not our witness.”

1 Corinthians 8:9-12. “Take heed lest ... this liberty of YOURS ... if any man see THEE which hast knowledge ... through THY knowledge ... But when YE sin.” The plural YOURS and YE refer to the church members in general, but the Holy Spirit personalizes the exhortation by changing to the singular THEE and THY.

2 Timothy 4:22. “The Lord Jesus Christ be with THY spirit. Grace be with YOU.” The singular THY refers to Timothy, to whom the epistle was written (2 Tim. 1:1), but

the plural YOU refers to others who were also included in Paul's final greetings, "Priscilla and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus" (2 Tim. 4:19).

Titus 3:15. "All that are with me salute THEE. Greet them that love us in the faith. Grace be with YOU all." Here, the singular THEE refers to Titus, but the plural YOU refers to the church in Crete (Tit. 1:5), and to all who loved Paul in the faith.

Philemon 21-25. "Having confidence in THY obedience I wrote unto THEE, knowing that THOU wilt also do more than I say ... I trust that through YOUR prayers I shall be given unto YOU ... There salute THEE ... the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with YOUR spirit." The singular THEE refers to Philemon, but as this short letter was also addressed to "Apphia ... Archippus ... and to the church in thy house" (v. 2), the plural form YOU, YOUR is used in verses 3, 22, and 25.

7. Previous generations educated the people UP TO the Bible, and that is what we should do today. It is my conviction that we don't need a new translation today; we need to renew our study of the excellent one that we already have. "Instead of lowering the Bible to a lowest common denominator, why should we not educate people to rise to the level required to experience the Bible in its full richness and exaltation? Instead of expecting the least from Bible readers, we should expect the most from them. The greatness of the Bible requires the best, not the least. ... The most difficult of modern English translations -- the King James -- is used most by segments of our society that are relatively uneducated as defined by formal education. ... research has shown repeatedly that people are capable of rising to surprising and even amazing abilities to read and master a subject that is important to them. ... Previous generations did not find the King James Bible, with its theological heaviness, beyond their comprehension. Nor do readers and congregations who continue to use the King James translation find it incomprehensible. Neither of my parents finished grade school, and they learned to understand the King James Bible from their reading of it and the preaching they heard based on it. We do not need to assume a theologically inept readership for the Bible. Furthermore, if modern readers are less adept at theology than they can and should be, it is the task of the church to educate them, not to give them Bible translations that will permanently deprive them of the theological content that is really present in the Bible" (Leland Ryken, *The Word of God in English*, pp. 107, 109).

8. Though the terms "thou" and "thine" have been out of common usage of the English language for more than 400 years, it was only a few decades ago that people started complaining about it. Even then it was done largely at the prompting of Bible publishers greedy to make ever larger profits by introducing an ever more bewildering smorgasbord of "up-to-date" Bibles. Believers of the 1600s, 1700s, 1800s, and even most of the 1900s, loved the "quaint" old English of the King James Bible. They did not think it strange that their Bible did not sound like the morning newspaper. It is the Bible! It was written thousands of years ago! It is the Word of the eternal God! It is nothing like the morning newspaper; why, pray tell, should it sound like one? "I believe that it is correct for an English translation to preserve an appropriate archaic flavor as a way of preserving the distance between us and the biblical world. Joseph Wood Krutch used an

evocative formula in connection with the King James Bible when he spoke of ‘an appropriate flavor of a past time’” (Ryken, *The Word of God in English*, p. 182).

9. There are many tools available to help people understand the KJV. Following are a few of these:

The *Bible Word List* from the Trinitarian Bible Society of London, England. This is a pamphlet that defines 618 antiquated words in the King James Bible. See <http://www.trinitarianbiblesociety.org/>.

The *Concise King James Bible Dictionary*, available from Way of Life Literature. Designed to fit in a Bible case, its convenient size makes it easy to use, because it can be kept right with one’s Bible. It includes an extensive list of King James Bible words that have changed meaning since 1611, plus all of the doctrinal terms (“justification,” “sanctification,” “propitiation,” etc.) and much more. Not only does it define individual Bible words but also many of the phrases and descriptive statements that are no longer a part of contemporary English usage, such as “superfluity of naughtiness,” “at your hand,” “taken with the manner,” and “in the gate.” It is an excellent small Bible dictionary for both new and older Christians. Way of Life Literature, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061-0368. 866-295-4143, <http://www.wayoflife.org> (web site).

*Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance*. In my estimation, *Strong’s* is the most important Bible study tool ever published. Not only is it exhaustive in its treatment of the words of the English Bible, but it also links the English words to an exceptional dictionary of the Hebrew and Greek terms underlying the English. One does not have to know the Greek and Hebrew alphabets to use Strong’s dictionary; he developed a masterly apparatus whereby each Greek and Hebrew word is assigned a number, and the student can thus search for Greek and Hebrew terms by numbers. The dictionary gives a concise definition of the Greek or Hebrew word as well as a list of how the word is translated at various places in the English Bible.

The *Way of Life Encyclopedia of the Bible & Christianity*. Another tool for studying the King James Bible is the *Way of Life Encyclopedia of the Bible & Christianity*. (The above-mentioned *Concise King James Bible* was based on the *Way of Life Encyclopedia*.) This lovely hardcover Bible encyclopedia contains 560 pages (8.5X11) of information, over 5,500 entries, and over 6,000 cross-references. Twenty-five years of research has gone into this one-of-a-kind reference tool. It is the only Bible dictionary/encyclopedia written by a fundamental Baptist and based strictly upon the King James Bible. It is a complete dictionary of biblical terminology, plus it features many other areas of research not often covered in a single volume Bible reference tool. Subjects include Bible versions, Denominations, Cults, Christian Movements, Typology, the Church, Social Issues and Practical Christian Living, Bible Prophecy, and Old English Terminology. The Christian will be helped and fortified in his faith



through this Encyclopedia. It does not correct the Authorized nor does it undermine the fundamental Baptist's doctrines and practices as many study tools do. Many preachers have told us that apart from *Strong's Concordance*, the *Way of Life Bible Encyclopedia* is their favorite study tool. A missionary told us that if he could save only one study book out of his library, it would be our encyclopedia. An evangelist in South Dakota wrote: "If I were going to the mission field and could carry only three books, they would be the Strong's concordance, a hymnal, and the *Way of Life Bible Encyclopedia*." Missionary author Jack Moorman says: "The encyclopedia is excellent and will meet a real need. The entries show a 'distilled spirituality.'" Way of Life Literature, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061. 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org (e-mail), <http://www.wayoflife.org> (web site).

### **SHOULDN'T WE REMOVE THE OLD LANGUAGE SUCH AS THEE, THOU, AND THINE?**

#### **ANSWER:**

See the previous question, "Isn't the King James Bible too antiquated and difficult to understand today?"

### **IS IT WRONG FOR A PREACHER TO CORRECT THE KING JAMES BIBLE?**

One man wrote to me and said: "I have used and been blessed by Martyn Lloyd Jones over the years. He is a great man for defending the truth and as you know he separated himself from much that was compromising. He always used the KJV but in places would write to clarify. For example, he would say that it is a pity the Authorized Version translators should have used the word 'atonement' here (Rom 5:11), because it is exactly the same word that is translated in verse 10 as 'reconciled.' Would you feel this was wrong? If so why?"

#### **ANSWER:**

I have no doubt that Dr. Jones was convinced that he was speaking the truth and was trying to help the Lord's people. I personally would not want to do that, though, for the following reasons:

First, I am sure that Dr. Jones was strong in the Word of God, but I do not believe one man's opinion should overthrow the work of 220 years of consecrated Bible translation. The King James Bible is not a one-man project. It is founded upon the work of John Wycliffe, William Tyndale, John Rogers, the Anglican bishops who produced the Bishops Bible, and the Geneva translators, all of who were persecuted for their faith. (Though Wycliffe translated from Latin rather than Hebrew and Greek, his translation was good and he forged the path in molding biblical words to the English language that was followed by those who came after him. Many of Wycliffe's words, in fact, remain in the King James Bible.) Tyndale himself, who spoke seven languages as fluently as English, was such a masterly translator that roughly 80% of his

translation remains in the KJV. Further, the KJV project that built upon this foundation was amazingly extensive and thorough. The group of some 50 translators, all masters in the field, was divided into six groups, and the translation eventually went through the hands of each individual and each group. It appears very audacious for a single man today to boast that he can make a better translation than this.

Second, it is much wiser, in my estimation, to say that Greek and English words can be used in different ways in different contexts. I would explain that in verses 10 and 11 in Romans chapter five similar Greek words are used (though not exactly the same) and that the KJV translators chose to use two different English words. It is as simple as that. It is a matter of translational choice rather than translational error. I would explain that Bible words (e.g., “atonement” and “reconcile”) must be interpreted according to their context and not according to any preset meaning. This is the method of interpretation that I teach in my course on “How to Study the Bible.” One of my favorite methods of word study is to find how a certain Hebrew or Greek word is translated throughout the KJV. It is so wonderfully and endlessly instructive. The KJV translators’ “inconsistent” use of English words has been a matter of debate for all of these centuries. Personally, I am glad that they did not always use the same English word to translate a Greek or Hebrew word, because this is one reason why the KJV reads as beautifully as it does. It has been called the greatest monument to English prose, and that is a powerful statement.

# QUESTIONS PERTAINING TO THE GREEK RECEIVED TEXT

## WASN'T THE TERM *TEXTUS RECEPTUS* MERELY AN ADVERTISING BLURB?

The term *Textus Receptus* in Latin (“Received Text” in English) that was printed in the Elziver’s edition of the Greek New Testament in 1633 *was not merely an advertising blurb*, as has been falsely claimed by modern version defenders. It was a statement of the faith of God’s people before the advent of modern textual criticism, that the text commonly passed down through the centuries, the text commonly and traditionally used in the churches, is the Holy Spirit inspired text of the prophets and apostles.

Bruce Metzger trips himself up on this in *The Text of the New Testament*. On the one hand he claims that this “was a more or less casual phrase advertising the edition (what modern publishers might call a ‘blurb’)” and that “partly because of this catchword” the Received Text became the standard text (Metzger, p. 106). But on the previous page, Metzger admitted that the reason Beza, in the 1500s, made little use of Codex D and Codex Claromontanus, which were in his possession, was because “they deviated too far from the generally received text of the time” (Metzger, p. 105). Thus, it is obvious that the publication of the term *Textus Receptus* in 1633 had nothing to do with popularizing this particular Greek New Testament. It was already the generally received text in the century prior to the Elziver’s. All of the Protestant Bibles had been based on this same Greek New Testament for more than 100 years prior to the Elziver’s. Thus the term *Textus Receptus* in the 1633 edition of the Elziver Greek New Testament was not merely an advertising blurb but an accurate statement of how believers in general looked upon the Received Greek text.

## WHAT ABOUT THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE VARIOUS EDITIONS OF THE RECEIVED TEXT AND WHICH EDITION SHOULD WE PREFER?

There are several editions of the Greek Received Text. Erasmus published five editions (1516, 1519, 1522, 1527, 1535). Robert Stephanus published four editions (1546, 1549, 1550, 1551). Theodore Beza published at least four independent editions (1556, 1582, 1688-89, 1598). The Elziver family printed two editions (1624, 1633). Another edition of the Greek Received Text was published in the Complutensian Polyglot. Finally in 1881 Frederick Scrivener, under contract to the Cambridge University Press, published the Greek text underlying the King James Bible. This edition of the Received Text has been republished many times, most recently by the Trinitarian Bible Society and by the Dean Burgon Society.

### **ANSWER:**

1. The differences between the various editions of the Greek Received Text are extremely slight and cannot be compared to the differences found in the Alexandrian manuscripts.

- a. According to Scrivener's extensive comparisons, there are only 252 places in which the Erasmus, Stephanus, Elzevir, Beza, and Complutensian Polyglot disagree sufficiently to affect the English translation. The 3rd edition of Stephanus and the 1st edition of Elzevir differ only 19 times in Mark. The editions of Beza differ from the 4th edition of Stephanus only 38 times in the entire New Testament.
- b. In contrast, consider three of the chief Alexandrian manuscripts, Sinaiticus, Vaticanus, and Codex D. In the Gospel of Mark alone, Vaticanus disagrees with Sinaiticus 652 times and with Codex D 1,944 times. Sinaiticus and Vaticanus disagree with one another in more than 3,000 places in the four Gospels alone!

2. Following are some of the most important of the differences between editions of the Greek Received Text:

Luke 2:22 -- Erasmus and Stephanus have "their purification," while Beza, Elzevir, and Complutensian have "her purification"

Luke 17:36 -- Erasmus and the first three editions of Stephanus omit this verse, while Beza, Elzevir, and the 4th edition of Stephanus include it.

John 1:28 -- Erasmus, Beza, Elzevir, and the 3rd and 4th editions of Stephanus have "Bethabara beyond Jordan," while the 1st and 2nd editions of Stephanus have "Bethany beyond Jordan."

John 16:33 -- Beza and Elzevir read "shall have tribulation," while Erasmus and Stephanus read "have tribulation."

Romans 8:11 -- Beza and Elzevir read "by His Spirit that dwelleth in you," while Erasmus and Stephanus read "because of His Spirit that dwelleth in you."

Romans 12:11 -- Beza, Elzevir, and the first edition of Erasmus read "serving the Lord," while Stephanus and the 2nd to the 5th editions of Erasmus read "serving the time."

1 Timothy 1:4 -- Erasmus, Beza, and Elzevir have "godly edifying," while Stephanus has "dispensation of God."

Hebrews 9:1 -- Stephanus reads "first tabernacle," while Erasmus and Beza omit "tabernacle."

James 2:18 -- The last three editions of Beza has "without thy works," while Erasmus, Stephanus, and the first edition of Beza have "by thy works."

3. Which edition of the Received Text should we follow today? Edward F. Hills, who had a doctorate in modern textual criticism from Harvard, made the following important statement in regard to the KJV and the Received Text:

“The King James Version is a variety of the Textus Receptus. The translators that produced the King James Version relied mainly, it seems, on the later editions of Beza's Greek New Testament, especially his 4th edition (1588-9). But also they frequently consulted the editions of Erasmus and Stephanus and the Complutensian Polyglot. According to Scrivener (1884), out of the 252 passages in which these sources differ sufficiently to affect the English rendering, the King James Version agrees with Beza against Stephanus 113 times, with Stephanus against Beza 59 times, and 80 times with Erasmus, or the Complutensian, or the Latin Vulgate against Beza and Stephanus. HENCE THE KING JAMES VERSION OUGHT TO BE REGARDED NOT MERELY AS A TRANSLATION OF THE TEXTUS RECEPTUS BUT ALSO AS AN INDEPENDENT VARIETY OF THE TEXTUS RECEPTUS....

“BUT WHAT DO WE DO IN THESE FEW PLACES IN WHICH THE SEVERAL EDITIONS OF THE TEXTUS RECEPTUS DISAGREE WITH ONE ANOTHER? WHICH TEXT DO WE FOLLOW? THE ANSWER TO THIS QUESTION IS EASY. WE ARE GUIDED BY THE COMMON FAITH. HENCE WE FAVOR THAT FORM OF THE TEXTUS RECEPTUS UPON WHICH MORE THAN ANY OTHER GOD, WORKING PROVIDENTIALY, HAS PLACED THE STAMP OF HIS APPROVAL, NAMELY, THE KING JAMES VERSION, OR, MORE PRECISELY, THE GREEK TEXT UNDERLYING THE KING JAMES VERSION. This text was published in 1881 by the Cambridge University Press under the editorship of Dr. Scrivener, and there have been eight reprints, the latest being in 1949 [DWC: It has since been republished by the Trinitarian Bible Society of London, England, and the Dean Burgon Society of Collingswood, New Jersey.] We ought to be grateful that in the providence of God the best form of the Textus Receptus is still available to believing Bible students” (Edward F. Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, 4th edition, pp. 220, 223).

We agree with Dr. Hills' position.

The exact Greek text underlying the King James Bible was reconstructed by Frederick Scrivener under the direction of the Cambridge University Press and published in 1891. It is republished today by the Trinitarian Bible Society in England as well as the Dean Burgon Society in America.

### **WASN'T ERASMUS A MERE ROMAN CATHOLIC HUMANIST?**

“The Textus Receptus began with an edition of the Greek New Testament put together by a Roman Catholic humanist, Desiderius Erasmus, in A.D. 1516” (Stewart Custer, *The Truth about the King James Version Controversy*, p. 10).

#### **ANSWER:**

1. We agree with the following assessment of Erasmus: “But Erasmus is a complex and many-faceted individual. His true face is difficult to delineate. And there is also the tendency to picture him in one's own mold or to interpret him in the light of one's own convictions and preconceptions. A study of the studies about him and of the various judgments that have been passed reveals this quite clearly” (John Olin, *Christian Humanism and the Reformation: Selected Writings of Erasmus*, p. 37).

2. Erasmus was not a humanist as it is defined today. He was a Christian humanist, “a biblical humanist” (*Erasmus*, Huizinga, p. 110).

- a. In a letter dated Jan. 7, 1985, Andrew Brown, Editorial Secretary of the Trinitarian Bible Society, replied as follows to this issue: “The use of the word ‘humanist’ in the Renaissance and Reformation period does not in any way share the atheistic connotations which that word now has in popular usage. A ‘humanist’ in that period was simply someone who was interested in classical literature, culture and education, as a means of attaining a higher standard of civilised life. Stephanus, Calvin and Beza were all humanists in this sense...” (Letter to David Cloud from Andrew Brown, Jan. 7, 1985). On a visit with two friends to the Erasmus Museum near Brussels in 2003, we asked the deputy curator whether Erasmus was a humanist and she confirmed Andrew Brown’s statement. She told us that he was not a humanist after the modern definition but after the Reformation definition, meaning that he was a lover of learning and personal liberty and that he refused to depend strictly upon the “church’s” authority but wanted to go back to original sources such as the Greek for the New Testament.
- b. Erasmus warned about various dangers that he perceived in the humanist movement of his day and toward the end of his life was increasingly distancing himself from it. “Nothing is more characteristic of the independence which Erasmus reserved for himself regarding all movements of his time than the fact that he also joined issue in the camp of the humanists. ... In spite of the great expectations he cherished of classical studies for pure Christianity, he saw one danger: ‘that under the cloak of reviving ancient literature paganism tries to rear its head, as there are those among Christians who acknowledge Christ only in name but inwardly breathe heathenism’. This he writes in 1517 to Capito. In Italy scholars devote themselves too exclusively and in too pagan guise to *bonae literae*. ... The core of the *Ciceronianus* [meaning ‘On the Best Diction’ and published in 1528] is where Erasmus points out the danger to Christian faith of a too zealous classicism. ... We here see the aged Erasmus on the path of reaction, which might eventually have led him far from humanism. In his combat with humanistic purism he foreshadows a Christian puritanism” (*Erasmus*, Huizinga, pp. 170-173).

3. Though we do not claim that Erasmus was a staunch, Bible-believing Christian, the whole story should be told.

- a. Erasmus was much more doctrinally sound than the typical Catholic of his day.

(1) Erasmus’ *Enchiridion militis Christiani* (*Christian Soldier’s Manual*) was translated into English by William Tyndale. It was written as a spiritual challenge to an actual soldier then living. “The general rules of the Christian conduct of life are followed by a number of remedies for particular sins and faults” (*Erasmus*, Johan Huizinga, p. 51).

- (2) Following is a quote from Erasmus' "Treatise on the Preparation for Death": "We are assured of victory over death, victory over the flesh, victory over the world and Satan. Christ promises us remission of sins, fruits in this life a hundredfold, and thereafter life eternal. And for what reason? For the sake of our merit? No indeed, but through the grace of faith which is in Christ Jesus. We are the more secure because he is first our doctor. He first overcame the lapse of Adam, nailed our sins to the cross, sealed our redemption with his blood ... He added the seal of the Spirit lest we should waver in our confidence ... What could we little worms do of ourselves? Christ is our justification. Christ is our victory. Christ is our hope and security. ... I believe there are many not absolved by the priest, not having taken the Eucharist, not having been anointed, not having received Christian burial who rest in peace, while many who have had all the rites of the Church and have been buried next to the altar have gone to hell."
- (3) Hugh Pope, a Romanist, said Erasmus expressed doubts on "about almost every article of Catholic teaching" (see Michael Maynard, *A History of the Debate over 1 John 5:7-8*, p. 329). Pope listed six dogmas in particular that Erasmus questioned, including the mass, confession, the primacy of the Pope, and priestly celibacy.
- (4) Jan Schlecta of the Bohemian Brethren corresponded with Erasmus about their views and listed five non-Catholic doctrines that the Brethren believed. Erasmus had no objection to any of them (P.S. Allen, *The Age of Erasmus*, "The Bohemian Brethren"; cited from Michael Maynard, *A History of the Debate over 1 John 5:7-8*, p. 328).
- (5) Erasmus advocated believer's baptism by immersion. In his paraphrase on Matthew 28, Erasmus wrote: "After you have taught them these things, and they believe what you have taught them, have repented their previous lives, and are ready to embrace the doctrine of the gospel, then immerse them in water, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, so that by this holy sign they may believe that they have been delivered freely through the benefit of my death from the filthiness of all their sins and now belong to the number of God's children" (Abraham Friesen, *Erasmus, the Anabaptists, and the Great Commission*, pp. 50, 51). Friesen observes that "in virtually every passage in the Acts of the Apostles that deals with baptism, Erasmus proceeded to set the sermon or event into the context of the Great Commission" (p. 51). In his annotations on Mark 16:15-16, Erasmus said, "The apostles are commanded that they teach first and baptize later. The Jew was brought to a knowledge [of God] through ceremonies; the Christian is taught first" (Friesen, p. 54). This is a clear statement in support of scriptural baptism as opposed to infant baptism.
- (6) In the introductory notes to the third edition of his Greek New Testament, Erasmus advocated re-baptism for those who were already sprinkled as infants (Friesen, pp.

34, 35). “It is little wonder, therefore, that when the doctors of the Sorbonne took a look at Erasmus’s proposal in 1526, they censured it and wrote that to ‘rebaptize’ children would be to open ‘the door to the destruction of the Christian religion’” (Friesen, p. 35).

- b. Erasmus wrote boldly against many of Rome’s errors. Consider some excerpts from his writings and remember that these were extremely bold words in those days, words that the Roman Catholic Church looked upon as heretical and worthy of death, words that very few were willing to put into print even if they believed them.

Matthew 23:27 (on whited sepulchres) -- ‘What would Jerome say could he see the Virgin’s milk exhibited for money ... the miraculous oil; the portions of the true cross, enough if they were collected to freight a large ship? Here we have the hood of St. Francis, there Our Lady’s petticoat, or St. Anne’s comb, or St. Thomas of Canterbury’s shoes ... and all through the avarice of priests and the hypocrisy of monks playing on the credulity of the people. Even bishops play their parts in these fantastic shows, and approve and dwell on them in their rescripts.’

Matthew 24:23 (on Lo, here is Christ or there) -- ‘I saw with my own eyes Pope Julius II, at Bologna, and afterwards at Rome, marching at the head of a triumphal procession as if he were Pompey or Cesar. St. Peter subdued the world with faith, not with arms or soldiers or military engines.’

- 1 Timothy 3:2 (on the husband of one wife) -- ‘Other qualifications are laid down by St. Paul as required for a bishop’s office, a long list of them. But not one at present is held essential, except this one of abstinence from marriage. Homicide, parricide, incest, piracy, sodomy, sacrilege, these can be got over, but marriage is fatal. There are priests now in vast numbers, enormous herds of them, seculars and regulars, and it is notorious that very few of them are chaste. The great proportion fall into lust and incest, and open profligacy. It would surely be better if those who cannot contain should be allowed lawful wives of their own, and so escape this foul and miserable pollution.’

In about 1518 Erasmus published (anonymously) *Julius Exclusus* (*Julius Excluded*), a bold reproof against papal glory and wars. It depicted the late Pope Julius II as a worldly Julius Caesar appearing “in all of his glory before the gate of the Heavenly Paradise to plead his cause and find himself excluded” (Huizinga, p. 84). In 1506 Erasmus had witnessed the triumphal entry of Pope Julius into Florence at the head of the army that had conquered Bologna.

- c. Erasmus understood the necessity of uprooting the papacy, even though he did not have the courage to attempt it himself nor to openly join hands with those, like Luther, who were trying to do it. In 1518 he wrote the following remarks in his letters: “I see that the monarchy of the Pope at Rome, as it is now, is a pestilence to Christendom, but I do not



know if it is expedient to touch that sore openly.” “We shall never triumph over feigned Christians unless we first abolish the tyranny of the Roman see, and of its satellites, the Dominicans, the Franciscans and the Carmelites. But no one could attempt that without a serious tumult” (Huizinga, pp. 141, 144).

d. Though Erasmus was not a separating reformer after the fashion of a Luther or a Zwingli or a Tyndale, he desired the Scriptures to be placed in the hands of every man. This sentiment alone set him apart dramatically from that which prevailed among Catholic authorities of that day, and it was a sentiment that was severely condemned by Catholic authorities. From the days of Pope Innocent III in the early 13th century, the Roman Catholic Church had forbidden the Bible to be translated into the common tongues and had put men to death for translating and reading the Bible.

(1) Erasmus first expressed his desire for every Christian to understand the Scripture in his *Enchiridion militis Christiani* of 1501. “... within this scope Erasmus finds an opportunity, for the first time, to develop his theological programme. This programme calls upon us to return to Scripture. It should be the endeavour of every Christian to understand Scripture in its purity and original meaning” (*Erasmus*, Huizinga, p. 51).

(2) Erasmus developed this theme boldly in his *Paraclesis* (meaning “a summons or exhortation” and referring to his summons for Christians to study Holy Scripture) which was published as a preface to the first edition of his Greek and Latin New Testament of 1516. “Indeed, I disagree very much with those who are unwilling that Holy Scripture, translated into the vulgar tongue, be read by the uneducated as if Christ taught such intricate doctrines that they could scarcely be understood by very few theologians, or as if the strength of the Christian religion consisted in men’s ignorance of it. The mysteries of kings, perhaps, are better concealed, but Christ wishes His mysteries published as openly as possible. I would that even the lowliest women read the Gospels and the Pauline Epistles. And I would that they were translated into all languages so that they could be read and understood not only by Scots and Irish but also by Turks and Saracens. ... Would that, as a result, the farmer sing some portion of them at the plow, the weaver hum some parts of them to the movement of his shuttle, the traveler lighten the weariness of the journey with stories of this kind! Let all the conversations of every Christian be drawn from this source. ... I think, and rightly so, unless I am mistaken, that that pure and genuine philosophy of Christ is not to be drawn from any source more abundantly than from the evangelical books and from the Apostolic Letters. ... If we desire to learn, why is another author more pleasing than Christ Himself? ... And He, since He promised to be with us all days, even unto the consummation of the world, stands forth especially in this literature, in which He lives for us even at this time, breathes and speaks. I should say almost more effectively than when He dwelt among men. ... We preserve the letters written by a dear friend, we kiss them fondly, we carry them

about, we read them again and again, yet there are many thousands of Christians who, although they are learned in other respects, never read, however, the evangelical and apostolic books in an entire lifetime. The Mohammedans hold fast to their doctrines, the Jews also today from the very cradle study the books of Moses. Why do not we in the same way distinguish ourselves in Christ? ... Let us all, therefore, with our whole heart covet this literature, let us embrace it, let us continually occupy ourselves with it, let us fondly kiss it, at length let us die in its embrace, let us be transformed in it ... We embellish a wooden or stone statue with gems and gold for the love of Christ. Why not, rather, mark with gold and gems and with ornaments of greater value than these, if such there be, these writings which bring Christ to us so much more effectively than any paltry image? The latter represents only the form of the body--if indeed it represents anything of Him--but these writings bring you the living image of His holy mind and the speaking, healing, dying, rising Christ Himself, and thus they render Him so fully present that you would see less if you gazed upon Him with your very eyes” (quoted from John Olin, *Christian Humanism and the Reformation: Selected Writings of Erasmus*).

- (3) As we have noted, this sentiment was 180 degrees contrary to the position of the Catholic Church in that day. In 1428 Rome had dug up the bones of English Bible translator John Wycliffe and burned them to express its outrage with his work. The Council of Toulouse (1229) and the Council of Tarragona (1234) had forbid the laity to possess or read the vernacular translations of the Bible. The Council of Toulouse used these words: “We prohibit the permission of the books of the Old and New Testament to laymen, except perhaps they might desire to have the Psalter, or some Breviary for the divine service, or the Hours of the blessed Virgin Mary, for devotion; expressly forbidding their having the other parts of the Bible translated into the vulgar tongue” (Allix, *Ecclesiastical History*, II, p. 213). The declarations of these Councils were still in force in Erasmus’ lifetime.
- e. As early as 1506, Erasmus expressed a desire to be completely devoted to Christ. “I am deliberating again how best to devote the remainder of my life (how much that will be, I do not know) entirely to piety, to Christ. I see life, even when it is long, as evanescent and dwindling ... Therefore I have resolved, content with my mediocrity (especially now that I have learned as much Greek as suffices me), to apply myself to meditation about death and the training of my soul. I should have done so before and have husbanded the precious years when they were at their best” (*Erasmus*, Huizinga, p. 59).
- f. Erasmus died in 1536 in Basel, Switzerland, among his Protestant friends (Edward Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, p. 195). There is a famous painting of Erasmus sitting with these friends, the original of which is in the Erasmus Museum in Brussels. I saw it on a visit there in April 2003.
- g. Erasmus’ work was rejected by the Catholic Church. His books were castigated and burned throughout Europe.

- (1) In England, Erasmus' writings were publicly burned in May 1520.
  - (2) In France, the Sorbonne burned French translations of Erasmus' work that had been made by Louis de Berquin. On April 17, 1529, Berquin himself was burned at the stake.
  - (3) In Spain, Reformers were called "Erasmistas."
  - (4) In 1535, Emperor Charles V made it a capital offense to use Erasmus' *Colloquies* in the schools.
  - (5) On July 1, 1523, the Belgium inquisitors burned two of Erasmus' acquaintances in Brussels.
  - (6) The Council of Trent (1545-1564) branded Erasmus a heretic and prohibited his works. In 1559, Pope Paul IV placed Erasmus on the first class of forbidden authors, which was composed of authors whose works were completely condemned.
  - (7) It was a Catholic apologist who made the famous statement, "Erasmus planted, Luther watered, but the devil gave the increase" (Smith, *Erasmus*, p. 399). Thus, the Roman Catholic Church did not recognize Erasmus as a friend but as an enemy.
  - (8) David Daniell rightly observes: "From Desiderius Erasmus came a printed Greek New Testament which, swiftly translated into most European vernaculars, was a chief cause of the Continent-wide flood that should properly be called the Reformation" (*The Bible in English*, p. 113).
- h. Much that can be said about Erasmus can also be said about John Wycliffe and William Tyndale. These are the fathers of the English Bible, but neither of them formally left the Catholic Church. Both were ordained Catholic priests to their death. Wycliffe continued to exercise the office of a priest in Lutterworth until his death in 1384. Before Tyndale was martyred in 1536 outside of the castle walls in Vilvoorde, Belgium, the authorities excommunicated him and disbarred him from the priesthood. Of course, both men had long rejected most of Rome's dogmas, and the same is true of Erasmus.
- i. It is also important to note that there is no comparison between the situation with Erasmus and what we find in the field of modern textual criticism and the modern Bible versions today. Erasmus edited the Greek New Testament on his own. He was not doing that work in any official capacity in the Catholic Church nor did he have Rome's backing but rather was criticized for it and his work was condemned in the strongest terms. On the other hand, the Roman Catholic Church has accepted modern textual criticism and the modern Bible versions with open arms. In 1965, Pope Paul VI authorized the publication of a new Latin Vulgate, with the Latin text conformed to the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament (Michael de Semlyen, *All Roads Lead to Rome*, p. 201). In 1987 a formal agreement was

made between the Roman Catholic Church and the United Bible Societies that the critical Greek New Testament will be used for all future translations, both Catholic and Protestant (*Guidelines for International Cooperation in Translating the Bible, Rome, 1987, p. 5*). Most of the translations produced by the United Bible Societies are “interconfessional,” meaning they have Roman Catholic participation and backing.

4. While it is true that Erasmus was weak, he is the exception rather than the rule in the lineage of the Traditional Text. The modern version defenders who make an issue of Erasmus need to take a closer look at their own field. Modern textual criticism is founded upon the writings of hundreds of men more unsound in the faith than Erasmus. The influential names in the field of textual criticism include **UNITARIANS** such as Johann Wettstein, Edward Harwood, George Vance Smith, Ezra Abbot, Joseph Thayer, and Caspar Gregory; **LIBERAL RATIONALISTS** such as Johann Semler, Johann Griesbach, Bernhard Weiss, William Sanday, William Robertson Smith, Samuel Driver, Eberhard Nestle, James Rendel Harris, Hermann von Soden, Frederick Conybeare, Fredric Kenyon, Francis Burkitt, Henry Wheeler Robinson, Kirsopp Lake, Gerhard Kittel, Edgar Goodspeed, James Moffatt, Kenneth Clark, Ernest Colwell, Gunther Zuntz, J.B. Phillips, William Barclay, Theodore Skeat, George Kilpatrick, F.F. Bruce, George Ladd, J.K. Elliott, Eldon Epp, Brevard Childs, Bart Ehrman, C.H. Dodd, Barclay Newman, Arthur Voobus, Eugene Nida, Jan de Waard, Kurt Aland, Barbara Aland, Matthew Black, Allen Wikgren, Bruce Metzger, and Johannes Karavidopoulos; and **TRADITIONALIST ROMAN CATHOLICS** such as Richard Simon, Alexander Geddes, Johann Hug, and Carlo Martini. For documentation of the theological position of these and many other men in the field of modern textual criticism see “The Modern Bible Version’s Hall of Shame,” available from Way of Life Literature.

5. It is also important to understand that Erasmus did not create a Greek text through principles of modern textual criticism; he merely passed on the commonly received text. “Hence in the editing of his Greek New Testament text especially Erasmus was guided by the common faith in the current text. And back of this common faith was the controlling providence of God. ... Although not himself outstanding as a man of faith, in his editorial labors on this text he was providentially influenced and guided by the faith of others” (Edward F. Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, 4th edition, p. 199). Westcott & Hort themselves said that Erasmus merely published the text commonly held as Received “without selection or deliberate criticism”; and they said further that the choices of the 16th century editors were “arbitrary and uncritical” (Hort, Introduction to the New Testament in the Original Greek).

6. To raise the issue of Erasmus as a means of discounting the theological liberalism that is an intimate associate of modern textual criticism is to strain at gnats and swallow camels (Mat. 23:24). Those who do so strain at the gnat of Erasmus, who was admittedly weak in the faith but was also an exception in the field of the Received Text, and swallow the camel of the fact that theological modernism, skepticism, and unitarianism is **THE RULE** among the fathers of modern textual criticism.

## WASN'T ERASMUS' GREEK NEW TESTAMENT DONE HASTILY AND ONLY FOR MONEY?

“It is customary for naturalistic critics to make the most of human imperfections in the Textus Receptus and to sneer at it as a mean and almost sordid thing. These critics picture the Textus Receptus as merely a money-making venture on the part of Froben the publisher. Froben, they say, heard that the Spanish Cardinal Ximenes was about to publish a printed Greek New Testament text as part of his great Complutensian Polyglot Bible. In order to get something on the market first, it is said, Froben hired Erasmus as his editor and rushed a Greek New Testament through his press in less than a year's time” (Edward Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, p. 203).

### ANSWER:

1. To look at the history of the Bible only through skeptical eyes and to see only weak men, is to fail to see the God of history and preservation. “But those who concentrate in this way on the human factors involved in the production of the Textus Receptus are utterly unmindful of the providence of God. For in the very next year, in the plan of God, the Reformation was to break out in Wittenberg, and it was important that the Greek New Testament should be published first in one of the future strongholds of Protestantism by a book seller who was eager to place it in the hands of the people and not in Spain, the land of the Inquisition, by the Roman Catholic Church, which was intent on keeping the Bible from the people” (Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, p. 203).

2. To what extent Erasmus' motive in working for Froben was financial only the Lord knows, but it is obvious that his motive went beyond the financial. He had been working on the Greek New Testament for some time and had expressed his desire to see it in print and to see it translated into the common languages so that the people could have the Word of God. In the Latin preface to his New Testament, Erasmus said: “Christ wishes his mysteries to be published as widely as possible. I would wish all women to read the gospel and the epistles of St. Paul, and I wish that they were translated into all languages of all Christian people, that they might be read and known, not merely by the Scotch and the Irish, but even by the Turks and the Saracens. I wish that the husbandman might sing parts of them at his plow, that the weaver may warble them at his shuttle, that the traveller may with their narratives beguile the weariness of the way.”

3. The errors that were in the first edition of the Erasmus Greek New Testament were corrected in later editions and are therefore a non-issue today and should not enter the textual debate. “God works providentially through sinful and fallible human beings, and therefore His providential guidance has its human as well as its divine side. And these human elements were evident in the first edition (1516) of the Textus Receptus. For one thing, the work was performed so hastily that the text was disfigured with a great number of typographical errors. These misprints, however, were soon eliminated by Erasmus himself in his later editions and by other early editors and hence are not a factor which need to be taken into account in any estimate of the

abiding value of the Textus Receptus” (Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, p. 202).

### **DIDN'T ERASMUS USE A MERE HANDFUL OF MANUSCRIPTS?**

This is the standard line that is given by textual critics and parroted by those who support textual criticism. Consider the following three examples. Kenyon was an influential textual critic, and Carson and Wallace are New Evangelicals who defend textual criticism.

Frederic Kenyon -- “Erasmus used only a handful of MSS...” (*The Text of the Greek Bible*, p. 155).

D.A. Carson -- “Although Erasmus published a fourth and fifth edition, we need say no more about them here. Erasmus’s Greek Testament stands in line behind the King James Version; yet IT RESTS UPON A HALF DOZEN MINUSCULE MANUSCRIPTS, none of which is earlier than the tenth century. ... the textual basis of the TR is a small number of haphazardly and relatively late minuscule manuscripts” (D.A. Carson, *The King James Version Debate*, 1979, pp. 35-36).

Daniel Wallace -- “[Erasmus] only used half a dozen, very late MSS for the whole New Testament any way” (*Why I Do Not Think the King James Bible is the Best Translation Available Today*).

#### **ANSWER:**

1. Erasmus had knowledge of many manuscripts other than those he used for his first edition. Erasmus “began studying and collating NT MSS and observing thousands of variant readings in preparation for his own edition” (Eldon Jay Epp, “Decision Points in New Testament Textual Criticism,” *Studies in The Theory and Method of New Testament Textual Criticism*, edited by Epp and Gordon Fee, p. 18; quoting Bentley 1983: 35, 138). “It is well known also that Erasmus looked for manuscripts everywhere during his travels and that he borrowed them from everyone he could. Hence although the Textus Receptus was based mainly on the manuscripts which Erasmus found at Basel, it also included readings taken from others to which he had access. It agreed with the common faith because it was founded on manuscripts which in the providence of God were readily available” (Edward Hills, *The King James Bible Defended*, p. 198).

2. Erasmus knew about the variant readings that are known to modern textual critics.

- a. As Frederick Nolan observed: “With respect to Manuscripts, it is indisputable that he [Erasmus] was acquainted with every variety which is known to us; HAVING DISTRIBUTED THEM INTO TWO PRINCIPAL CLASSES, one of which corresponds with the Complutensian edition [the Received Text], and the other with the Vatican manuscript [corresponding to the modern critical text]. And he has specified the positive grounds on which he received the one and rejected the other. The former was in the

possession of the Greek church, the latter in that of the Latin; judging from the internal evidence he had as good reason to conclude the Eastern church had not corrupted their received text as he had grounds to suspect the Rhodians from whom the Western church derived their manuscripts, had accommodated them to the Latin Vulgate. One short insinuation which he has thrown out, sufficiently proves that his objections to these manuscripts lay more deep; and they do immortal credit to his sagacity. In the age in which the Vulgate was formed, the church, he was aware, was infested with Origenists and Arians; an affinity between any manuscript and that version, consequently conveyed some suspicion that its text was corrupted" (Nolan, *Inquiry into the Integrity of the Greek Vulgate, or Received Text of the New Testament*, London, 1815, pp. 413-15).

b. "For the first edition Erasmus had before him ten manuscripts, four of which he found in England, and five at Basle. ... The last codex was lent him by John Reuchlin ... (and) 'appeared to Erasmus so old that it might have come from the apostolic age.' He was aware of Vaticanus in the Vatican Library and had a friend by the name of Bombasius research that for him. He, however, rejected the characteristic variants of Vaticanus which distinguishes itself from the Received Text. (These variants are what would become the distinguishing characteristics of the critical text more than 350 years later.)" (Preserved Smith, *Erasmus: A Study of His Life, Ideals, and Place in History*, 1923). Erasmus was given 365 select readings from Vaticanus. "A correspondent of Erasmus in 1533 sent that scholar a number of selected readings from it [Codex B], as proof [or so says that correspondent] of its superiority to the Received Text" (Frederic Kenyon, *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts*, 1895; S.P. Tregelles, *On the Printed Text of the Greek Testament*; cited from Hills).

c. Erasmus discussed these variants in his notes. "*Indeed almost all the important variant readings known to scholars today were already known to Erasmus more than 460 years ago and discussed in the notes (previously prepared) which he placed after the text in his editions of the Greek New Testament.* Here, for example, Erasmus dealt with such problem passages as the conclusion of the Lord's Prayer (Matt. 6:13), the interview of the rich young man with Jesus (Matt. 19:17-22), the ending of Mark (Mark 16:9-20), the angelic song (Luke 2:14), the angel, agony, and bloody seat omitted (Luke 22:43-44), the woman taken in adultery (John 7:53-8:11), and the mystery of godliness" (1 Tim. 3:16) (Edward Hills, pp. 198-199).

3. Erasmus also had the textual evidence from the writings of ancient church leaders and from ancient Bible translations. "Nothing was more important at the dawn of the Reformation than the publication of the Testament of Jesus Christ in the original language. Never had Erasmus worked so carefully. **'If I told what sweat it cost me, no one would believe me.'** **HE HAD COLLATED MANY GREEK MSS. of the New Testament, and WAS SURROUNDED BY ALL THE COMMENTARIES AND TRANSLATIONS, by the writings of Origen, Cyprian, Ambrose, Basil, Chrysostom, Cyril, Jerome, and Augustine.** ... When a knowledge of Hebrew was necessary, he had consulted Capito, and more particularly Ecolampadius. Nothing without Theseus, said he of the latter, making use of a Greek proverb" (J.H. Merle

D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, New York: Hurst & Company, 1835, Vol. 5, p. 157).

4. Erasmus knew that the manuscripts he selected reflected the reading of the common text, and he was guided by this “common faith.”

“Long before the Protestant Reformation, the God-guided usage of the Church had produced throughout Western Christendom a common faith concerning the New Testament text, namely, a general belief that the currently received New Testament text, primarily the Greek text and secondarily the Latin text, was the True New Testament Text which had been preserved by God’s special providence. It was this common faith that guided Erasmus and the other early editors of the *Textus Receptus*. ...

“In Erasmus’ day [the common] view occupied the middle ground between the humanistic view and the scholastic view. Those that held this view acknowledged that the Scriptures had been providentially preserved down through the ages. They did not, however, agree with the scholastic theologians in tying this providential preservation to the Latin Vulgate. On the contrary, along with Laurentius Vallas and other humanists, they asserted the superiority of the Greek New Testament text. This common view remained a faith rather than a well articulated theory. No one at that time drew the logical but unpalatable conclusion that the Greek Church rather than the Roman Church had been the providentially appointed guardian of the New Testament text. But this view, though vaguely apprehended, was widely held, so much so that it may justly be called the common view. Before the Council of Trent (1546) it was favored by some of the highest officials of the Roman Church, notably, it seems, by Leo X, who was pope from 1513-1521 and to whom Erasmus dedicated his New Testament. Erasmus’ close friends also, John Colet, for example, and Thomas More and Jacques Lefevre, all of whom like Erasmus sought to reform the Roman Catholic Church from within, likewise adhered to this common view. Even the scholastic theologian Martin Dorp was finally persuaded by Thomas More to adopt it. In the days of Erasmus, therefore, it was commonly believed by well informed Christians that the original New Testament text had been providentially preserved in the current New Testament text, primarily in the current Greek text and secondarily in the current Latin text. Erasmus was influenced by this common faith and probably shared it, and God used to providentially to guide Erasmus in his editorial labors on the *Textus Receptus*. ...

“But if Erasmus was cautious in his notes, much more was he so in his text, for this is what would strike the reader’s eye immediately. Hence in the editing of his Greek New Testament text especially Erasmus was guided by the common faith in the current text. And back of this common faith was the controlling providence of God. For this reason Erasmus’ humanistic tendencies do not appear in the *Textus Receptus* which he produced. Although not himself outstanding as a man of faith, in his editorial labors on this text he was providentially influenced and guided by the faith of others. In spite of his humanistic tendencies Erasmus was clearly used of God to place the Greek New Testament in print, just as Martin Luther was used of God to bring the Protestant Reformation in spite of the fact that, at least at first, he shared Erasmus’ doubts concerning Hebrews, James, Jude and Revelation” (Edward F. Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, 4th edition, pp. 193, 197, 199).



5. This entire issue is a smokescreen.

- a. First, what could it possibly matter that Erasmus used only a few select manuscripts for his Greek New Testament, when the textual critics know full well that these manuscripts represented then and still represent today the vast majority of extant Greek manuscripts and lectionaries? Charles Ellicott, the chairman of the English Revised Version committee, admitted that Erasmus' "few" manuscripts represent the "majority." "The manuscripts which Erasmus used differ, for the most part, only in small and insignificant details from the bulk of the cursive manuscripts. The general character of their text is the same. By this observation the pedigree of the Received Text is carried up beyond the individual manuscripts used by Erasmus. ... That pedigree stretches back to a remote antiquity. The first ancestor of the Received Text was at least contemporary with the oldest of our extant manuscripts, if not older than any one of them" (Charles John Ellicott, *The Revisers and the Greek Text of the New Testament, by Two Members of the New Testament Company*, 1882, pp. 11, 12). Obviously, therefore, the exact number of manuscripts that Erasmus used has no relevance to the issue whatsoever. Yet we continually read the following type of statement from those who defend the modern versions: "This approach to the question, however, ignores the thousands of manuscripts that Erasmus did not consider. Some of those might actually contain the words originally penned by the apostles" (Robert Milliman, "Translation Theory and Twentieth-Century Versions," *One Bible Only?* edited by Roy Beacham and Kevin Bauder, 2001, p. 135). How such a thing could be written with a straight face, I do not know. This type of thing is why we titled our first book on this subject in the 1980s "Myths about Modern Bible Versions." By the way, Milliman's statement is another blatant denial of preservation. If the words of God were not available to the Reformation editors and translators, that means they were hidden away from common use by the churches for at least 1,500 years. What type of "preservation" is that?
- b. Second, if to base a Greek New Testament upon a few manuscripts is in actuality something that should not be done, why do the textual critics support the Critical Text when it is based largely on a mere handful of manuscripts? The United Bible Societies Greek New Testament, the latest edition of the Westcott-Hort Text, repeatedly questions and omits verses, portions of verses, and individual words with far less textual authority than the Trinitarian statement of 1 John 5:7. Most of the significant omissions are made on the authority of Aleph and B (sometimes both together and sometimes one standing alone), and a bare handful of similar manuscripts and versions. For example, the word "fasting" is removed from the Westcott-Hort Text, the Nestles' Text, the UBS Text, and all of the modern versions on the authority of its omission in Aleph, B, two minuscules (0274, 2427), one Old Latin, and the Georgian version. The entire last 12 verses of the Gospel of Mark are omitted are seriously questioned on the authority of only three Greek manuscripts, Aleph, B, and the minuscule 304 (plus some witness by various versions that were influenced by the Alexandrian Text). Sometimes, in fact, the modern textual critics don't have even this much "authority" for their changes. For example, the UBS Greek N.T. puts

Matthew 21:44 in brackets on the “authority” of only one 3 Greek manuscripts, one uncial (the terribly unreliable D) and two minuscules.

6. Concerning the preservation of the Scriptures, our faith is not in man, but in God. Even if the Reformation editors had fewer resources than those of more recent times, we know that the God who controls the times and the seasons was in control of His Holy Word (Dan. 2:21). The infallible Scriptures were not hidden away in some monastic dungeon or a dusty corner of the Pope’s library at the headquarters of Apostasy. The infallible Scriptures were being published, read, and taught by God’s people.

“At Marquette Manor Baptist Church in Chicago (1984), Dr. [Stewart] Custer said that God preserved His Word ‘in the sands of Egypt.’ No! God did not preserve His Word in the sands of Egypt, or on a shelf in the Vatican library, or in a wastepaper bin in a Catholic monastery at the foot of Mt. Sinai. God did not preserve His Word in the ‘disusing’ but in the ‘using.’ He did not preserve the Word by it being stored away or buried, but rather through its use and transmission in the hands of humble believers. At latest count, there were 2,764 cursive manuscripts (MSS). Kenyon says, ‘... An overwhelming majority contain the common ecclesiastical [Received] text.’ ... Kenyon is prepared to list only 22 that give even partial support to the [modern critical] text. ... Are we to believe that in the language in which the New Testament was originally written (Greek), that only twenty-two examples of the true Word of God are to be found between the ninth and sixteenth centuries? How does this fulfill God’s promise to preserve His Word? ... We answer with a shout of triumph God has been faithful to His promise. Yet in our day, the world has become awash with translations based on MSS similar to the twenty-two rather than the [more than] two-and-a-half thousand” (Jack Moorman, *Forever Settled*, 1985, pp. 90-95).

For more about Erasmus and the Received Text see “Should 1 John 5:7 Be in the Bible Since It Has Little Support Among the Greek Manuscripts?”

### **DIDN’T ERASMUS AND THE REFORMATION EDITORS USE TEXTUAL CRITICISM?**

Some defenders of the critical Greek text today are trying to equate the “textual criticism” used in the 16th and 17th centuries to that used by modern textual critics.

#### **ANSWER:**

**1. We must distinguish between the principles used by the Reformation editors and those used by the modern textual critics, between textual criticism in a general sense and MODERN textual criticism. While Erasmus and the other Reformation era Greek editors did compare manuscripts and use principles for deciding the text, they most decidedly did NOT use anything like the principles of MODERN textual criticism. To defend the use of modern textual criticism with the claim that the Reformation editors also used textual criticism is to compare apples with oranges and is to deal in half truths that hide the heart of the issue.**

- a. Consider the testimony of Edward F. Hills, who had a doctorate in modern textual criticism from Harvard. He distinguishes between Reformation criticism and Modern criticism by describing the former as “believing” and the latter as “naturalistic.” In *The King James Version Defended* (first published in 1956) and *Believing Bible Study* (1967), Hills made this important distinction. Note the following statement:

“The New Testament textual criticism of the man who believes the doctrines of the divine inspiration and providential preservation of the Scriptures to be true ought to differ from that of the man who does not so believe. The man who regards these doctrines as merely the mistaken beliefs of the Christian church is consistent if he gives them only a minor place in his treatment of the New Testament text, a place so minor as to leave his New Testament textual criticism essentially the same as that of any other ancient book. But the man who holds these doctrines to be true is inconsistent unless he gives them a prominent place to his treatment of the New Testament text, a place so prominent as to make his New Testament textual criticism different from that of other ancient books, for if these doctrines are true, they demand such a place.

“THUS THERE ARE TWO METHODS OF NEW TESTAMENT TEXTUAL CRITICISM, THE CONSISTENTLY CHRISTIAN METHOD AND THE NATURALISTIC METHOD. These two methods deal with the same materials, the same Greek manuscripts, and the same translations and biblical quotations, but they interpret these materials differently. The consistently Christian method interprets the materials of New Testament textual criticism in accordance with the doctrines of the divine inspiration and providential preservation of the Scriptures. The naturalistic method interprets these same materials in accordance with its own doctrine that the New Testament is nothing more than a human book.

“Sad to say, modern Bible-believing scholars have taken very little interest in the concept of consistently Christian New Testament criticism. For more than a century most of them have been quite content to following in this area the naturalistic methods of Tischendorf, Tregelles, and Westcott and Hort. And the result of this equivocation has been truly disastrous. Just as in Pharaoh’s dream the thin cows ate up the fat cows, so the principles and procedures of naturalistic New Testament textual criticism have spread into every department of Christian thought and produced a spiritual famine” (Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, 4th edition, p. 3).

- b. Consider the testimony of Zane Hodges, who observed the same thing in 1971: “Modern textual criticism is psychologically ‘addicted’ to Westcott and Hort. Westcott and Hort, in turn, were rationalists in their approach to the textual problem in the New Testament and employed techniques within which rationalism and every other kind of bias are free to operate. The result of it all is a methodological quagmire where objective controls on the conclusions of critics are nearly nonexistent. It goes without saying that no Bible-believing Christian who is willing to extend the implications of his faith to textual matters can have

the slightest grounds for confidence in contemporary critical texts” (emphasis added) (Zane C. Hodges, “Rationalism and Contemporary New Testament Textual Criticism,” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, January 1971, p. 35).

**2. The argument which attempts to equate the textual principles of the Reformation to those of the modern era is a new one that did not appear prior to last couple of decades.**

- a. Westcott and Hort themselves said that Erasmus merely published the text commonly held as Received “without selection or deliberate criticism”; and they said further that the choices of the 16th century editors were “arbitrary and uncritical” (Hort, Introduction to the New Testament in the Original Greek).
- b. Frederick Scrivener also stated that modern textual criticism did not begin during the days of the Reformation. “... they [the KJV Translators] lived at time ... when the first principles of textual criticism had yet to be gathered from a long process of painful induction” (*The Authorized Edition of the English Bible*, 1884, p. 60).
- c. The theories of modern textual criticism were not developed until the late 18th and the 19th centuries and they are rationalistic. I have dozens of textbooks on this subject in my library, and the modern textual critics themselves trace the history of their discipline back only that far. From their inception the principles of modern textual criticism were put forth as something new and as something different from and vastly superior to the “simplistic, fideistic” [faith] principles that had been used in prior centuries. One cannot *now* honestly claim that the principles of modern textual criticism were not revolutionary and try to equate them in any meaningful way with those that were used in the Reformation.

**3. The principles used by the Reformation editors were, in fact, quite the opposite of those underlying modern textual criticism. They are not complimentary at any point but are in sharp conflict.**

- a. Consider some of the foundational principles employed in the Reformation era:

(1) Reformation Textual Principle #1: Divine Inspiration and Preservation are foundational. Reformation editors by and large believed that God had infallibly inspired and providentially preserved the Scriptures and that this preservation was represented in the testimony of the majority of the extant Greek and Latin manuscripts and not by curious manuscripts such as Vaticanus. “There were three ways in which the editors of the Textus Receptus, Erasmus, Stephanus, Beza, and the Elzevirs, were providentially guided. In the *first* place, they were guided by the manuscripts which God in His providence had made available to them. In the *second* place, they were guided by the providential circumstances in which they found themselves. Then in the *third* place, and most of all, they were guided by the *common faith*. Long before the Protestant Reformation, the God-guided usage of the

Church had produced throughout Western Christendom a common faith concerning the New Testament text, namely, a general belief that the currently received New Testament text, primarily the Greek text and secondarily the Latin text, was the True New Testament Text which had been preserved by God's special providence. It was this common faith that guided Erasmus and the other early editors of the *Textus Receptus*" (Edward F. Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, 4th edition, p. 193).

- (a) The evidence of this faith is found in the great doctrinal statements of the Reformation era, whether of Protestant or Baptist. They all stated that the Scriptures were infallibly inspired and divinely preserved, and they believed, further, that the preserved Scripture was to be found in the Masoretic Hebrew Old Testament and the Greek Received New Testament. Consider two examples:

The testimony of the Westminster Confession of Faith of 1648, which was repeated in the London Baptist Confession of 1677 and the Philadelphia Confession of 1742. "The Old Testament in Hebrew . . . and the New Testament in Greek . . . being immediately inspired by God, and BY HIS SINGULAR CARE AND PROVIDENCE KEPT PURE IN ALL AGES, are therefore authentical; so as in all controversies of religion, the Church is finally to appeal unto them."

The testimony of the Protestant [Baptist] Confession of Faith, London, 1679:  
"And by the holy scriptures we understand, the canonical books of the old and new testament, as they are now translated into our English mother-tongue, of which there hath never been any doubt of their verity and authority, in the protestant churches of Christ to this day."

- (b) Even the modern textual critics admit this. Consider the following statements from Kurt and Barbara Aland: "It is UNDISPUTED that from the 16th to the 18th century orthodoxy's doctrine of verbal inspiration assumed ... [the Greek] Received Text ... they regarded it as the 'original text.' ... IT WAS REGARDED AS PRESERVING EVEN TO THE LAST DETAIL THE INSPIRED AND INFALLIBLE WORD OF GOD HIMSELF" (Kurt and Barbara Aland, *The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism*, 2nd edition, 1987). "Every theologian of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (and not just the exegetical scholars) worked from an edition of the Greek text of the New Testament WHICH WAS REGARDED AS THE 'REVEALED TEXT.' THIS IDEA OF VERBAL INSPIRATION (i.e., of the literal and inerrant inspiration of the text), which the orthodoxy of both Protestant traditions maintained so vigorously, WAS APPLIED TO THE TEXTUS RECEPTUS..." (Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, 2nd edition, pp. 6, 7).

Actually, the Received Text was still regarded as the preserved apostolic Scripture by Protestants and Baptists in general until well into the 20th century.

- (c) The term *Textus Receptus* in Latin (“Received Text” in English) that was printed in the Elziver’s edition of the Greek New Testament in 1633 *was not merely an advertising blurb*, as has been falsely claimed by modern version defenders. It was a statement of the faith of God’s people before the advent of modern textual criticism, that the text commonly passed down through the centuries, the text commonly and traditionally used in the churches, is the Holy Spirit inspired text of the prophets and apostles. Bruce Metzger trips himself up on this in *The Text of the New Testament*. On the one hand he claims that this “was a more or less casual phrase advertising the edition (what modern publishers might call a ‘blurb’)” and that “partly because of this catchword” the Received Text became the standard text (Metzger, p. 106). But on the previous page, Metzger admitted that the reason Beza, in the 1500s, made little use of Codex D and Codex Claromontanus, which were in his possession, was because “they deviated too far from the generally received text of the time” (Metzger, p. 105). Thus, it is obvious that the publication of the term *Textus Receptus* had nothing to do with popularizing this Greek New Testament. It was already the generally received text in the century prior to the Elziver’s and the term *Textus Receptus* in the 1633 edition of the Elziver Greek New Testament was not merely an advertising blurb but an accurate statement of how believers in general looked upon the Received Greek text.

- (2) Reformation Textual Principle #2: The preserved text will be found in the Greek and Latin texts commonly used through the centuries. The Reformation editors gave the most weight to the Greek manuscripts but also valued the Latin and other versions that had been so widely distributed in the Dark Ages. They believed that some errors had crept into the Latin manuscripts in general, and in these cases they leaned to the Greek. An example of this is the omission of “God” in 1 Timothy 3:16. At the same time, in a very few cases they believed that the original reading was preserved more in the Latin rather than in the majority of Greek manuscripts. A classic example is the Trinitarian statement of 1 John 5:7. “His [Erasmus’] WHOLE DEPENDENCE WAS RESTED UPON THE GREEK AND LATIN VULGATE; and if we may believe himself, he used some ancient copies of the latter. Of these he made the best use: confronting their testimony, and estimating the internal evidence of the context with the external testimony of the Eastern and Western Churches, he thence ascertained the authentic text of Scripture” (Frederick Nolan, *Inquiry into the Integrity of the Greek Vulgate, or Received Text of the New Testament*, London, 1815). Thus, the Reformation editors did not think that the original New Testament text was to be found outside of the mainstream of textual witness that existed in the Greek and Latin (and in ancient translations from these languages). They did not

value strange and isolated manuscripts such as Codex Vaticanus or Codex Bezae, both of which they were familiar with.

(3) Reformation Textual Principle #3: Heretics attacked the New Testament in the early centuries. The Reformation editors believed that the manuscripts had been corrupted with theological error in the third and fourth centuries and that the Vaticanus type text was representative of those corruptions. Nolan says: “One short insinuation which he [Erasmus] has thrown out, sufficiently proves, that his objections to these manuscripts lay more deep; and they do immortal credit to his sagacity. IN THE AGE IN WHICH THE VULGATE WAS FORMED, THE CHURCH, HE WAS AWARE, WAS INFESTED WITH ORIGENISTS AND ARIANS; AN AFFINITY BETWEEN ANY MANUSCRIPT AND THAT VERSION, CONSEQUENTLY CONVEYED SOME SUSPICION THAT ITS TEXT WAS CORRUPTED. So little dependence was he inclined to place upon the authority of Origen, who is the pillar and ground of the Corrected edition [the Greek text favored by modern textual critics].”

(4) Reformation Textual Principle #4: Manuscript readings supporting the deity of Christ and the Trinity are authentic as opposed to those that weaken these doctrines, because it was these very doctrines that were so viciously attacked in the early centuries. This principle is closely aligned with that of #3 above. For example, based on this general principle Theodore Beza defended the “longer ending” of Mark, “God” in 1 Timothy 3:16, and the Trinitarian statement of 1 John 5:7. “In his notes Beza defended the readings of his text which he deemed doctrinally important. For example, he upheld the genuineness of Mark 16:9-20 against the adverse testimony of Jerome. ... And in 1 Tim. 3:16 Beza defends the reading *God was manifest in the flesh*. ‘The concept itself,’ he declares, ‘demands that we receive this as referring to the very person of Christ.’ And concerning 1 John 5:7 Beza says, ‘It seems to me that this clause ought by all means to be retained’” (Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, p. 206).

b. In contrast to the principles of the Reformation editors and translators, consider some of the foundational principles of modern textual criticism, from Johann Griesbach in the early 19th century to Westcott and Hort in the late 19th to Kirsopp Lake and Frederic Kenyon in the early to mid-20th to Bruce Metzger and Kurt Aland in the late 20th. The fact that textual critics since Westcott and Hort have modified some of these principles (see Wilbur Pickering, *The Identity of the New Testament Text*) does not change the fact that these have been foundational principles of modern textual criticism for the past 150 years. They are principles that created the Tischendorf and the Westcott and Hort Greek New Testaments, and those are the two texts that were incorporated into the Nestle’s text and from there were folded into the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament.

(1) Modern Textual Criticism Principle #1: The Bible has become corrupted through the centuries and must be recovered through principles of textual criticism. Constantine Tischendorf said, “[We are in] the struggle to REGAIN the original form of the New Testament.” This modern principle is directly opposed to the foundational Reformation principle that the Scripture has been divinely preserved, to quote the Westminster Confession, “by his singular care and providence kept pure in all ages.”

(2) Modern Textual Criticism Principle #2: Oldest is best and the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus are the best of all. Westcott and Hort preferred the Vaticanus, saying: “B [Vaticanus] far exceeds all other documents in neutrality of text. ... It is our belief (1) that the readings of Aleph B [Sinaiticus and Vaticanus] should be accepted as the true readings until strong internal evidence is found to the contrary, and (2) that no readings of Aleph B can safely be rejected absolutely. ... The fullest comparison does but increase the conviction that their preeminent relative purity is likewise approximately absolute, a true approximate reproduction of the text of the autographs” (Westcott and Hort, 1881). For his part, Tischendorf preferred the Sinaiticus. This modern principle is directly opposed to the Reformation principle, which held that old manuscripts dating to the 3rd and 4th centuries are highly suspect, particularly so if they come from Egypt as the Alexandrian manuscripts do. Erasmus and the Reformation editors rejected the Vaticanus manuscript and ones similar to it.

(3) Modern Textual Criticism Principle #3: The Traditional Text that has come down through the centuries and that was printed in the 16th century is a corrupt text; the true text was laid aside in the 4th century and not recovered until the late 19th. This is Hort’s principle of a Lucian Recension; and as A. H. McNeile said, “Nearly all text critics assume that between 250 and 350 A.D. there was a revision of the Greek text which produced the traditional text” (*An Introduction to the Study of the New Testament*, p. 428). According to this foundational principle of modern textual criticism the “original” text of Scripture was laid aside for some 1,500 years and not used by the churches for all of that time! Again, this modern principle is directly opposed the Reformation principle of divine preservation, that the text commonly used in the Greek and Latin is where we find the preserved text.

(4) Modern Textual Criticism Principle #4: When attempting to recover the original text of Scripture, one must treat the Bible like any other book; the same principles that apply to books in general apply to the Bible. “The principles of criticism explained in the foregoing section hold good for all ancient texts preserved in a plurality of documents. In dealing with the text of the New Testament no new principle whatever is needed or legitimate” (Westcott and Hort, *Introduction to the New Testament in the Original Greek*, 1881). This modern principle is directly opposed to the Reformation principle that the Scripture is divinely inspired and that



it is unique among books and that its transmission was subject to phenomena to which other books are not subject (i.e., God's providential preservation, the attack of the devil, and willful corruption by false teachers).

(5) Modern Textual Criticism Principle #5: The Scripture manuscripts were not subject to willful manipulation by scribes; the mistakes were of a general sort that are common to the transcription of all books. This was a foundational principle of Westcott and Hort. "It will not be out of place, to add here a distinct expression of our belief that even among the numerous unquestionably spurious readings of the New Testament there are no signs of deliberate falsification of the text for dogmatic purposes" (Westcott and Hort, *Introduction to the New Testament in the Original Greek*, 1881). This principle is directly opposed to the Reformation principle that in looking at the manuscript evidence one must take into account the direct and vicious doctrinal assault that the manuscripts endured in the 2nd to the 4th centuries.

(6) Modern Textual Criticism Principle #6: Textual readings favoring doctrinal orthodoxy are suspect. "When there are many variant readings in one place, that reading which more than the others manifestly favors the dogmas of the orthodox is deservedly regarded as suspicious" (J.J. Griesbach, *Novum Testamentum, Graece*, 2nd edition, 1809, vol. 1, pp. 75-82, cited from Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, 4th edition, p. 65). (Westcott and Hort said they venerated the name of Griesbach "above that of every other textual critic." They adopted many of his principles of textual criticism and popularized them in their writings.) This modern principle is diametrically opposed to the one used by the Reformation editors, such as Beza, who accepted "God" in 1 Timothy 3:16, even though it is not found in most Latin manuscripts, and the Trinitarian statement in 1 John 5:7, even though it is not found in most Greek manuscripts, *on the basis of doctrinal orthodoxy*. A Bible-believing textual principle teaches us that when the devil attacks the Scriptures he attempts to weaken key doctrines, and this is exactly what we find in the small Alexandrian family of manuscripts that stem from that hotbed of theological heresy, Egypt.

**Conclusion:** These principles of modern textual criticism are diametrically opposed to the principles that were foundational to the Reformation editors. As Dr. Edward F. Hills demonstrated in his books, the modern principles themselves, which he was taught at the University of Chicago and at Harvard, are rationalistic (even when held by believers) because they fly in the face of the Bible's own testimony of its inspiration and preservation. It is thus wrong and illogical to compare the principles of textual "criticism" used by the Reformation editors with those used by the modern textual critics.

## WHY AREN'T THERE ANCIENT GREEK UNCIAL MANUSCRIPTS OF THE TRADITIONAL TYPE LIKE THERE ARE FOR THE ALEXANDRIAN TYPE?

It is often stated as fact that the extant uncials of the first four centuries are representative of the "Alexandrian" text. In fact, this is not the whole story.

### ANSWER:

1. It is not true that there is no ancient support for the Traditional Text. The support, in fact, is significant.

a. The Traditional Text is represented by Codex A in the Gospels. This is why the modern textual critics call this portion of Codex A "inferior." "The text is of uneven value ... inferior in the Gospels, good in the rest of the New Testament" (Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, 2nd edition, p. 109). To the modern textual critic, anything supporting the Traditional Text is inferior upon its very face, regardless of how old it is.

b. When the "five old uncials" (Aleph, A, B, C, D) are examined textually, we find that taken together they give as much support to the Traditional Text as to the Alexandrian. Jack Moorman conducted such an examination, using the apparatus of the Nestle-Aland 26th edition Greek New Testament, and he concluded: "The impression is often given that these five (actually six) oldest and most famous uncials give conclusive support to the text of the modern versions. Nothing could be further from the truth! B strongly supports it. But the support of Aleph is hardly overwhelming: from 2-1 in the Gospels and Acts to about 10-7 in Romans to Jude, with its correctors supporting the Traditional Text by 5-2. And then A, C, and the two D manuscripts give overall support to the Authorized Version side. ... Hardly the overwhelming support Modern Version proponents claim from these sources!" (Moorman, *A Closer Look*, 1990, pp. 20, 21).

c. The Traditional Text is represented by many other ancient Greek uncials. The following is summarized by Thomas Holland from Kurt and Barbara Aland's *The Text of the New Testament*:

From the 9th century we have Codex Boreelianus (09), Codex Seidelianus (011), Codex Seidelianus (013), Codex Cyprius (017), Codex Mosquensis (018), Codex Angelicus (020) and Codex Campianus -- all of which are Byzantine type manuscripts and support the TR and KJV. And there are many, many more besides these.

From the 8th and 7th centuries we have Codex Basilensis, Princeton's 047, and the Institute for Manuscripts' 0211 located in Germany. These are Byzantine type manuscripts.

From the 6th century we find Codex Petropolitanus Purpureus (022), Codex Sinopensis (023), Codex Guelferbytanus A (024), Codex Nitriensis (027), Codex

Rossanensis (042), Codex Bezae Cantabrigiae (043), and 0253 (formerly of Damascus), just to name a few which are Byzantine.

And from the 5th century we have Codex Bezae Cantabrigiae B (026) which is likewise Byzantine (Holland, summarizing Aland, pp. 107-128).

Jack Moorman analyzed all of the 274 Greek uncials using the selective information given in the apparatus of the critical Greek Testaments and concluded as follows: “The Alphabet and 0 uncials give important insights into the kind of manuscript that was being copied between the fifth and ninth centuries. They leave no question about the matter! These important witnesses [the 39 Alphabet Uncials] move strongly to the side of the AV Doctrinal Text: by at least 4-1. Coming now to the ‘0’ uncials I have only listed those which are known to be extant among the passages in the Manuscript Digest. Selective citation gives a disproportionate picture here. If, as the fourth column shows, the manuscripts were fully cited, the 2-1 margin could easily become 10-1 in favour of the Doctrinal Text. You may rest assured that if the 1265+ non-cited readings gave even 20% support to the other side, the critical editors would be quick to show it. Only a few of these uncials are from the fifth and sixth centuries, but here also the evidence moves convincingly to the Doctrinal Text. Limiting this comparison to manuscripts which are adequately cited (at least 20 times) and fully cited (a minimum of non-citations in comparison to citations), we find 286-120 [in favour of the Traditional Text]. Excluding the one uncial mounting something of a challenge (W) the other five vote for the Doctrinal Text by well over 4-1. Thus in the entire list of 274 uncials, very few of those which are adequately cited give clear support to the diminished text of the Modern Versions. The text that was buried in the sands of Egypt found little reception during this period of manuscript transmission” (Moorman, *A Closer Look*, p. 25).

d. The Traditional Text is also represented in ancient versions and in the writings of “church fathers.” We have dealt with this in *Faith vs. the Modern Bible Versions*, under “Four Periods of Church History: The Dark Ages,” which is in the second section, “We hold to the King James Bible Because It Is Based on the Preserved Hebrew and Greek Texts.”

2. The preservation of the earliest extant ancient Greek manuscripts is due largely to the climate in which they were created. All of the most ancient manuscripts came from Egypt where the climate is arid. This includes Vaticanus, Sinaiticus, Alexandrinus, the Beatty Papyri, and the Bodmer Papyri. The arid climate accounts for their preservation. Had the Dead Sea Scrolls, for example, been located in caves in northern Italy they would not have survived. **THUS THE MANUSCRIPT EVIDENCE THAT WE HAVE FOR THE EARLY CENTURIES IS WEIGHTED IN THE EXTREME ON THE SIDE OF EGYPT, A HOTBED OF THEOLOGICAL HERESY.** This is admitted by Kurt and Barbara Aland: “... all the early witnesses listed above on p. 57 are from Egypt, where the hot, dry sands preserved the papyri through the centuries ... From other major centers of the early Christian church nothing has

survived. This raises the question whether and to what extent we can generalize from the Egyptian situation. Egypt has distinguished from other provinces of the Church, so far as we can judge, by the early dominance of gnosticism. ... Asia Minor and Greece, the centers of early Christianity, undoubtedly exercised a substantive if not critical influence on the development of the New Testament text, BUT IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO DEMONSTRATE BECAUSE THE CLIMATE IN THESE REGIONS HAS BEEN UNFAVORABLE TO THE PRESERVATION OF ANY POPYRI FROM THE EARLY PERIOD” (Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, pp. 59, 67). Note that the Alands admit that the earliest extant manuscripts are from an area in which heresy predominated and that the manuscript record from other areas did not survive, yet they give no real significance to this in their textual work, clinging steadfastly to the Alexandrian text without questioning whether it might represent the gnostic corruption that they have hinted at in this quote, and generalizing about the early manuscript record based on the slim evidence that has survived from only one region. It is like the evolutionist today who, though rejecting chief planks of Darwinianism, cannot bear to admit that since the foundation was faulty the superstructure has been discredited and should therefore be torn down and rebuilt from the ground up.

3. The extant ancient uncials often exist because they were not valued or used. It is admitted by modern textual critics that Sinaiticus and Vaticanus have no “daughters.” They were rejected by the Christians of that day and set on a shelf until the 19th century, when they were taken off the shelf, dusted off, and exalted to the highest value by modern textual critics. The Traditional Text, on the other hand, represents the text that was commonly used by the churches in Syria, Asia Minor, and Greece, the very area where the largest concentration of apostolic churches existed. The New Testament manuscripts among these churches were used and were used aggressively, so that they wore out in a short time. I can understand this from my own experience, having worn out several Bibles in the short 32 years that I have been saved.

4. It is thought that the custom was to place worn out manuscripts into a jar and bury them. This was the way the Jews discarded worn out Scriptures. “It was a Jewish habit both to preserve manuscripts by placing them in jars ... and also to dispose of defective, worn-out, or heretical scriptures by burying them near a cemetery, not to preserve them but because anything that might contain the name of God might not be destroyed. ... It certainly looks as if this institution of a morgue for sacred but unwanted manuscripts was taken over from Judaism by the early Church” (C.H. Roberts, cited by Wilbur Pickering, *The Identity of the New Testament Text*, chapter 6).

5. The Byzantine minuscules are themselves evidence that there were ancient Greek uncials of the Byzantine type for the simple reason that the 2,900 extant minuscules of the 9th to the 16th centuries had to have been copied from Byzantine uncial exemplars. Though the exemplars have disappeared, we know that they existed and that they were the same Traditional text that we find in the minuscules. “In the codicology the great value of the transliteration process in the 9th century and thereafter is recognized. At that time the most important New Testament manuscripts written in majuscule [uncial] script were carefully transcribed into minuscule script.

... The import of this datum has not been taken into account enough in the present New Testament textual criticism. For it implies that just as the oldest, best and most customary manuscripts come to us in the new uniform of the minuscule script, does it not? ... Even though one continues to maintain that the copyists at the time of the transliteration handed down the wrong text-type to the Middle Ages, one can still never prove this codicologically with the remark that the older majuscules have a different text. This would be circular reasoning. There certainly were majuscules just as venerable and ancient as the surviving Vaticanus or Sinaiticus, which, like a section of the Alexandrinus, presented a Byzantine text. But they have been renewed into minuscule script and their majuscule appearance has vanished” (Jacob Van Bruggen, *The Ancient Text of the New Testament*, pp. 26, 27). Jack Moorman adds: “Does it not seem likely that scribes of the Ninth Century would be in a better position to decide on the ‘oldest and best manuscripts’ than textual critics of the Twentieth? Why during this changeover did they so decisively reject the text of Vaticanus and instead make copies of that text which now underlies the A.V.?” (Moorman, *A Closer Look*, p. 26).

6. The New Testament manuscripts were written on papyrus prior to the 4th century, and this accounts for the scarcity of manuscripts that have survived. Papyrus would only survive in a dry climate like Egypt. Edward Miller was one of the first to point this out: “If vellum had been in constant use over the Roman Empire during the first three centuries and a third which elapsed before B and Aleph were written, there ought to have been in existence some remains of a material so capable of resisting the tear and wear of use and time. As there are no vellum MSS. at all except the merest fragments dating from before 330 A.D., we are perforce driven to infer that a material for writing of a perishable nature was generally employed before that period” (Burgon and Miller, *The Traditional Text*, p. 156). Kurt and Barbara Aland add, “Parchment did not come into use as a writing material for the New Testament until the fourth century--in the meanwhile papyrus was the rule...” (*The Text of the New Testament*, p. 85).

7. The manuscript record is scant for the early centuries, both for the Greek and for the versions. It has been devastated by time, by pagan persecution, and by the Roman Catholic inquisition and crusades against “dissident” Christians. Consider a few examples:

- a. Of the ancient Persian translation, which probably dates to the 3rd century, there are no known manuscripts (Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 214).
- b. Of the Nubian translations that probably date to the 6th century, there are only fragments in existence, so that we know nothing about the textual basis (Aland, p. 214).
- c. Of the Soghdian translation of Central Asia, only fragments exist and “they are too brief” for definite conclusions (Aland, p. 214).
- d. The existing manuscripts for Old Latin, Ethiopian, Gothic, Coptic and many other ancient versions are few and fragmentary, allowing only an imperfect understanding of their textual basis. For example, though the Gothic version “must have been the vernacular Bible

of a large portion of Europe” in the 4th to the 5th centuries (Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 377), only a few fragments remain and even those fragments are largely palimpsests, meaning the original Gothic was scraped off and overwritten with something else and thus it is very difficult to know exactly what the original said.

- e. Thus, we can learn many things from the manuscript record and it is sufficient to demonstrate the priority of the Traditional Text, but it cannot be used as the ultimate foundation for faith. The only solid foundation is God Himself and His promises in the Scripture, as “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God” (Rom. 10:17).

8. It is important, also, to understand that the dating of ancient manuscripts is an inexact science in the best of hands; and when we consider that for the past 150 years the dating of manuscripts has been exclusively in the hands of textual critics who hate the Received Text and have an agenda to discredit it, we are left to wonder about the results.

## **WHAT ABOUT THE GREEK “MAJORITY TEXT”**

### **INTRODUCTORY POINTS**

1. The Majority Text position is a new challenge to the Greek Received Text underlying the Reformation Bibles.

- a. On the one hand the Received New Testament is challenged by the critical Greek text that was produced by modern textual criticism. This is represented today by the Nestles’ Greek New Testament and the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament.
- b. On the other hand, the Received Text has been challenged since the 1980s by the “Majority Text.” Basically this is an attempt to go back to Greek text of the Byzantine Empire that predated the 16th-century Reformation.

2. The Majority Text is vastly superior to the critical Greek text, but the difference between the Majority Text and the Textus Receptus is significant enough to force us to look at this issue carefully.

3. Let me also say at the outset of this study that while I strongly disagree with Zane Hodges, Arthur Farstad, and Wilbur Pickering in their support the Hodges-Farstad Majority Text position, I am thankful for their rejection of modern textual criticism and for the extensive research they have done in this field. They have brought important facts to light, and their writings are helpful, as long as one understands the Majority Text issue.

### **WHAT IS THE MAJORITY TEXT?**

1. Historically, the term “Majority Text” has been used as a synonym for the Received Greek

New Testament (Textus Receptus or TR) published in the 16th century during the Reformation.

- a. Strictly speaking the Received Greek Text is *a slightly modified form* of the Byzantine or Traditional Greek New Testament that represents the majority of extant Greek manuscripts. While representing the majority of Greek manuscripts in most cases, the Reformation Received Text contains a few readings not supported by the majority but which are supported by the majority of Latin manuscripts, other versions, and quotations from ancient church leaders.
- b. Following are some major places where the Received Text is not supported by the majority of extant Greek manuscripts:

Matthew 27:35 -- “that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.”

Acts 8:37 -- “And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” [This verse has significant minority support in the Greek manuscripts.]

Acts 9:5-6 -- “It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? and the Lord said unto him.”

1 John 5:7 -- “the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth”

- c. The reason why the Received Text is not entirely and strictly a majority text is simple. In determining the true reading of Scripture, other witnesses must be examined in addition to the extant Greek manuscripts, in particular, Greek lectionaries, ancient versions, and the quotations from the writings of “church fathers,” meaning church leaders who lived in the early centuries after the apostles. In a few cases, these witnesses point to readings more authentic than existing Greek manuscripts.

2. Since the 1980s, the term “Majority Text” has come to refer to something other than the Received Text of the Reformation. Currently there are two editions of the Majority Text, as follows:

- a. In 1982 Thomas Nelson published *The Greek New Testament according to the Majority Text* (hereafter referred to as the Hodges-Farstad Text). A second edition appeared in 1985.

(1) This was edited by Zane Hodges (1932- ) and Arthur Farstad (1935-98) of Dallas Theological Seminary. Hodges taught New Testament Greek and Exegesis at Dallas from 1959 to 1987, though his view of the Majority Text was

a minority position there. Hodges continues to teach a module entitled “New Testament Textual Criticism Majority Text Theory.” He was scheduled to teach this at Chafter Theological Seminary, Orange, California, May 10-28, 2004.

- (2) As its title implies, the Hodges-Farstad Text claims to be a Greek text that reflects the readings of the majority of extant Greek manuscripts.
- b. In 1991 *The Greek New Testament according to the Byzantine Text Form*, edited by Maurice Robinson (1947- ) and William Grover Pierpont (1915-2003), was published by Original Word Publishers, Roswell, Georgia. It was revised in 2000 and 2003. (This is usually referred to as the Robinson-Pierpont Text in the remainder of this study.) The Byzantine Text Form Greek New Testament is available in many of the Bible software packages, including Online Bible, Bible Works, and Logos.
- (1) This is another attempt to challenge the Reformation Received Greek Text with a “Majority Text.” The Byzantine Greek Text was the one used in the Greek Byzantine Empire until the fall of Constantinople in the 15th century. It is nearly perfect and had to be corrected in only a few places in the Reformation era.
  - (2) Like the Hodges-Farstad Majority Text, the Robinson-Pierpont Byzantine is built upon Hermann von Soden’s faulty and extremely insufficient textual apparatus.
  - (3) Maurice Robinson is a professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is very bold in his rejection of a “theological” approach to the text and is therefore no friend of faith. “The Byzantine-priority hypothesis ... does not encourage a simplistic eclectic approach nor a narrow theological outlook toward a predetermined result” (Robinson, *New Testament Textual Criticism: The Case for Byzantine Priority*). The “narrow theological outlook,” of course, is a reference to a faith-preservation approach to the Bible text.
  - (4) William Pierpont (1915-2003) grew up in a Baptist church, but in the 1970s he joined an Evangelical Free congregation in Wichita, Kansas, and remained a member in that denomination until his death. He attended Friends College in Wichita for two years but had to drop out because of health problems. He taught himself to read Greek, Hebrew, Latin, and other languages. He worked at Beech Aircraft (as a self taught structural engineer) for 41 years until his retirement in 1982, but he had a sideline passion for the Greek New Testament. He had been taught to practice Westcott-Hort style modern textual criticism, but in the 1960s he began to question this approach and eventually developed his Byzantine priority theory. In the late 1970s, Pierpont met Robinson and they worked together to produce a Greek New Testament after the Byzantine fashion. Pierpont died on Aug. 10, 2003, at age 88. See <http://rosetta.reltch.org/TC/>



## HOW INFLUENTIAL IS THE MAJORITY TEXT?

1. The New King James Version, which was also published in 1982 by Thomas Nelson, has marginal notes supporting the “majority text.”
  - a. The New King James Version (NKJV) contains approximately 500 footnotes that give what is supposedly the “majority reading” over against the Received Text reading.
  - b. In fact, the New King James Version and the Hodges-Farstad Majority Text are twin productions. Arthur Farstad was the general editor of the NKJV. The eventual goal is to produce a “definitive” Majority Text and to publish an English translation of this to compete in that already crowded field.
2. The Majority Text Society was founded by the late Arthur Farstad and has an address in Dallas, Texas. Its web address is <http://www.majoritytext.org/index.htm>. In 2005 Zane Hodges took over the presidency from James Davis, who will be teaching New Testament Studies at the Jordan Evangelical Theological Seminary in the Middle East. In the announcement of his departure, Davis called Hodges a “founding father” of the MTS position (<http://www.majoritytext.org/newsletter1.htm>).
3. Wilbur Pickering supports the Majority Text position in his book *The Identity of the New Testament Text* (Thomas Nelson, 1977, 1980). Zane Hodges wrote the foreword. Following is a statement on this by Pickering: “The critical edition of the ‘Byzantine’ text being prepared by Zane C. Hodges, Professor of New Testament Literature and Exegesis at the Dallas Theological Seminary, Arthur Farstad, and others, and to be published by Thomas Nelson, will differ from the Textus Receptus in over a thousand places. ... Hodges will be very happy to hear from anyone interested in furthering *THE QUEST FOR THE DEFINITIVE TEXT*” (Pickering, *The Identity of New Testament Text*, 1977, pp. 212, 232-233, capitalization not in the original). The web site is <http://www.esgm.org/>.
4. Jakob Van Bruggen supports the Majority Text in his book *The Future of the Bible* (Thomas Nelson, 1972).
5. Jay Green, editor of the *Interlinear Bible* and author of many books on the Bible version issue (as well as the King James II and the Modern King James translations), promotes the Majority Text view (Sovereign Grace Publishers, Lafayette, Indiana). In the back of Green’s *Interlinear Bible* is a list of roughly 1,500 “majority text” readings that Green suggests should replace the Received Text. He introduces the list with these words: “If the foregoing Received Text is modified by the following notes, it will then be in the closest possible agreement with the vast majority of all manuscripts.” He says this even though he certainly knows that “the vast majority of all manuscripts” have never been collated, so that no one knows what most of them read in the various passages he cites. In fact, Green got this list of allegedly superior majority readings

from William Pierpont and Maurice Robinson. They produced the list as a preliminary to the publication of their *Greek New Testament according to the Byzantine Text Form* (<http://rosetta.reltech.org/TC/vol08/Pierpont2003obit.html>).

6. In 2002, the *English Majority Text Version New Testament* was published by Paul W. Esposito (Port St. Lucie, FL: Stauros Ministries). It is based on the Hodges-Farstad Text with consultation with the Robinson-Pierpont Text and the research of Wilbur Pickering.

7. *Logos 21* is another English version translated from the Hodges-Farstad Majority New Testament. It appears from the web site that only the Gospel of John has been published (<http://www2.livingwater.org/livingwater/about.html>). The editors also worked on the New King James Version. The general editor is Arthur L. Farstad and the English editor is William H. McDowell. Zane Hodges and Wilbur Pickering were also involved. Curtis Vaughan (one of the seven members of the Executive Review Committee for the NKJV and general editor of *The New Testament from 26 Translations*) “carefully annotated this entire translation.” The textual notes were written by James F. Davis.

8. Leland Haines argues for the Byzantine Text and a revision of the King James Bible on that basis in chapter six of the book *The Authority of Scripture* (Biblical Viewpoints Publications, Goshen, Indiana).

9. In 1984 Harry A. Sturz (1916-89) published *The Byzantine Text-Type and New Testament Textual Criticism* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson). Sturz was for many years Professor of Greek and Chairman of the Theology Department at Biola University in southern California. He was an ordained minister in the Grace Brethren Churches. *The Byzantine Text-Type* is a major work that argues against modern textual criticism’s position that the traditional Greek text is a mere later recension; Sturz urged that the Byzantine Text be given its proper value. Unlike Hodges, Farstad, and some of the others already mentioned, Sturz did not argue for a pure Byzantine text.

10. For a short time the Trinitarian Bible Society (TBS), under the editorial direction of Andrew Brown, gave some support to the Majority Text view.

a. Andrew Brown was Editorial Secretary of the Trinitarian Bible Society (TBS) for about a decade in the 1980s (until 1991) and in this position had considerable influence in the translation projects with which Trinitarian is involved and with the materials published by the TBS.

b. Brown’s sympathy with the Majority Text position was evident in the following statements:

(1) “*The Greek New Testament according to the Majority Text* (1982) has just been published by Thomas Nelson Publishers, New York, under the editorship of Professor Zane Hodges and Dr. A.L. Farstad. This new edition, as its title implies, contains the text found in the majority of Greek New Testament manuscripts. It

differs from the Received Text in those passages where the manuscripts used by 16th century editors deviated from the overall manuscript consensus. ... Although this ‘majority text’ is not necessarily at all points identical with the original text, THE NEW EDITION IS ON THE WHOLE A RELIABLE GUIDE. It will be an indispensable tool for all who wish to study the differences between the various forms of Greek New Testament text, and between the competing translations to which the Greek variants give rise” (*Quarterly Record*, Trinitarian Bible Society, No. 482, 1982, pp. 14-16).

- (2) In the course of correspondence with me in regard to a new translation of the Bible in the Nepali language, Andrew Brown made the following statements:
  - (a) “We would also encourage you to refer to the ‘Majority Text’ which in certain passages is an improvement on the older Textus Receptus, where the TR does not represent the true consensus of the manuscripts. An edition of the Majority Text was published in the USA by Z. Hodges and A.L. Farstad in 1982, and is a valuable tool of reference” (Andrew Brown, letter to D.W. Cloud, April 4, 1984).
  - (b) When I asked Mr. Brown for a list of passages that are “improved” in the Majority Text, he refused to provide such a list but he did give me one example, from Hebrews 12:20: “... ‘or thrust through with a dart’--is not accurate in the TR and AV, but that the Majority variant should be preferred here” (Andrew Brown, letter to D.W. Cloud, Jan. 7, 1985). I thought it was very strange that he would instruct me to use the alleged improved “majority readings” to correct the Received Text but he would not provide me with a list of such readings.
- (3) Andrew Brown was dismissed from the Trinitarian Bible Society in 1991. The present leaders have assured us that they do not support the Hodges-Farstad Text, but it is clear that Andrew Brown had considerable influence during the several years he was associated with this organization. Further, the afore-referenced issue of the Trinitarian Bible Society *Quarterly Record* supporting the Hodges-Farstad Text was distributed throughout the world.

## **DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE RECEIVED TEXT AND THE MAJORITY TEXT**

1. There are 1,838 differences (most fairly insignificant) between the Received Text and the Hodges-Farstad Majority Text (by Daniel Wallace’s count as reported in “Some Second Thoughts on the Majority Text,” [http://www.bible.org/page.asp?page\\_id=673](http://www.bible.org/page.asp?page_id=673)).
2. To illustrate this matter, we will list some of the more significant omissions in the Hodges-Farstad Majority Text as compared to the TR. Please understand that this is not an exhaustive listing:

Matthew 27:35 -- “that might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.” (19 words omitted in the Greek)

Mark 15:3 -- “but he answered nothing” (4 words omitted in Greek)

Luke 7:31 -- “And the Lord said” (4 words omitted in Greek)

Luke 9:1 -- “his disciples” (2 words omitted in Greek)

Luke 17:36 -- “Two men shall be in the field; the one shall betaken, and the other left.” (12 words omitted in Greek)

Luke 20:19 -- “the people” (2 words omitted in Greek)

John 6:70 -- “Jesus” (1 word omitted in Greek)

John 10:8 -- “before me” (2 words omitted in Greek)

Acts 7:37 -- “him shall ye hear” (2 words omitted in Greek)

Acts 8:37 -- “And Philip said, if thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God” (29 words omitted in Greek)

Acts 9:5,6 -- “it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” (20 words omitted in Greek)

Acts 9:17 -- “Jesus” (1 word omitted in Greek)

Acts 10:6 -- “he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do” (7 words omitted in Greek)

Acts 10:21 -- “which were sent unto him from Cornelius” (7 words omitted in Greek)

Acts 15:11 -- “Christ” (1 word omitted in Greek)

Acts 15:34 -- “Notwithstanding it pleased Silas to abide there still” (6 words omitted in Greek)

Acts 20:21 -- “Christ” (1 word omitted in Greek)

Acts 24:6-8 -- “and would have judged according to our law. But the chief captain Lysias came upon us, and with great violence took him away out of our hands, Commanding his accusers to come unto thee” (27 words omitted in Greek)

Romans 13:9 -- “Thou shalt not bear false witness” (2 words omitted in Greek)

2 Corinthians 8:4 -- “that we would receive” (2 words omitted in Greek)

Colossians 1:14 -- “through his blood” (2 words omitted in Greek)

1 Thessalonians 2:19 -- “Christ” (1 word omitted in Greek)

2 Timothy 2:19 -- -- “Christ” (1 word omitted in Greek)

Hebrews 11:13 -- “and were persuaded” (2 words omitted in Greek)

Hebrews 12:20 -- “or thrust through with a dart” (3 words omitted in Greek)

1 John 5:7, 8 -- “the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth” (25 words omitted in Greek)

Revelation 1:8 -- “the beginning and the ending” (3 words omitted in Greek)

Revelation 1:11 -- “I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and” (13 words omitted in Greek)

Revelation 2:3 -- “hast laboured” (1 word omitted in Greek)

Revelation 5:4 -- “and to read” (2 words omitted in Greek)

Revelation 5:7 -- “the book” (2 words omitted in Greek)

Revelation 5:14 -- “four and twenty” (1 word omitted in Greek)

Revelation 5:14 -- “him that liveth forever and ever” (6 words omitted in Greek)

Revelation 7:5-8 -- -- “were sealed” from 10 of the 12 references (10 words omitted in Greek)

Revelation 8:7 -- “angel” (1 word omitted in Greek)

Revelation 8:13 -- “angel” changed to “eagle”

Revelation 11:1 -- “and the angel stood” (3 words omitted in Greek)

Revelation 11:17 -- “and art to come” (3 words omitted in Greek)

Revelation 12:12 -- “to the inhabitants” (2 words omitted in Greek)

Revelation 14:1 -- “forty and four” (2 words omitted in Greek)

Revelation 14:3 -- “forty and four” (2 words omitted in Greek)

Revelation 14:5 -- “before the throne of God” (5 words omitted in Greek)

Revelation 21:24 -- “of them which are saved” (2 words omitted in Greek)

Revelation 22:19 -- “book of life” is changed to “tree of life”

## **REASONS WHY WE REJECT THE “MAJORITY TEXT”**

**1. The Majority Text is a mythical text.** The Hodges-Farstad Greek New Testament and the Robinson-Pierpont Text both claim to represent a Majority of extant Greek manuscripts, but this is simply a myth.

a. First of all, the extant Greek manuscripts have never been collated and examined in such a way that a majority text could be determined with any degree of certainty.

(1) “... THE MAIN PROBLEM OF NT TEXTUAL CRITICISM LIES IN THE FACT THAT LITTLE MORE THAN THEIR ACTUAL EXISTENCE IS KNOWN OF MOST OF THE MANUSCRIPTS SO FAR IDENTIFIED, and that therefore we constantly have problems with many unknowns to solve. We proceed as if the few manuscripts, which have fully, or almost fully, studied, contained all the problems in question” (Kurt Aland, “The Significance of the Papyri”; cited from Pickering, *The Identity of the New Testament Text*, Conclusion).

(2) In *The Text of the New Testament*, Kurt and Barbara Aland state that “MOST OF THE MINUSCULES HAVE NOT YET BEEN EXAMINED FOR THEIR TEXTUAL VALUE” (p. 128).

(3) The Hodges-Farstad Text is based on the collations of Hermann von Soden from the early 20th century. Though this is the most extensive collation that has ever been made, it was a very partial, insufficient one. Note the following important testimonies about von Soden’s work:

(a) “Von Soden and his assistants collated some hundreds of manuscripts, and published the results in a massive critical edition. In his footnotes, von Soden shows the majority text by the symbol K (short for Koine, or ‘common text’). However, AT ANY GIVEN INSTANCE OF THIS SYMBOL, ONE CAN RARELY BE SURE WHETHER VON SODEN CONSULTED ALL HIS MANUSCRIPTS AT THE PASSAGE IN QUESTION, OR CONSULTED JUST A REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLE. And even where he does give figures, the resulting total does not constitute a majority of all the manuscripts which are

now available” (TSB *Quarterly Record*, Number 482, page 15).

- (b) “Yet von Soden was a rationalist. HE SHOWED VERY LITTLE REGARD TOWARD THE RECEIVED TEXT and sought to rewrite it on the basis of his collations and rather novel theory of textual history. ... We will show that [Hodges and Farstad] have used von Soden very uncritically. We will also show that despite the massive scope of von Soden’s work, it is after all only a very small part of the total picture and cannot begin to be used in the way Hodges and Farstad have attempted” (Jack Moorman, *When the KJV Departs from the Majority Text*, p. 8).
- (c) “Now what needs to be seen here is that anyone who seeks to gather Byzantine MS evidence from the standard sources--Alford, Tischendorf, Souter, Merk, Vogels, Nestle, Aland, or von Soden--IS REALLY GETTING ONLY A FEW SCRAPS FROM THE TABLE. The energies of these men have been expended elsewhere. Their labours toward the great mass of Byzantine MSS is limited to those places where there is departure from the TR. ... Therefore Hodges and Farstad have based their edition upon an area of von Soden’s work where he gave the least attention” (Moorman, *When the KJV Departs from the Majority Text*, p. 11).
- (d) Kurt and Barbara Aland, while stating that von Soden’s apparatus “is a necessary tool for textual critics,” warn that “VON SODEN’S APPARATUS IS SO UNRELIABLE that the reader soon comes to regard this remarkably full apparatus as little more than a collection of variant readings whose attestation needs verification elsewhere. Von Soden’s edition was distinctly a failure” (Kurt and Barbara Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 23).
- (e) In 1967 E.C. Colwell made the following statement before the International Greek New Testament Project (IGNT): “The preparation of a comprehensive textual apparatus has required attention to previous editions of the Greek NT, viz, Tischendorf, Tregelles, von Soden, Legg. CAREFUL STUDY SHOWED THAT THE TEXTUAL EVIDENCE IN THESE EDITIONS CANNOT BE USED IN THE IGNT APPARATUS, SINCE THEY FAIL TO CITE WITNESSES COMPLETELY, CONSISTENTLY, AND IN SOME CASES ACCURATELY” (E.C. Colwell, “The International Greek New Testament Project: a Status Report,” *Journal of Biblical Literature*, LXXXVI, 1968, 192, note 13).
- (f) “It can only be said that the apparatus is POSITIVELY HONEYCOMBED WITH ERRORS, and many documents which should have been recollated have not been touched, others only partially, and others again have been incorrectly handled” (Herman Hoskier, *Journal of Textual Studies*, 15, 1914, p. 307; quoted from Moorman, *When the KJV Departs from the Majority Text*, p. 9).
- (g) “Once the extent of error is seen, THE WORD ‘INACCURACY’ BECOMES A EUPHEMISM. Of the 99 checked MSS, 76 were missing one or more times when they should have been cited, or were listed when they should not have been. ... von Soden’s inaccuracies cannot be tolerated for any purpose. HIS

APPARATUS IS USELESS FOR A RECONSTRUCTION OF THE TEXT OF THE MSS HE USED” (Frederik Wisse, *Profile Method*, pp. 16, 17; quoted from Moorman, p. 11).

- (4) The largest project being conducted at present toward the collation of Greek manuscripts is the work at The Institut für neutestamentliche Textforschung [The Institute for New Testament Research] in Münster, Germany. According to Wilbur Pickering, this institute has “a collection of microfilms of some 4,500 of the extant Greek MSS (around 80 percent of them), and scholars connected with the institute are collating SELECTED ONES” (*The Identity of the New Testament Text*, 1980 edition, p. 150).
  - (a) It is obvious that even this project will fall far short of the goal of producing the material necessary to determine a definitive majority text. Even though this Institute has a vast number of manuscripts on microfilm, Pickering observes that these represent only 80 percent of the total number known to be in existence.
  - (b) He also observes that the scholars are collating only “selected ones” from the 80% they have at hand. To our knowledge no one is in the process of digitizing and collating all of the manuscripts. One reason for this is that the theories of modern textual criticism held by those doing this work cause them to despise the Byzantine Greek manuscripts. Jack Moorman explains why the modern textual critics are in no hurry to examine the vast majority of surviving Greek manuscripts. “It may come as a surprise that only a relative few of the 5,300 MSS now catalogued have been collated. ... Except for a few cursory checks the vast majority has been ignored. The reason is quite simple: The overwhelming majority of manuscripts support the TR/KJV; and seeking out any further support is the last thing textual criticism is interested in. Westcott and Hort certainly were not interested in giving the majority the chance to speak. ... In the past 100 years since Hort a further 1700-1800 cursives have been found. Added to these we have a total of nearly 2,200 lectionaries. Again, apart from a cursory glance to see if there might be some readings supportive of the Aleph-B kind of text, they have been merely catalogued and ignored. Attention, instead, has centered on the comparatively few papyri fragments, and what to do when they disagree with Aleph and B. ... what this present ‘age of minuscules’ means to the editors of the critical text is the hope that they might find a little more support for the Aleph/B/Alexandrian kind of text. Despite appearances to the contrary and talk of being eclectic, Aleph, B and their few allies still dictate the modern critical text, and the feeling prevails that no purpose would be served in giving the majority of MSS a greater voice” (Moorman, *When the KJV Departs from the Majority Text*, pp. 4-6).
- (5) Thus, nowhere in the world is an effort being made toward the collation and examination of all or even most of the extant Greek manuscripts.



b. Even the men who have produced the Majority Text admit that their current work is insufficient.

(1) Hodges and Farstad admit that von Soden's collations are insufficient to produce their desired result: "It should be understood, therefore, that ALL DECISIONS ABOUT MAJORITY READINGS ARE PROVISIONAL AND TENTATIVE. ... As all who are familiar with von Soden's materials will know, his presentation of the data leaves much to be desired. ... What is urgently needed is a new apparatus covering the entire manuscript tradition. It should include complete collations of a very high percentage of the surviving majority text manuscripts (*The Greek New Testament according to the Majority Text*, pp. xxii, xxiii).

(2) Wilbur Pickering also admits that they are not in a position today to demonstrate a true majority of Greek manuscripts: "This means that not only are we PRESENTLY UNABLE TO SPECIFY THE PRECISE WORDING OF THE ORIGINAL TEXT, but it will require considerable time and effort before we can be in a position to do so. And the longer it takes us to mobilize and coordinate our efforts the longer it will be" (Pickering, *The Identity of the New Testament Text*, 1980 revision, pp. 149-150). I do not agree with Pickering. I believe we are able to specify the precise wording of the original text. It is the traditional Masoretic Hebrew and Received Greek text underlying the Reformation Bibles. I believe this by faith and I do not need to wait until some Institute finally collates all surviving Greek manuscripts (if they ever will).

c. In light of these facts, it is evident that the claim to have a true Majority Text based on the majority of Greek manuscripts is a myth, for no such thing exists and it is not possible at this time to make such a text.

## **2. The Hodges-Farstad Text is an insufficient text.**

a. There are four major witnesses to the text of Scripture, as outlined by John Burgon in *The Revision Revised* (pp. 8-11) and the *Traditional Text of the Gospels* (pp. 19-39). (Sometimes these four witnesses are reduced to three, by grouping the Greek manuscripts and the Greek lectionaries into one category.)

(1) The witness of Greek manuscripts. Divided into papyri (96), uncials (263), and minuscules (2,812), there are 3,171 Greek manuscripts extant today (by the count of Kurt and Barbara Aland in the second edition of *The Text of the New Testament*).

(2) The witness of Greek lectionaries. These are Scripture readings used by churches. In contrast to the Greek manuscripts that give a "continuous text," the lectionaries have an "interrupted text." There are 2,280 lectionaries extant.

- (3) The witness of ancient versions. A translation into another language is an important witness to the text upon which it was founded. We have copies of many ancient versions, including Syriac, Latin, Coptic, Gothic, Armenian, Georgian, and Ethiopic. In some cases (e.g., Syriac Peshitta and Old Latin) these are earlier than the oldest of the Greek uncials.
- (4) The witness of quotations from “church fathers,” or the writings of ancient preachers. When they quoted the Scripture, it is possible to see what text they were using. Burgon himself collated more than 86,000 quotations from ancient Christian writings, searching for textual evidence.
- b. Burgon emphasized that ALL of these witnesses are important and none are to be ignored. He called these four witnesses the “provision which the Divine Author of Scripture is found to have made for the preservation in its integrity of His written Word” (*The Revision Revised*, p. 8).
- c. This was the method followed by the Reformation editors. While giving priority to the Greek manuscripts they also weighed the ancient versions and quotations. This is why they modified the Greek Byzantine text in a few places upon the added authority of Latin and other witnesses.
- d. The Hodges-Farstad Majority Text (as well as the Robinson-Pierpont) is based upon only one of the four important witnesses to the original Text. In the foreword to *The Majority Text*, the editors make the following statement: “The present edition DOES NOT cite the testimony [1] of the ancient versions or [2] church fathers. [3] Nor are the lectionary texts considered. This is not because such sources have no value for textual criticism. Rather; it is due to the specific aims of this edition, in which the primary goal has been the presentation of the Majority Text as this appears in the regular manuscript tradition” (emphasis added) (*The Greek New Testament according to the Majority Text*, 1982, p. xviii).

This sounds like a scholarly game to me. If the other areas of witness have value for textual criticism, why would you ignore them when attempting to reproduce the “original” New Testament? What kind of reasoning is this?

- e. Wilbur Pickering’s position in this is contradictory.

(1) In 1977, in *The Identity of the New Testament Text*, Pickering said: “So then, how are we to identify the original wording? First we must gather the available evidence—this will include [1] Greek mss. [2] (including lectionaries), [3] Fathers, and [4] versions. Then we must evaluate the evidence to ascertain which form of the text enjoys the earliest, the fullest, the widest, the most respectable, the most varied attestation” (*Identity of the New Testament Text*, 1977 edition, p. 137).

- (2) On the other hand Pickering supports the Hodges-Farstad Majority Text that ignores a full three-fourths of this overall witness.
- e. It is not possible to come to the truth on textual issues while ignoring a large part of the evidence. The Hodges-Farstad Majority Text is therefore an insufficient text.

### **3. The Hodges-Farstad Text is a provisional text.**

a. First we should note that the King James Bible is *not* a provisional Bible.

- (1) Its underlying Hebrew and Greek texts were brought out of the Dark Ages by believing editors who were not tainted by the gross skepticism of our modern times. Any skepticism that was incipient in Erasmus was restrained by his commitment to the commonly-received traditional text and by the larger faith that characterized his age. The great statements of faith were developed in that age and were established upon that very Text. When the authors of the Westminster Confession spoke in 1648 of their confidence that the Old Testament in Hebrew and the New Testament in Greek were “BY HIS SINGULAR CARE AND PROVIDENCE KEPT PURE IN ALL AGES,” they were referring to the Masoretic Hebrew and the Received Greek that underlies the King James Bible. For men of God in those times, the Bible they had was anything but provisional.
- (2) It is the product of 85 years of translation work (from Tyndale in 1526, through the Coverdale, the Matthew’s, the Bishops, the Geneva, to the KJV in 1611, not to speak of the Wycliffe Bible of the late 14th century that laid an important foundation for succeeding English versions). The King James revision alone was done by roughly 50 scholars of the highest caliber and each part of the revision was examined at least 14 times in a peerless process.
- (3) It was refined in the fires of persecution. Two of the translators of versions that preceded the KJV were martyred for their faith (William Tyndale and John Rogers). Another (Wycliffe) was condemned as a heretic and his bones were burned. The translators of the Geneva Bible had to flee England because of their faith. Hundreds of the readers of these English Bibles were imprisoned and abused, and thousands of copies were burned in the flames.
- (4) It has been tested for almost four centuries in churches throughout the world, and it has been loved by scholars and common people alike.
- (5) A massive number of Bible study tools and materials have been laboriously developed around the KJV. Consider Strong’s *Exhaustive Concordance*. Strong did not dedicate his earthly life to produce that work because of money. He was not hired by some wealthy Bible publishing firm; he did the work as an internal

compulsion before God and as a labor of love.

b. The Majority Text, though, is merely and only provisional, as admitted by its editors.

(1) This is true for the Hodges-Farstad Text.

- (a) “The editors do not imagine that the text of this edition represents in all particulars the exact form of the originals. Desirable as such a text certainly is, much further work must be done before it can be produced. It should therefore be kept in mind that THE PRESENT WORK, *THE GREEK NEW TESTAMENT ACCORDING TO THE MAJORITY TEXT*, IS BOTH PRELIMINARY AND PROVISIONAL. It represents A FIRST STEP in the direction of recognizing the value and authority of the great mass of surviving Greek documents. The use made of those documents in this edition must be subjected to scrutiny and evaluation by competent scholars. Such scrutiny, if properly carried out, can result in further progress toward a Greek New Testament which most accurately reflects the inspired autographs” (Introduction, *The Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text*, 1982, p. x).
- (b) This is also acknowledged by Wilbur Pickering, a consulting editor for the work: “The critical edition of the ‘Byzantine’ text being prepared by Zane C. Hodges, Professor of New Testament Literature and Exegesis at the Dallas Theological Seminary, Arthur Farstad, and others, and to be published by Thomas Nelson, will differ from the Textus Receptus in over a thousand places. ... Hodges ... will be very happy to hear from anyone interested in furthering THE QUEST FOR THE DEFINITIVE TEXT” (emphasis added) (Pickering, *The Identity of the New Testament Text*, pp. 212, 232-233).
- (c) In the latest edition of his book Pickering says the Hodges-Farstad Majority Text is “an excellent INTERIM Greek Text to use UNTIL THE FULL AND FINAL STORY CAN BE TOLD.”

(2) The same is true for the Robinson-Pierpont Text. Maurice Robinson’s “Byzantine priority” methodology is a “QUEST TOWARD THE GOAL of establishing the original text of the canonical Greek New Testament,” a quest that requires diligent labor (Robinson, *New Testament Textual Criticism: The Case for Byzantine Priority*).

c. This is a plain testimony against divine preservation. If after 2,000 years of church history, if after the glorious Reformation, if after the grand missionary thrust of these last days, if after centuries of unprecedented worldwide Bible distribution, if after all of the biblical scholarship of the past 500 years, if after all of that we are still waiting to discover the “original text” of the New Testament, why should we believe that we would ever find it? Standing, as we are, at the end of the greatest period of spiritual revival and world missionary activity history has witnessed since the apostolic age, are we still searching for the definitive text of God’s Word; are we still dependent on a “provisional” text and still on

a “quest” toward producing a definitive text? Was that Received Text which was carried throughout the world from 1500 to 1900 (and which continues to be carried throughout the world by the many missionaries who are committed to it) only a provisional text as we are led to believe by these quotes? I contend this is not the case.

#### **4. The Hodges-Farstad Text is an inconsistent text.**

Following are two ways in which the Hodges-Farstad Majority Text is inconsistent:

- a. It is inconsistent in that it does not consistently follow its own majority principle. Of the readings adopted in *The Majority Text*, 1240 “are shown in the footnotes as NOT having a clear overall majority of manuscripts in their favour. Further; in John 7:53--8:11 and Revelation ... the editors have on a number of occasions adopted a reading found only in a minority of manuscripts” (*Quarterly Record*, Trinitarian Bible Society, No. 482, p. 14). We see, then, that even in the matter of the selection of readings, the “majority principle” is abandoned quite often in the Majority Text. This is a strange inconsistency.
- b. The Hodges-Farstad Majority Text is also inconsistent in that some Westcott-Hort principles are employed even though the editors call these principles defective.

(1) The Westcott-Hort principle of the Genealogical Method is employed.

- (a) In the introduction to the Hodges-Farstad Greek New Testament we read: “Final decisions about readings ought to be made on the basis of a reconstruction of their history in the manuscript tradition. This means that for each New Testament book a genealogy of the manuscripts ought to be constructed. ... It is true, of course, that most modern textual critics have despaired of the possibility of using the genealogical method. Nevertheless, this method remains the only logical one” (p. xii).
- (b) John Burgon wisely observed: “High time however is it to declare that, in strictness, all this talk about ‘genealogical evidence,’ when applied to Manuscripts is--MOONSHINE. ... And perforce all talk about ‘Genealogical evidence,’ where no single step in the descent can be produced--in other words, where no Genealogical evidence exists--is absurd” (*The Revision Revised*, pp. 255-56). No evidence has been unearthed since Burgon’s day that would require a change to his wise assessment of the “genealogical method.”

(2) The Westcott-Hort principle of Intrinsic and Transcriptional Probability.

- (a) The editors of the Hodges-Farstad Greek N.T. state: “Where K itself was sharply divided within an M reading, the rival variations were weighed both in terms of their distribution within the majority tradition as a whole and with regard to intrinsic and transcriptional probabilities. Occasionally, a transcriptional

- consideration outweighs even a preponderance of contradictory testimony from K (p. xxii).
- (b) Hort defined intrinsic probability as having reference to the author of the text and transcriptional probability as having reference to the copyists. In applying these principles, the Greek editor asks himself, “What would the author have most likely have written in this place, and what would the copyists most likely have copied.” In spite of the claims of textual critics otherwise, IT IS PURELY SUBJECTIVE. It legitimizes guessing.
  - (c) John Burgon dismissed intrinsic and transcriptional probabilities out of hand. “So far from thinking with Dr. Hort that ‘the value of the evidence obtained from transcriptional probability is incontestable,’--for that, ‘without its aid, textual criticism could rarely obtain a high degree of security,’ (p. 24)--we venture to declare that inasmuch as one expert’s notions of what is ‘transcriptionally probable’ prove to be the diametrical reverse of another expert’s notions, the supposed evidence to be derived from this source may, with advantage, be neglected altogether. Let the study of documentary evidence be allowed to take its place. Notions of ‘probability’ are the very pest of those departments of Science which admit of an appeal to fact” (Burgon, *The Revision Revised*, p. 252).
  - (d) Wilbur Pickering refuted the Westcott-Hort principle of intrinsic and transcriptional probabilities in *The Identity of the New Testament Text*. He wisely observes, “NO TWENTIETH CENTURY MAN CONFRONTING A SET OF VARIANT READINGS CAN KNOW OR PROVE WHAT ACTUALLY TOOK PLACE TO PRODUCE THE VARIANTS” (p. 78). That is the crux of the matter. Why, then, does Pickering support the Hodges-Farstad Majority Text that employs this bogus principle?
- (3) Because it borrows from the field of modern textual criticism, the Majority Text position does not have the simplicity of biblical truth.
- (a) 2 Cor. 11:3 warns that the devil complicates the truth and corrupts “the simplicity that is in Christ.” The Lord Jesus rejoiced that the Father has revealed His truth to babes and not to the wise of this world (Mat. 11:25). Paul revealed that God has chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise (1 Cor. 1:27). The truth can be preached in any congregation of ordinary Spirit-led believers and be understood.
  - (b) Contrast this simplicity with the complexity of modern textual criticism, with its intrinsic and transcriptional probabilities, its genealogical methods, etc. Maurice Robinson, co-author of the *Robinson-Pierpont Byzantine Majority Text*, calls his textual criticism “the Byzantine-priority method” and it is as complicated as standard modern textual criticism. In fact, Robinson plainly states that his textual criticism is complicated: “The Byzantine-priority hypothesis is far more complex than it may appear; it does not encourage a simplistic eclectic approach

nor a narrow theological outlook toward a predetermined result” (Robinson, *New Testament Textual Criticism: The Case for Byzantine Priority*). The “narrow theological outlook,” of course, is a reference to a faith-preservation approach.

- c. The Hodges-Farstad Majority Text is therefore an inconsistent work. It claims to be an attempt to follow a purely Majority principle, but this is not the case. The claim is made by the editors that Westcott-Hort principles are rejected, but the truth is that some of those very principles are employed. Such gross inconsistency in a work of this nature is inexcusable and is yet another reason why God’s people should reject The Majority Text. In no sense does it represent an improvement over the Received Text.

### **5. The Majority Text position encourages preferences rather than convictions.**

- a. The Majority Text is preferred by some fundamentalists who also have no serious qualms against the critical text; it is more a scholarly preference than a deeply held conviction.
- b. In this it is similar to the New King James Version. I don’t know of any man who uses the New King James who has a strong conviction about the preservation of the underlying Greek text. It is a choice, a preference, oftentimes a convenience, but not a conviction. Further, the use of the NKJV is usually a stepping-stone to the critical text and the modern versions based on it, and I believe the Majority Text position is also a stepping-stone to modern textual criticism, as noted under our next point.

### **6. There is great potential for the Majority Text method to lead to (1) endless speculation and uncertainty and (2) to give students an itch for modern textual criticism.**

I believe that just as the New King James Bible tends to open the door to the acceptance of the modern English versions the Majority Greek Text tends to open the door to the acceptance of modern textual criticism.

- a. Since the Majority Text position is not predicated upon faith in divine preservation, it can never result in the truth. The textual record alone can never lead us to the preserved Scripture; the record must be observed through the eyes of faith in the divine promises. I have met believers who have been confused by the Majority Text position. They can no longer hold to the Received Text or to the KJV with confidence, but the only replacement they have is a “provisional” Greek text.
- b. Further, the Majority Text position teaches the Bible student that he needs to do textual criticism, that he needs to search for and recover the Apostolic Text to some extent, that he needs to be on a “quest” for a definitive text. I fear that the “little bit” of textual criticism that the Majority Text position encourages will not be satisfying to many scholarly students. They will be tempted to move farther out onto the uncertain seas of modern

textual criticism. There is no anchor of faith to ground them.

- c. Look what has happened to Zane Hodges. “I see in this entire regression from the Dean John Burgon methodology once espoused by Zane C. Hodges indeed a sad spectacle. I remember how Hodges for years had a paper he entitled a defense of the ‘Textus Receptus.’ Then he changed the title to the ‘Majority Text.’ I have seen him move closer and closer to the former Westcott and Hort position of textual criticism. Now we have seen him use the genealogical method of the Hortian heretics. We have seen him being quite at home with the intrinsic and transcriptional probability of these same heretics. Where will it all end? Is there no bottom? One of our DBS Vice Presidents, Dr. David Otis Fuller, uses the expression ‘scholarolatry.’ Is this what Hodges is guilty of now?” (Donald Waite, *The Dean Burgon News*, May-August, 1985, pp. 2-4).

## **7. The Hodges-Farstad Text flies in the face of divine preservation.**

- a. I cannot emphasize too strongly that the heart of this issue is faith and the doctrine of divine preservation of Scripture. Consider just a few of God’s promises. (For a more exhaustive study of this doctrine see *Faith vs. the Modern Bible Versions*, Part I, “We Hold to the King James Bible Because of Divine Preservation.”)

### Matthew 5:18

- (1) The Lord Jesus was certain about the preservation of God’s Word. Even the smallest details will be preserved. This can only be accomplished by God’s providential intervention in the transmission of the Bible through the centuries.
- (2) Though Christ was referring to the Old Testament, the same must apply to the New, in that it is equally the infallibly inspired Word of God and in fact exceeds the Old in glory (2 Cor. 3:9).

### Matthew 24:35

- (1) This is an amazing promise and it contains important doctrine about the inspiration and preservation of Scripture. Jesus Christ, the Alpha and Omega, the Author of history, promised that His words would not pass away; thus He is promising that His words will be inscripturated and preserved.
- (2) The doctrines of inspiration and preservation are intimately associated throughout Scripture. The association is not merely logical; it is scriptural; it is not merely inferred; it is plainly stated.
- (3) Christ’s promise here applies, first, to the four Gospels. It teaches us that the Gospels are supernatural. The human authors did not have to fumble around in a



naturalistic manner as most textbooks on the history of the Bible presume, borrowing from one another and from other documents, imperfectly and inaccurately describing things. The entire foundation of the modern field of “form or redaction criticism” is vain and heretical. It is vain because it is impossible at this point in history to know how the Gospels were written from a human perspective and it is heretical because God’s Word informs us that the writing of the Gospels was supernatural and gives no emphasis to the “human element.”

- (4) Christ’s promise applies not only to the four Gospels but also to all of the words of the New Testament as given by the Spirit of Christ (1 Pet. 1:11).

Matthew 28:19-20; 1 Timothy 6:14; 2 Timothy 2:2

These passages describe *the process of preservation*. Evangelicals and fundamentalists who defend textual criticism would have us believe that while the Bible contains a general promise of preservation (if not directly, at least by implication, they say), it does not describe *the means* of preservation. For example, in an e-mail written to me in December 2000, Dr. James Price, a professor at Tennessee Temple Seminary and the chairman of the Old Testament committee of the New King James Bible, said: “I know the passages that infer preservation, and I believe the doctrine. I just don’t think that the Bible explicitly states how God preserved His word.” The fact is that the Bible not only infers preservation it specifically promises it (so that it is an actual Bible doctrine) and it *does* tell us *how* it will be accomplished.

- (1) God preserves His Word among the churches as it is being obeyed and as the Great Commission is being conducted (Mat. 28:19-20). In the Old Testament it was the Jewish priests who preserved God’s Word (Deut. 17:18; Rom. 3:1-2). In the New Testament the priesthood is composed of all believers (1 Pet. 2:9) and it is the churches that keep God’s Word as they carry out the Great Commission (1 Tim. 3:15; Mat. 28:19-20).
- (a) Thus the Scriptures have been preserved in the church age not by exalted scholars but by humble believers.
  - (b) Christ is foretelling the inscripturating of His words and teaching. The fulfillment of this is found in the divinely-given New Testament Scriptures, whereby the churches are able to hold fast to the “faith once delivered to the saints.”
  - (c) Christ does not foresee that His Words will need to be recovered; rather, He describes a process of continual preservation that will endure until the end of the age. The Lord Jesus Christ, who knows the beginning from the end, assumed that the Word of God would be available from generation to generation through the church age. Otherwise, it would not be possible for succeeding generations

to teach the “all things” of the New Testament faith (Mat. 28:20).

- (d) We see that the Scriptures are not preserved by being hidden away (such as in a remote monastery in the Sinai desert or the Vatican Library) but by being used. Dr. Stewart Custer of Bob Jones University says, “God has preserved His word in the sands of Egypt” (stated during a debate in Marquette Manor Baptist Church, Chicago, 1984). He is referring to the view held by modern textual critics that the pure New Testament manuscripts were replaced in the 4th century by corrupt ones and were not “recovered” until the 19th century when the handful of Egyptian or Alexandrian manuscripts were given prominence, but this flies in the face of the Scriptures’ own testimony. “God did not preserve His Word in the ‘disusing’ but in the ‘using.’ He did not preserve the Word by it being stored away or buried, but rather through its use and transmission in the hands of humble believers” (Jack Moorman, *Forever Settled*, 1985, p. 90).
- (e) The witness of the Latin manuscripts and other versions have significance in determining the text of Scripture, because these were even more commonly used by the churches through the Dark Ages than the Greek. Likewise, in this light the lectionaries that were read in the churches and the quotations from church leaders are important witnesses. This is why the Reformation editors looked to the Latin as an important secondary witness after the Greek. Thus in a few places there is more testimony to the preserved text in the Latin than the Greek (i.e., Acts 8:37; 1 John 5:7). Dr. Edward F. Hills observed, “...it was not trickery that was responsible for the inclusion of the *Johannine Comma* in the Textus Receptus [referring to the claim that a Greek manuscript was fabricated by Erasmus’ contemporaries to support this verse], but the usage of the Latin speaking Church.” This is the chief reason that we reject the Majority Text or pure Byzantine Text position. We cannot ignore the Latin and concern ourselves strictly with finding a majority of the Greek. And when we refer to the Latin, we are not talking merely about Rome’s Latin Vulgate but much more of those lovely little hand-size ancient “dissident” versions that were based on Latin and that were used by Bible believers such as the Anabaptists and Waldenses and Lollards down through the Dark Ages, the pre-Reformation Romaunt, Spanish, German, Italian, French, Czech, English (Wycliffe 1380), etc. Most, if not all, of these contained the *Johannine Comma* in 1 John 5:7, and it is that type of evidence that convinced the Reformation editors of its authenticity.
- (f) The purest Bible manuscripts and translations were literally used up in the process of time so that they were replaced with new copies. This is why ancient manuscripts that are in mint condition such as the Sinaiticus and the Vaticanus are deeply suspect. They weren’t used! The majority of ancient uncials extant are mere fragments because they were worn out and come down to us only in pieces. The fact that manuscripts such as the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus come down to us relatively intact from ancient times is due to their corruption and disuse. This process continues today. Though I have only been saved 32 years, I have worn out Bibles and replaced them with new ones. Ancient manuscripts

would ordinarily have worn out even more quickly than modern Bibles, because they were used not only for reading and study but also for copying.

- (2) The churches are to hold to apostolic teaching (and Scripture) in every detail and they also are to pass “the same” and “all things” along from generation to generation (Mat. 28:20; 2 Tim. 2:2). The words “the same” and “all things” describe the process of the preservation of inscripturated apostolic teaching. Thus we see the role of individual churches in the task of Bible preservation.
- (3) God’s people and the churches are to be zealous for the details of the Scripture, for the “spots” (1 Tim. 6:14). The lax attitude that characterizes the textual criticism position, that the omission of thousands of words is of little significance, is not Scriptural.
- (4) “Faithful men” play an important role in Bible preservation, because it is only such men who will care enough to guard the Word and who will have the spiritual discernment necessary for the task.
- (5) God preserves His Word by His own power (Mat. 19:20). Christ explains how the preservation of Scripture can be possible in light of human frailty and the vicious and unceasing assault of the devil. It is possible because of God’s active role in preserving it. We see this in Christ’s promise, “I, I am with you always.” Though men have an important part to play in the process of preservation, it is God Himself who has preserved the Scripture. Modern textual critics focus almost exclusively upon *man’s* role in the transmission of the text, but the Bible believer traces the hand of *God*.
- (6) This process has continued down to the end of the church age (Mat. 28:20).
  - (a) It was in operation through the Dark Ages of Rome’s rule. This is why we know that the preserved Word of God is found in the majority of Greek and Latin manuscripts and translations thereof that were in common use among the churches during those centuries and not in the Alexandrian text that was commonly rejected.
  - (b) This process was in operation during the 16th and 17th centuries when the Reformation editors and translators put the Scriptures into print. They understood that the preserved New Testament was found largely in the Greek Byzantine text that had come down from Antioch in the early centuries of the church age and secondarily in the Latin that was widely used during the Dark Ages (not so much by Rome as by “dissident” or separatist Bible believers such as the Waldenses and the Lollards who used Latin-based versions). In a few instances, such as the Trinitarian statement of 1 John 5:7, the Scripture was preserved more in Latin and in other versions such as the Waldensian Romaunt,

the early German (e.g., the Tepl), and early English (the Wycliffe version). But always it was preserved in the common usage among the churches.

- (c) This process was in operation in the 19th century, when the Scripture continued to be preserved in the Bible-believing churches that resisted the tide of skepticism coming from Germany. Modern textual criticism was never popular in believing churches in that century. In fact, it was strongly resisted.
  - (d) This process is still in operation today. By the late 20th century, the tide of end time apostasy was so powerful that the corrupt critical Greek text and the translations thereof had become the majority, but Bible believing churches continue, in the midst of this apostasy, to love, preach, and defend the preserved Scripture. Most of the staunchly fundamentalist churches today that are boldly resisting the ecumenical tide continue to love the King James Bible and other Received Text versions.
- b. The plain teaching of the Scriptures on divine preservation is in conflict with the Majority Text position. Consider, for example, Wilbur Pickering, one of the influential voices in the Majority Text debate.

(1) Pickering dismisses the faith approach to the text.

- (a) He rejects the faith approach of Edward F. Hills, saying, “I agree with Ehrman’s critique of Hill’s position, though his is not the first--Hill’s position is inconsistent and arbitrary, and does not square with the evidence” (*The Identity of the New Testament Text*, Appendix A “Inspiration and Preservation”). Thus Pickering sides with the skeptic Ehrman, who does not even believe there was an established apostolic orthodoxy in the first century, against the believer Hills.
- (b) Pickering speaks of those who “perversely persist in affirming that my case is based on theological presupposition.” Thus he strongly affirms that his principles of textual criticism are NOT based on the Bible and faith, are not predicated upon providential preservation.
- (c) As a result, Pickering is treated with a little more respect by the proponents of modern textual criticism, who so lightly dismiss men like John Burgon and Edward Hills. Consider, for example, the following statement by Daniel Wallace of Dallas Theological Seminary: “What was new, however, with Pickering’s approach was perhaps a combination of things: his theological invectives were subdued (especially compared with those of the Textus Receptus-advocating fundamentalist pamphleteers); his theological presuppositions regarding preservation were also played down; his treatment appeared sane, reasonable, and thorough...”(Daniel Wallace, “Some Second Thoughts on the Majority Text,” [http://www.bible.org/page.asp?page\\_id=673](http://www.bible.org/page.asp?page_id=673)). To the modern textual critic, sanity is rejecting the common Text of church history.

- (2) Pickering claims that the Bible merely “infers” that God would preserve the Scripture and that “nowhere does it say how He proposed to do it...”
- (a) To the contrary, the Bible’s statements on preservation are clear and unequivocal. Away with this business that preservation is merely inferred! In *Faith vs. the Modern Bible Versions*, Part I, “We Hold to the King James Bible Because of the Doctrine of Preservation,” we examine dozens of Scriptures that explicitly teach the doctrine of preservation. In *Faith vs. the Modern Bible Versions*, Part X, “We Hold to the KJV Because of the Evil Fruit of the Modern Versions,” we give further examples of evangelicals and fundamentalists who claim that the Bible does not explicitly teach preservation.
  - (b) Further, God *has* told us how He would preserve the Scripture. It would be preserved in its usage by the churches. It would be passed along from generation to generation by the priesthood of believers as part of the fulfillment of the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20; 2 Tim. 2:2).
  - (c) The New Testament text that fits that definition since the Protestant Reformation is the Received Text in Greek and the King James Bible in English. Pickering wants to go back to the Byzantine Greek New Testament, but that is a step backward not forward. The wise textual editors in the 16th century understood that the Byzantine Greek New Testament in general contained some few corruptions and they purified it and published it to the ends of the earth in the slightly modified form of the Reformation Received Text.
- (3) Only at the very end of his book does Pickering throw out a bone to faith.
- (a) After making every effort to belittle Edward Hills’ faith position, Pickering *concludes* his book by quoting Hebrews 11:6: “But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”
  - (b) Thus Pickering *CONCLUDES* his position with a salute to faith, even after severely distancing himself from those like Dr. Edward Hills who *PREDICATE* their “textual criticism” on faith! It appears that Dr. Pickering too much yearns to be “recognized” by the scholars, and one must always compromise the faith to reach that objective. Jack Moorman wisely observes: “... if the critics misrepresent us because we present biblical truth, and if they become uncomfortable with this, what does it matter? Who are we trying to please, God or man? Must we participate in their neutrality and unbelief in order to gain a hearing from them? Must we yield to peer pressure? Must we put our good friends ahead of our good Bible?” (*When the Majority Text Departs*, p. 1).
- c. The plain teaching of the Scriptures on divine preservation is also in conflict with the position of Maurice Robinson, co-author of the *Robinson-Pierpoint Byzantine Text*.

- (1) Robinson says: “Byzantine-priority provides no domain or shelter for those unwilling to labor diligently, or for unscholarly individuals whose goal is merely a biased theological perspective or the advocacy of a particular translation.” (Robinson, *New Testament Textual Criticism: The Case for Byzantine Priority*).

*Comment:*

- (a) It is obvious that Robinson has no time for “a biased theological perspective.” It is strange to hear a supposed evangelical Christian referring to biblical theology in terms of bias. This is precisely the charge that is made against creationists by evolutionists. We wonder how Robinson approaches the subject of origins and whether he simply believes the Bible’s testimony or whether he allows room for the “natural record” to overthrow the Bible.
  - (b) He refers to “unscholarly individuals,” pretending that those who do not practice textual criticism of some sort are ignorant. The arrogance of textual critics never ceases to amaze me. Edward Hills had every scholarly credential in this field, but since he was committed to a “theological perspective,” he is branded unscholarly.
  - (c) Robinson refers to diligent labor. Where did Jesus Christ or the Apostles teach that the believer must “labor diligently” to find the Scripture? Why could it not be, Mr. Robinson, that God has preserved His Scripture in the honorable Greek Received Text and that instead of laboring to recover the Scripture through secular principles of textual criticism we should be laboring to proclaim it to the ends of the earth in obedience to His command?
  - (d) He is opposed to “the advocacy of a particular translation.” How is it that God inspired one Scripture originally but today that one Scripture must be represented by many conflicting versions?
- (2) Robinson says: “For advocates of the TR/KJV position, the ‘theological argument’ regarding the conflict between God and Satan is primary, centering upon the ‘providential preservation’ of a specific and unique text, unlike that found in any single manuscript or texttype, including the Byzantine Textform. FOR ADVOCATES OF THE BYZANTINE-PRIORITY HYPOTHESIS, THE UNDERLYING THEOLOGICAL FACTORS TAKE A SECONDARY ROLE IN THE REALM OF TEXTUAL CRITICISM. Nor can we summarily dismiss the manuscripts of competing texttypes as ‘useless’ or ‘heretical.’ Neither the Alexandrian nor the Western manuscripts in themselves present a deliberately ‘evil’ text--only a text which (under the present hypothesis) has suffered from scribal corruption and/or ‘creativity’ to an adverse degree--a situation which has lessened their overall value and authority” (Maurice Robinson, “The Case for the Byzantine Textform: A New Approach to ‘Majority Text’ Theory,” Southeastern Regional Meeting, Evangelical Theological Society, at Toccoa Falls College, March 8-9, 1991).

*Comment:*

- (a) Though it is true that the Greek Received Text differs from any single manuscript or texttype (a continually shifting term that was invented by modern textual criticism), it only does so very slightly. It is so slight that for more than 450 years (from 1500 to 1980) it was common for the Received Text and the Majority Text and the Byzantine Text to be used as synonyms. God has not promised that corruptions will not creep into the text, only that the text will be preserved in spite of the corruptions. We believe that some few errors that had come to reside in the majority of Greek manuscripts were purified in the Reformation era as the Scripture came out of the Dark Ages.
- (b) Robinson boldly but unconvincingly claims that neither the Alexandrian nor the Western manuscripts present a deliberately evil or heretical text. He has no evidence of this. He doesn't even know the history of these manuscripts. In fact, since they contain readings of a doctrinal nature that differ from the Traditional Text, there is good reason to believe that heretics *were* involved. There is a wealth of historical evidence that manuscripts were tampered with on a large scale in the first centuries after the apostles. Frederick Scrivener observed: "... THE WORST CORRUPTIONS TO WHICH THE NEW TESTAMENT HAS EVER BEEN SUBJECTED, ORIGINATED WITHIN A HUNDRED YEARS AFTER IT WAS COMPOSED ... Irenaeus (AD 150), and the African Fathers, and the whole Western, with a portion of the Syrian Church, used far inferior manuscripts to those employed by Stunica, or Erasmus, or Stephens thirteen centuries later, when moulding the Received Text" (Scrivener, *Introduction to New Testament Criticism*, 3rd edition, p. 511). And John Burgon adds: "WE KNOW THAT ORIGEN IN PALESTINE, LUCIAN AT ANTIOCH, HESCHIUS IN EGYPT, 'REVISED' THE TEXT OF THE N.T. Unfortunately, they did their work in an age when such fatal misapprehension prevailed on the subject, that each in turn will have inevitably imported a fresh assortment of *monstra* into the sacred writings. Add, the baneful influence of such spirits as Theophilus (sixth Bishop of Antioch, A.D. 168), Tatian, Ammonius, &c., of whom there must have been a vast number in the primitive age,--some of whose productions, we know for certain, were freely multiplied in every quarter of ancient Christendom:--add, the fabricated gospels which anciently abounded ... and WE HAVE SUFFICIENTLY EXPLAINED HOW IT COMES TO PASS THAT NOT A FEW OF THE CODICES OF ANCIENT CHRISTENDOM MUST HAVE EXHIBITED A TEXT WHICH WAS EVEN SCANDALOUSLY CORRUPT" (*The Revision Revised*, pp. 29, 30).
- (3) Robinson says: "Some authentic 'Majority Text' advocates have been unfairly lumped with this extreme position, even though these individuals have made it plain that they are not in sympathy with such an absurd agenda. The present writer desires to make it absolutely clear that he is not tied to such an agenda in any

way” (Maurice Robinson, “The Case for the Byzantine Textform: A New Approach to ‘Majority Text’ Theory,” Southeastern Regional Meeting, Evangelical Theological Society, at Toccoa Falls College, March 8-9, 1991).

*Comment:* The position that God’s people held in the Reformation and that was common until the late 19th century, that God had preserved the Scriptures in the Greek Received Text, is called “absurd” by Robinson. Consider, for example, the Westminster Confession of Faith, 1648: “The Old Testament in Hebrew . . . and the New Testament in Greek . . . being immediately inspired by God, and by his singular care and providence kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentic; so as in all controversies of religion, the Church is finally to appeal unto them.” The Presbyterian authors of this confession were referring to the Hebrew Masoretic and the Greek Received Text. This statement on preservation was affirmed by Baptists in the London Confession of 1677 as well as the Philadelphia Confession of 1742. Men of God in the 16th, 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries believed in divine preservation AS IT APPLIED TO THE SCRIPTURES THEY POSSESSED IN THE MASORETIC HEBREW AND THE GREEK RECEIVED TEXT. But to the modern textual critic, who has drank too deeply from the wells of unbelieving modern biblical scholarship, this is absurd and extreme.

d. The plain teaching of the Scriptures on divine preservation is also in conflict with the position of Harry Sturz, author of *The Byzantine Text-Type*.

(1) Sturz argued against making the doctrine of preservation a corollary or consequence of inspiration. “It should be pointed out that providential preservation is not a necessary consequence of inspiration. Preservation of the Word of God is promised in Scripture, and inspiration and preservation are related doctrines, but they are distinct from each other, and there is a danger in making one the necessary corollary of the other. The Scriptures do not do this. God, having given the perfect revelation by verbal inspiration, was under no special or logical obligation to see that man did not corrupt it” (*The Byzantine Text-Type*, p. 38).

(a) Sturz’s statement is strangely contradictory. To say that preservation is promised in the Bible and is therefore a doctrine and then to say that God is under no special obligation to preserve the Scripture is to speak nonsense. This confusing, nonsensical position is the place that every professing evangelical or fundamentalist is driven when he attempts to reconcile modern textual criticism, which is a secular and non-faith practice, with his biblical faith.

(b) Sturz’s statement is also misguided and off target. He misrepresents the position of John Burgon and Edward Hills. They would have agreed with Sturz that inspiration and preservation are not exactly the same. The way that Sturz defines preservation as a corollary of inspiration is contrary to how Burgon and Hills defined it. It is a straw man. They defined preservation as a corollary of



inspiration in the sense that it is reasonable and scriptural to assume that the God who gave an infallible Scripture would preserve it so that it was not lost, but they did not define preservation as a corollary of inspiration in the sense that every manuscript would be kept from error or any such thing.

- (c) In claiming that we should not tie inspiration and preservation together, Sturz rejected the godly faith held by God's people in centuries past. The Westminster Confession of Faith of 1648, which was repeated in the London Baptist Confession of 1677 and the Philadelphia Confession of 1742, stated that the Old and New Testament Scriptures are "immediately inspired by God and "BY HIS SINGULAR CARE AND PROVIDENCE, KEPT PURE IN ALL AGES." Francis Turretin, professor of theology at Geneva and prominent Reformed Protestant leader, said in 1674: "Nor can we readily believe that God, who dictated and inspired each and every word to these inspired men, would not take care of their entire preservation." John Owen, English Puritan leader, said in about 1670, "But yet we affirm, that the whole Word of God, in every letter and title, as given from him by inspiration, is preserved without corruption." In each case, these confessions were tied to the Greek Received Text that was in common use in those days.
- (2) Sturz based his argument against tying together inspiration and preservation on the fact that the manuscript record has varieties, even within the Byzantine text tradition. "One danger of such a position is that the faith of some has been weakened when they have become aware of variant readings in the manuscripts precisely because they have confounded preservation with inspiration. ... He did not stipulate in the Scriptures that He would keep Christian scribes from error or that the text-type with the most copies would be the best text" (*The Byzantine Text-Type*, p. 38).
- (a) Faith is based strictly upon God's promises and is the opposite of sight. "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1). To interpret the Bible by "the record" is the same mistake that the evolutionist commits. This is backwards. The record, whether of fossils or of biblical manuscripts, can only properly be interpreted through the eyes of faith in the Scriptures.
  - (b) Sturz presented a strawman when he said that God did not stipulate that He would keep scribes from error. To my knowledge, no defender of the King James Bible has made such a claim. Sturz is critiquing John Burgon and Edward Hills, and it is certain that neither of these men made this claim. We know that scribes were not kept from error. The promise of preservation is not a claim that every copier of Scripture would become infallible or that God would not allow any corruption to enter the manuscript record. Preservation does not guarantee that God would keep the Scriptures *from* the assault from devils and heretics but

that He would keep the Scriptures *through* that assault, and we believe that this is exactly what we see in history. God allowed periods of great assault upon the Scripture, especially during the first three centuries after the apostles. It was during this age that the heretical Alexandrian text was created, but it did not succeed in taking over the apostolic text and was effectively put on a shelf, where it sat almost entirely unused thereafter. God also allowed Rome to dominate the world for many hundreds of years and during that Dark Age the free transmission of the Bible was greatly restricted and though the light was never put out, it did not shine as brightly and freely during those days. Yet in spite of the fact that the Bible had to go through that era of fierce persecution and picked up some minor corruption along the way, we believe that God brought it out of those dark times intact. He used the Reformation editors and translators to dust it off, so to speak, to perfect those few blemishes that had crept in, and to put it into print in mint condition so that it could be preached throughout the world during an amazing period of end-time missionary work, a period that has stretched to our very day. In my view, this position is in perfect conformity with the doctrine of preservation we find in Scripture.

- (c) Sturz presented another strawman when he said that God did not stipulate that the text-type with the most copies would be the best text. We agree that God did not stipulate that and we don't know of any King James defender who has made such a claim. Certainly John Burgon and Edward Hills did not, and these are the men Sturz was critiquing. Burgon used a seven-fold test to determine the genuineness of Scripture within the manuscript record (antiquity, consent of witnesses, variety of evidence, respectability of witnesses, continuity, context, internal considerations). Hills taught that the preserved text is not a mere majority text but that the testimony of the majority of Greek manuscripts is only the starting place for determining the apostolic text. He showed that the Reformation editors, while revering the traditional or majority Greek text, also looked to the witness of ancient versions and that they understood the importance of Latin as a witness.
- (3) Sturz said the variety among the Byzantine or traditional Greek manuscripts disproves the doctrine that makes preservation the consequence of inspiration. "... the theory is on shaky ground due to the fact that even the Byzantine text with its high degree of homogeneity is composite..." (p. 39).
- (a) No one denies that such a variety exists, but this does not overthrow the doctrine of preservation as a consequence of inspiration. The doctrine of preservation is not that every Scripture manuscript would be as infallible as the original but that the infallible text would not be destroyed or lost.
  - (b) The doctrine of preservation teaches us that the infallible Scripture is recoverable, discernable within the manuscript record. This was what the Reformation editors believed, and when they published the Masoretic Hebrew

Old Testament and the Greek Received New Testament they were confident that they had recovered the infallible text from the manuscript record.

- (c) The vast majority of “varieties” within the traditional text manuscripts are of the nature of obvious scribal errors and these are not difficult to detect and correct. It is not rocket science, when comparing manuscripts, to know that a misspelled word is a misspelled word or that an accidentally omitted line is an omitted line.
- (4) Sturz made the mistake common to textual critics in that he claimed that the Bible does not tell us *how* God would preserve His Word. Sturz quoted Hills, “God must preserve this text, not secretly, not hidden away ... but openly before the eyes of all men through the continuous usage of His Church,” and then asked, “Where is the proof of this necessity upon God?”
  - (a) The proof of Hills’ assertion is found throughout the New Testament. It is found in Christ’s Great Commission, in which He instructed the churches to carry the Gospel to the ends of the earth and to establish believers until the end of the age in the “all things” that He has commanded (Mat. 28:19-20). It is found in the book of Acts and in the Epistles, wherein we see the apostles carrying out these exact instructions. This is the “how” of preservation in the church age. In the Old Testament dispensation, God used the Jews to preserve His Word (Rom. 3:1-2). In the New Testament dispensation, God uses the churches in the context of the Great Commission. This is a doctrine that is as clearly taught as anything in the Bible, but it is entirely overlooked by modern textual critics.
  - (b) To claim, as modern textual criticism does, that the alleged purest New Testament text (the Alexandrian) was rejected for 1,500 years of church history and that a corrupt recension of the Scripture (the Traditional Reformation text) was promulgated in the churches during that era and that the purest Scripture was kept locked away in a couple of strange and remote monasteries and in the Pope’s library and not “recovered” until the 19th century, is not ANY KIND OF preservation! Such a position has no practicality whatsoever. If God did promise to preserve His Word, such a position is ridiculous upon its very face. I admit that there are questions that I cannot answer in regard to the position I hold on preservation, but the problems I have are AS NOTHING when compared to those of the textual critic.
- e. In contrast to the rationalistic position of modern textual criticism, even in its more benign Majority Text form, we commend the faith position of Edward F. Hills.
  - (1) Dr. Hills followed in the footsteps of men like John Burgon but he also broke new ground in the 1950s when he began writing on the subject of the Bible’s text. He had a doctorate in textual criticism from Harvard, yet he rejected the skeptical premises of textual criticism and set out to establish his principles strictly upon the Word of God and to walk by faith even if that meant going against the entire field of

modern textual criticism. And it did!

- (2) As a result he was held up to ridicule by textual critics (those few who have given him the time of day), but he was willing to bear that reproach. For a man with his intelligence and credentials, that is a rare and commendable characteristic. He was more desirous of hearing the “well done, good and faithful servant” from the lips of his Saviour than to bask in the praise of men in this present world. He trembled more at the words of God than at the reprobation of the scholars.
- (3) Hills understood that the philosophy of modern textual criticism is antagonistic to the principle of faith and that if left unchallenged it will always overthrow faith eventually. He carefully documented the intimate association between so-called higher and lower criticism, between theological modernism and modern textual criticism. (For that groundbreaking work alone he should be commended by men like Pickering who claim to believe the Bible.)

Consider the following important statements from Hills’ pen:

- (a) “For in the realm of New Testament textual criticism as well as in other fields the presuppositions of modern thought are hostile to the historic Christian faith and will destroy it if their fatal operation is not checked. IF FAITHFUL CHRISTIANS, THEREFORE, WOULD DEFEND THEIR SACRED RELIGION AGAINST THIS DANGER, THEY MUST FORSAKE THE FOUNDATIONS OF UNBELIEVING THOUGHT AND BUILD UPON THEIR FAITH, a faith that rests entirely on the solid rock of holy Scripture. And when they do this in the sphere of New Testament textual criticism, THEY WILL FIND THEMSELVES LED BACK STEP BY STEP (PERHAPS, AT FIRST, AGAINST THEIR WILLS) TO THE TEXT OF THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION, NAMELY, THAT FORM OF NEW TESTAMENT TEXT WHICH UNDERLIES THE KING JAMES VERSION and the other early Protestant translations” (Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, 4th edition, p. 1).
- (b) “If we believe in the providential preservation of the New Testament text, then we must defend the Textus Receptus as well as the Traditional Text found in the majority of the Greek manuscripts. For the Textus Receptus is the only form in which this Traditional Text has circulated in print. TO DECLINE TO DEFEND THE TEXTUS RECEPTUS IS TO GIVE THE IMPRESSION THAT GOD’S PROVIDENTIAL PRESERVATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT TEXT CEASED WITH THE INVENTION OF PRINTING. It is to suppose that God, having preserved a pure New Testament text all during the manuscript period, unaccountably left this pure text hiding in the manuscripts and allowed an inferior text to issue from the printing press and circulate among His people for more than 450 years” (Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, 4th edition, p. 192).

- (4) Thus Hills went farther than John Burgon or Frederick Scrivener, who “looked askance at the Textus Receptus and declined to defend it except in so far as it agreed with the Traditional Text found in the majority of the Greek New Testament manuscripts.”
- (5) I could not agree with Dr. Hills more. I believe that the Greek Received Text that has been the missionary text for centuries is the infallible, preserved Scripture. If it cannot be said that God has put His stamp of approval upon the Hebrew Masoretic Old Testament and the Greek Received New Testament and the King James Bible in English (and other faithful translations of those texts in various languages), I don’t see how we can ever have confidence in tracing the hand of God in the providential preservation of Scripture. I am glad that the doctrine of preservation allows me to reject the Majority Text view. I’m glad that we are not still waiting for the Apostolic Text to be dug out of the heap of manuscripts through computer technology. I am glad that my *quest* is not to find the Scripture but to obey it and to fulfill its Great Commission.

## **Conclusion**

1. While the Majority Text claims to be a preliminary step in the refining of the alleged imperfect Received Text, we believe it is actually a step away from the preserved Word of God.
2. The men who are leading in this are not modernists. They do not deny the infallible inspiration of Scripture or hold to heretical documentary theories (at least, to our knowledge), but this does not mean they are correct in their views. Actually, the very fact that the editors and consultants for *The Majority Text* are men who believe in biblical inerrancy makes their work even more dangerous. It is much more difficult to convince God’s people of the error of good men than to convince them of the error of bad ones!
3. For a more extensive study on the Majority Text see “When the KJV Departs from the ‘Majority’ Text: A New Twist in the Continuing Attack on the Authorized Version” by Jack Moorman. This 154 page book is available from Bible for Today, 900 Park Ave., Collingswood, NJ 08108, 800-564-6109, [www.BibleForToday.org](http://www.BibleForToday.org).

## **WHAT PERCENTAGE OF THE MANUSCRIPT EVIDENCE SUPPORTS THE TRADITIONAL TEXT OF THE REFORMATION?**

Even the modern textual critics admit that the Traditional Text of the Reformation was the text in common use through most of church history. Bruce Metzger states: “...during the period from about the sixth or seventh century down to the invention of printing with moveable type (A.D. 1450-56), THE BYZANTINE FORM OF TEXT WAS GENERALLY REGARDED AS THE AUTHORITATIVE FORM OF TEXT AND WAS THE ONE MOST WIDELY CIRCULATED AND ACCEPTED” (Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 1975, p. xx).

In fact, the Traditional Text was the one most widely circulated and accepted in all centuries. Metzger sees nothing in this except an accident of history, but the Bible believer sees the providential hand of God.

The following is some of the evidence that the Traditional Text underlying the Reformation Bibles is the Preserved Word of God. (There are three major witnesses: Greek manuscripts, quotations from Church Fathers, and ancient versions.)

**1. The vast majority of extant Greek New Testament manuscripts support the Traditional Text.** A large percentage of the extant Greek manuscripts, numbering roughly 5,400 (if the lectionaries are included), represent the Traditional type of text found in the Reformation Bibles. Kurt and Barbara Aland admit the figure of “more than 80 percent” (*The Text of the New Testament*, p. 128), but it is actually far more than 80%. After extensive research, they can list only 61 manuscripts (mostly papyri which exist in bare fragments) that support the Alexandrian text that they prefer (Aland, pp. 159-162). The other 5,339 Greek manuscripts represent the Traditional text either exclusively or largely. This figures out to roughly 98% in favor of the Traditional text.

a. The testimony of *the Greek uncials* (also called majuscules)

- (1) These are ancient New Testaments or portions thereof written in all caps with no space between words and little or no punctuation. There are about 263 uncials extant, dating from the 2nd to the 11th centuries. Most of the earliest are fragments.
- (2) Most of the uncials represent the Traditional text, as admitted by the textual critics. “A great number of uncials (especially those of the later centuries) actually preserve little more than a purely or predominantly Byzantine Majority text” (Aland, *The Text of the N.T.*, 2nd edition, p. 103). Kurt Aland used the expression “little more,” because he despised the Traditional Text, but he admitted that the testimony of the uncials is largely in favor of this Text.

b. The testimony of *the Greek minuscules*

- (1) The minuscules were written in lower case with some punctuation and spaces between the words and thus are much easier to read and interpret than the uncials. There are roughly 2,937 minuscule Greek manuscripts extant.
- (2) The minuscules replaced the uncial style from the 9th century forward. This was an important step in the transmission of the Scriptures, and faith in divine preservation implores us to see the hand of God in this critical transition. The exemplars that were the basis for the creation of the minuscules have disappeared, but we know that they existed and that they contained the same type of text we find in the minuscules. “In the codicology the great value of the transliteration process in the 9th century and thereafter is recognized. At that time the most important New Testament

manuscripts written in majuscule script were carefully transcribed into minuscule script. ... THE IMPORT OF THIS DATUM HAS NOT BEEN TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT ENOUGH IN THE PRESENT NEW TESTAMENT TEXTUAL CRITICISM. FOR IT IMPLIES THAT JUST AS THE OLDEST, BEST AND MOST CUSTOMARY MANUSCRIPTS COME TO US IN THE NEW UNIFORM OF THE MINUSCULE SCRIPT, DOES IT NOT? ... Even though one continues to maintain that the copyists at the time of the transliteration handed down the wrong text-type to the Middle Ages, one can still never prove this codicologically with the remark that the older majuscules have a different text. This would be circular reasoning. There certainly were majuscules just as venerable and ancient as the surviving Vaticanus or Sinaiticus, which, like a section of the Alexandrinus, presented a Byzantine text. But they have been renewed into minuscule script and their majuscule appearance has vanished” (Jacob Van Bruggen, *The Ancient Text of the New Testament*, pp. 26, 27).

- (3) “Does it not seem likely that scribes of the Ninth Century would be in a better position to decide on the ‘oldest and best manuscripts’ than textual critics of the Twentieth? Why during this changeover did they so decisively reject the text of Vaticanus and instead make copies of that text which now underlies the Authorized Version?” (Jack Moorman, *A Closer Look*, p. 26).

c. The testimony of *the Greek lectionaries*

- (1) The lectionaries are collections of New Testament readings used in church services. (The word *lection* is from a Latin root meaning “to read.”)
- (2) There are about 2,280 Greek lectionaries extant, dating from the 9th century forward (Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, 2nd edition, p. 163).
- (3) They are nearly 100% “a Byzantine type of text” (Aland, p. 169), meaning they represent the Traditional Text found in the Reformation Bibles.

d. The testimony of *the Greek Byzantine Empire*

- (1) The Traditional Text is called the *Byzantine Text* because it represents the Greek Text that was preserved in the Greek Byzantine Empire. The capital city of the empire was called Byzantium until it was conquered in 330 A.D. by Constantine and renamed “Constantinople” or “New Rome.” The Byzantine Empire was the eastern half of the Roman Empire, which survived for a thousand years after the western half had crumbled into various feudal kingdoms. In the late fourth century Emperor Theodosius I made Christianity the sole religion of the Empire and Constantinople became the religious center of the eastern part of the Roman Empire, while Rome remained the center in the west. In 1054 the Roman Catholic Church split from the

Eastern section. The Byzantine Empire lasted roughly from 452 to 1453 A.D., at which time Constantinople fell to the Ottoman Turks.

- (2) The Byzantine Empire received the Greek New Testament from the area most saturated with apostolic churches and most zealous for the sound faith. In 565 A.D. the Byzantine Empire covered all of the sections of Asia Minor and Europe where the apostolic churches had been founded, including the cities of Jerusalem, Antioch, Caesarea, Ephesus, Philippi, Colosse, Thessalonica, Philadelphia, Smyrna, Thyatira, Athens, the province of Galatia, and Rome.
- (3) While the Greek language died out as a living language in the Roman Empire, it remained so in the Byzantine Empire. Having received the Greek text from the part of the world most saturated with apostolic churches, it preserved that text for more than 1,000 years.
- (4) This lasted until the fall of Constantinople to the Muslims in 1453. At that time the Greek Orthodox Christians were disbursed to the west and carried with them the precious Greek manuscripts and their knowledge of the Greek language.
- (5) In God's providence, this was exactly the same hour in history in which movable type was invented in Europe. A mere three years after the fall of Constantinople the Gutenberg Bible (in Latin) was printed and books began to be multiplied. During the last half of the 15th century, Bibles were printed not only in Latin but also in German, Italian, French, Dutch, Swedish, and other languages. The Greek New Testament was printed in 1516. "... until the middle of the fifteenth century, Constantinople still stood, sorely pressed indeed by the Moslems, but yet independent; a Christian Greek kingdom, retaining the ecclesiastical literature, the language ... Then came the final overthrow and dispersion of 1453. The Greek scholars and ecclesiastics, who then filled Europe with the news of their calamity, became the channels for transmitting to all the west the precious remains of early Christianity; and providence prepared the church with the new art of printing to preserve and diffuse them. It was thus that the Constantinopolitan MSS., the representatives of the common text of former ages, became the parents of our received text" (Robert L. Dabney, "The Doctrinal Various Readings of the New Testament Greek," *Southern Presbyterian Review*, April 1871, reprinted in *Discussions Evangelical and Theological*, 1890, pp. 350-389). If one cannot see the providential hand of God in these events in regard to the preservation of the Scriptures, I do not understand how it could ever be seen.
- (6) The Greek Orthodox Church still uses the Traditional Greek Text today. "We don't agree with many of their doctrines or practices, but that entire church for over 1,000 years has used the Received Text. When Mrs. Waite and I were in Israel and were visiting the Church of the Nativity, Christ's supposed birthplace, we met a Greek





**Byzantine Empire 565 A.D.**

Orthodox priest. ... I said, ‘You have a New Testament you use, don’t you?’ ‘Oh, yes,’ he said. I asked, ‘Which text do you use? Are you familiar with the so-called Westcott-and-Hort-type-text?’ ‘Oh, yes,’ he said, ‘We use the Received Text; we have no confidence at all in the Westcott and Hort text.’ That was interesting. The Greek Orthodox Church still goes back to this text that underlies the King James Bible” (D.A. Waite, *Defending the King James Bible*).

- (7) The Byzantine Greek New Testament was largely the basis for the Received Text printed in the early 16th century. The exceptions were the recovery of a few words such as those of Acts 8:37 and 1 John 5:7 that were better preserved in the Latin tradition.

**2. The Ancient Versions support the Traditional Text.**

“Versional History is by far the most important and stirring in ‘church’ history. It is an account that often winds along the trail of blood, and should be told more fully. Just as the roots of the Authorized Version go back to a Tyndale or Wycliffe, so it is with God’s humble people with a heart for the Bible to whom we will look rather than the lofty church ‘fathers’” (Moorman, *A Closer Look*, 1990, p. 28; for a study of the versional evidence, we recommend Moorman’s book, which is available from Bible for Today, Collingswood, NJ).

Some important introductory facts about the ancient versions:

a. The manuscript record is scant for the early centuries, both for the Greek and for the versions. The manuscript record has been devastated by time, by pagan persecution, by the Roman Catholic inquisition and crusades against “dissident” Christians, and by the Roman Catholic Church’s habit of re-writing history. Consider a few examples of this:

- (1) Of the ancient Persian translation, which probably dates to the 3rd century, there are no known manuscripts.
- (2) Of the Nubian translations that probably date to the 6th century, there are only fragments in existence, so that we know nothing about the textual basis.
- (3) Of the Soghdian translation of Central Asia, only fragments exist and “they are too brief” for definite conclusions (Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 214).
- (4) The existing manuscripts for Old Latin, Ethiopian, Gothic, Coptic and other ancient versions are few and fragmentary, allowing only a very imperfect understanding of the textual basis. For example, though the Gothic version “must have been the vernacular Bible of a large portion of Europe” in the 4th to the 5th centuries (Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 377), only a few fragments remain and even those fragments are largely palimpsests, meaning the original Gothic was scraped off and overwritten with something else.
- (5) Though we know that Britain was evangelized very early, perhaps even during the apostolic era, not even the smallest fragments have survived of the ancient versions that were most assuredly used in that great and fascinating endeavor. We do not know, for example, anything about the New Testament version that was used by Patrick to evangelize Ireland.

These are a few examples of what we encounter when we attempt to examine the ancient versional record.

b. Further, the extant manuscripts in these and other ancient languages commonly date to a later period when the text had probably been modified from its original form. Rome’s hand must always be considered when dealing with the manuscript evidence, because she so dominated the Dark Ages. For example, there is strong evidence that the Armenian version was revised in the 13th century by the Latin Vulgate after the Armenian churches submitted to Rome (Scrivener and Miller, *Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament*, vol. 1, p. 408, cited by Moorman, *A Closer Look*, p. 47). “The further one goes in these matters, the more the hidden hand of Rome is seen in the editions. Ten thousand Vulgate manuscripts scattered throughout Europe and the Mediterranean regions have done their leavening work!” (Jack Moorman, *A Closer Look*, p. 49).

c. Even in more recent times, thousands of copies of various Scriptures and writings have disappeared from the face of the earth. Consider a few examples:

(1) Of the thousands of copies of the *Biblio Pauperum* (*The Bible of the Poor*) that were printed from wooden blocks, only a few have survived and most of those are either mutilated or in bad condition.

(2) Of the Romaunt New Testament, which was used and distributed widely by the Waldenses in the 12th to 14th centuries, only seven copies have survived.

(3) The first printing of the Tyndale New Testament in 1526 is another example. Of the 3,000 or more copies that were printed, only two have survived.

(4) Only three copies have survived of the Anabaptist German Bible called “the Worms Bible,” even though tens of thousands were printed.

d. We can learn many things from the manuscript record and it is sufficient to demonstrate the priority of the Traditional Text, but the only absolute foundation for faith is God Himself and His promises (Rom. 10:17).

e. Why didn't God allow more evidence to survive? I believe it is because we are required to walk by faith not by sight. God gives enough information in the record so that we can know that His Word was preserved and that it was brought out of the Dark Ages intact, ready to be broadcast to the ends of the earth; but He also leaves enough out so that the unbeliever can stumble. A believer looking at the record is encouraged and sees the hand of God but is also left to stand on faith, whereas the unbeliever looking at the record sees nothing but confusion and contradiction and stumbles at the Stumblingstone, which is Christ and Faith.

Following is a summary of some of the important ancient versions:

### **Old Latin (Italick)**

a. Old Latin is so called because it predated the Jerome Latin Vulgate adopted by the Roman Catholic Church. It was likely first translated from Greek in roughly 157 A.D. (Scrivener and Miller, *A Plain Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism*, II, 1894, pp. 42, 43).

b. We know only a little about the Old Latin. There are no entire Old Latin New Testaments in existence, only about 60 fragments, dating from the 4th to the 13th centuries (the books of Jude and 2nd and 3rd John are missing entirely). In addition there are quotations of Old Latin from ancient church leaders.

c. There is a dramatic difference between the Old Latin in the West and the Old Latin in Africa.

- (1) The Old Latin in Africa contains a bewildering variety of readings including blatantly corrupt ones.
  - (2) The Old Latin in Italy and Europe, on the other hand, was closer to the Received Text than the Old Latin in Africa (Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 72).
- d. From what we do know, the western Old Latin was close to the Traditional Text (Kenyon, *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts*, pp. 169, 170). Jack Moorman examined the Old Latin by using the apparatus in the 3rd edition United Bible Societies Greek New Testament, and concluded: “The 55 or 60 OL manuscripts which remain for us today show varying amounts of corruption, and frequently disagree among themselves. As such they are but an imperfect reflection of the original OL Text. The OL of North Africa show some of the strange cases of addition and subtraction associated with the so-called Western Text, while those of Europe are generally favourable to the Traditional Text. The Old Latin supports the Traditional Text against Aleph-B by about 2-1 [2340-1252]. If the cut-off date is moved back to 500 AD, we have 712-371. While the one pre-400 manuscripts give 137-60 support to the text underlying the King James Bible. ... Augustine of Hippo (N. Africa, died 430) is clear as to which he thought was the best: ‘Now among the translations themselves the Italian [Italia] is to be preferred to the others, for it keeps closer to the words without prejudice to clarity of expression’” (Moorman, *A Closer Look*, pp. 28-30).
- e. The Old Latin continued to be used by Christians separated from Rome, particularly the Waldenses and Albigenses, until the 13th century.
- (1) “Some [old Latin manuscripts] held their ground and continued to be copied down to the 12th and even the 13th century. Codex C (Ephraemi) is an example of this; it is a manuscript of the 12th century, but as Professor Burkitt has pointed out (*Texts and Studies*, IV, ‘Old Latin,’ 11) ‘IT CAME FROM LANGUEDOC, THE COUNTRY OF THE ALBIGENSES. Only among heretics isolated from the rest of Western Christianity could an Old Latin text have been written at so late a period’” (“Latin Version, The Old,” *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*). Note that the term “heretic” here simply means one that was so regarded by the Roman Catholic Church.
  - (2) “... the older Latin remained popular for centuries. German Christians still quoted from these versions in the ninth century; the English and Spaniards in the tenth; and in the French province of Languedoc the Old Latin Psalter was still in use in the twelfth century. THE OLD LATIN VERSIONS WERE USED LONGEST BY THE WESTERN CHRISTIANS WHO WOULD NOT BOW TO THE AUTHORITY OF ROME--e.g., the Donatists; the Irish in Ireland, Britain, and the continent; the Albigenses, etc.” (Melanthon Jacobus, *Roman Catholic and Protestant Bibles Compared*, 2nd edition 1908, p. 200, note 15).

(3) “Commentators such as Aelfric and Dunstan in the tenth century employed [the old Latin translations] as the basis of their commentaries” (Henry Wheeler Robinson, *Ancient Versions of the English Bible*, 1940, p. 116).

f. Dr. Frederick Nolan (1784-1864) spent 28 years tracing the history of the Old Latin version of Europe. In 1815 he published his findings in *An Inquiry into the Integrity of the Greek Vulgate or Received Text of the New Testament, in which the Greek manuscripts are newly classed, the integrity of the Authorised Text vindicated, and the various readings traced to their origin*. Nolan concluded that the Waldensian translations were based on the Old Latin and that they represent a pure form of Scripture passed down independently of Rome. “The circumstance is at present mentioned, as the author thence formed a hope, that some remains of the primitive Italick version might be found in the early translations made by the Waldenses, who were the lineal descendants of the Italick Church; and who have asserted their independence against the usurpations of the Church of Rome, and have ever enjoyed the free use of the Scriptures. In the search to which these considerations have led the author, his fondest expectations have been fully realized. It has furnished him with abundant proof on that point to which his inquiry was chiefly directed; as it has supplied him with the unequivocal testimony of a truly apostolical branch of the primitive church, that the celebrated text of the heavenly witnesses [1 John 5:7] was adopted in the version which prevailed in the Latin Church, previously to the introduction of the modern Vulgate” (Nolan, *Integrity of the Greek Vulgate*, pp. xvii, xviii).

### **Syriac Peshitta**

- a. This translation is from Syria, which was the home of the famous missionary church at Antioch (Acts 13).
- b. It is very ancient, perhaps going back to the time of the apostles. “Bishop Ellicott in 1870 wrote, ‘It is no stretch of imagination to suppose that portions of the Peshitta might have been in the hands of St. John’” (Jack Moorman, *Modern Bibles the Dark Secret*, p. 30). The Syrian Orthodox churches still use the Peshitta, even in some parts of southern India, and according to their tradition, the Peshitta was actually translated by Mark or Jude.
- c. There are about 350 ancient manuscripts of the Syriac Peshitta and they represent the Traditional Text.
- d. The Peshitta contains 22 books in the N.T. Missing are 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, Jude, and Revelation. The missing books are found in the Philoxenian Syriac version that was produced in 508 A.D. for Philoxenus, bishop of Mabbug, by his assistant Polycarp. “In 616 this version was re-issued, or perhaps revised, by Thomas of Harkel, who likewise was bishop of Habbug. The Philoxenian-Harclean version included the five books which the Peshitta omits...” (Edward Hills, *The King James Bible Defended*, p. 119).

- e. The history and date of the Peshitta has been revised by modern textual critics. “The Peshitta Syriac version, which is the historic Bible of the whole Syrian Church, agrees closely with the Traditional Text found in the vast majority of the Greek New Testament manuscripts. Until about one hundred years ago it was almost universally believed that the Peshitta originated in the 2nd century and hence was one of the oldest New Testament versions. Hence because of its agreement with the Traditional Text the Peshitta was regarded as one of the most important witnesses to the antiquity of the Traditional Text. In more recent times, however, naturalistic critics have tried to nullify this testimony of the Peshitta by denying that it is an ancient version. Burkitt (1904), for example, insisted that the Peshitta did not exist before the 5th century but ‘was prepared by Rabbula, bishop of Edessa (the capital of Syria) from 411-435 A.D., and published by his authority.’ Burkitt’s theory was once generally accepted, but now scholars are realizing that the Peshitta must have been in existence before Rabbula’s episcopate...” (Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, 4th edition, p. 173).
- f. The following refutation of this theory is summarized from Jack Moorman. (See also Burgon and Miller, *The Traditional Text*, pp. 135-147; and Edward Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, pp. 173-174).
- (1) There is not a trace of such a thing in Syrian ecclesiastical history. As Arthur Voobus, an authority in this field, writes, ‘... this kind of reconstruction of textual history is pure fiction without a shred of evidence to support it’ (*Early Versions of the New Testament*, Estonian Theological Society, 1954, see pp. 90-97).
  - (2) Further, this position is contrary to established facts. In Rabbula’s day a massive split occurred in the Syrian Church. The opposing sides were known as the Nestorians and Monophysites (led by Rabbula). Yet, both sides regarded the Peshitta as their authoritative Bible. It is impossible to believe that the side bitterly opposed to Rabbula should at the same time embrace unanimously his alleged revision of the Scriptures. Further, such a unanimous acceptance by both parties in the early 400’s argues powerfully for the Peshitta’s early origin.
  - (3) Regarding the two sole extant manuscripts of the so-called Old Syrian text. They are not all that close to each other. One denies the virgin birth of Christ in Matthew 1:16. Nor do they lend particularly convincing support to the Alexandrian Text. In fact, they contain a significant number of Received Text readings. They are merely corrupted copies, all but ignored by the Syrian church, yet with the Received Text base still discernible.
- g. Jack Moorman analyzed the Peshitta Syriac using the sources commonly available, being the apparatus in Tischendorf’s Greek New Testament and in the Nestle Aland 26th edition. He concluded that the Peshitta supports the Traditional text 237 times over against 74 times for the Alexandrian text (Moorman, *A Closer Look*, p. 39). (Similar figures were found for

the Harclean Syriac.) (The Peshitta follows the Latin in omitting “God” from 1 Timothy 3:16.)

- h. What about the Old Syriac, the Sinaitic and the Curetonian? “Textual criticism would have us believe that two manuscripts discovered in the latter half of the 19th century represent the ‘Old Syriac,’ the ‘primal’ version of the Syrian Church from whence the Peshitta is only a revision. ... It is hard to think of a less promising locality for a Peshitta ‘replacement’ to be found than the monastery dedicated to St. Mary Deipara in the Nitrian Desert of Egypt [where the Curetonian Syriac was discovered]! But this was the source of the bundle of manuscripts William Cureton of the British Museum examined back in 1842. Among them was a MS of the Gospels in a hitherto unknown Syriac text. Metzger describes the ‘stampede’: ‘As soon as the text of the leaves was made available to scholars, it became obvious that the newly found version was a rival claimant to the priority of the Peshitta version. In fact, Cureton went so far as to suppose that in this version he had discovered the original of St. Matthews Gospel (*The Text of the New Testament*, p. 37)!!! A second ‘Old Syriac’ MS of the Gospels [the Sinaitic] was found near the close of the century in St. Catherines Monastery at Mount Sinai (also the home of Codex Aleph). It was a palimpsest, with the Gospel text having been erased in the 8th century, and twelve ‘Lives of Female Saints’ written in its place. What does that say about 8th century opinion concerning ‘a rival claimant to the Peshitta’? ... In fact both are but another example of that small group of early MSS which through the influence of Alexandria have been stripped of substantial doctrinal content. ... The Sinaitic [Syriac] in Matthew 1:16 denies the Virgin Birth: ‘Joseph, to whom was betrothed Mary the virgin, begot Jesus who is called the Christ.’ These are the only two ‘clear’ examples of the so-called Old Syriac to be found, and Metzger’s attempt to explain this scarcity in comparison to the hundreds of Peshitta manuscripts betrays how weak the position is (Ibid., pp. 45-48). In fact, Aland now admits ‘that the Old Syriac ... derives not from the II century but from the IV century’ (NA-26, p. 54). But, keep in mind how necessary this ‘Old Syriac exercise’ has been for Textual Criticism: a 2nd century Peshitta completely undermines their theory of early priority going to the Aleph-B Text” (Moorman, *A Closer Look*, pp. 34, 35).

### **Latin Vulgate**

- a. The Latin Vulgate was based on the work of Jerome (340-420), who was called upon by Damasus, the Bishop of Rome (who was already exalting himself above his fellows and calling himself the Pope), to produce a standard Latin Bible. This was completed between A.D. 383 and 405.
- b. Jerome rejected old Latin texts that differed from the Eusebius text, which he had borrowed from the heretic Origen, and thus perpetuated some textual corruptions in his version. Eusebius of Caesarea (270-340) collected the writings of Origen and promoted his erroneous teachings. “Whatever proof exists that Origen and his school deteriorated the correctness of the text, it is to the same extent clear that Eusebius accepted and perpetuated

that injury” (*Discussions of Robert Lewis Dabney*, I, p. 387). Jerome “was brought up with a dislike for the vulgar [common] edition of the Greek, and with a predilection for the corrected text of Eusebius; having imbibed an early partiality for this edition, through Gregory of Nazianzum“ (Frederick Nolan, *An Inquiry into the Integrity of the Greek Vulgate*, 1815, p. 151). “From the text of Hesychius, it is probable Eusebius derived most of the peculiar readings of Origen, which he adopted in his edition: having here found them incorporated in the sacred text, while the testimony of Origen became sufficient authority for him to retain them as genuine” (Nolan, pp. 60, 61).

- c. What was Damasus’ motive in producing the Vulgate? “A man has to be more than a little naïve to believe the main reason Pope Damasus commissioned Jerome (in 383) to produce a new Latin Bible, was his concern over the differing Old Latin texts. ... Of course, the Pope’s chief concern was that there be a new translation which in format (inclusion of the Apocrypha) and text was more suitable to the rising power of the Roman Church. Nor should too much weight be given the idea that Jerome was ‘an independent scholar unfettered by the structure of the Church.’ In fact, during the year immediately before the translation work began, he was the Pope’s secretary at Rome! And Jerome certainly leaves no doubt in his preface as to what his first motivation for the work was: ‘The command laid upon him by Damasus, the Supreme Pontiff’” (Jack Moorman, *A Closer Look: Early Manuscripts and the Authorized Version*, 1990, p. 31).
- d. In spite of its “official” status in Rome, the Jerome Latin translation was not well received in its day and did not replace the Old Latin for a long time. “Notwithstanding the high reputation of Jerome ... it was but slowly adopted by the Western Churches, which still persevered in retaining the primitive version” (Nolan, *Inquiry into the Integrity of the Greek Vulgate*, p. 152). “Jerome was reviled throughout the West for his labors, and ... it was not until after Gregory the Great had given it his formal approval (about 600 A.D.) that his recension came into general use in the Roman Church” (Henry Vedder, *Our New Testament: How Did We Get It?* 1908, p. 297). As we have already seen, separated Christians kept the old Latin versions. Indeed, Jerome’s Latin Bible was not given its familiar label ‘Vulgate’ (implying common use) until the thirteenth century” (Harry Frank, *The Bible through the Ages*, 1967, p. 138).
- e. The Vulgate had a wide influence throughout the Dark Ages. The Catholic Church used it, but so did many non-Catholic believers. It was the basis for many versions in other languages during the Dark Ages, such as the first English Bible translated by John Wycliffe in 1384. (I have proven this through an extensive textual study of the Wycliffe New Testament.)
- f. The Vulgate is a partway text, more akin to the Byzantine Greek than to the Alexandrian, but containing corruptions, such as the omission of “God” in 1 Timothy 3:16.
- g. At the same time the Latin Vulgate contained certain features that were consistent across the



centuries. For one, it contained Acts 8:37 and the Trinitarian statement in 1 John 5:7, whereas the Greek Byzantine did not. *Thus God preserved these verses largely in the Latin.* And this was true not only for Rome's Latin Vulgate, but also for the Latin and other versions used by the Waldenses, Albigenses, Lollards, pre-Reformation Anabaptists, and other separatist Christians. At the time of the Protestant Reformation in the 16th century, when the pure text was recovered from its venture through the Dark Ages, the Reformation editors understood that the Greek Byzantine text needed to be modified by the Latin in a few places.

### **Georgian**

- a. The Georgians, of a mountainous district between the Black and Caspian seas, were evangelized from Armenia in the early fourth century, and Kurt and Barbara Aland theorize that the first Georgian translation, called Old Georgian (geo1), was made from the Armenian, which in turn was allegedly based on "old" Syriac (*The Text of the New Testament*, p. 205). (The Armenian was first made in the 4th century.) The Georgian was later revised by "a Greek text which was made after the separation from the Armenian church in the early seventh century and has left extensive traces" (*The Text of the New Testament*, pp. 205, 209). This is called geo2 in the UBS Greek N.T. critical apparatus.
- b. The extant Georgian manuscripts represent the Traditional Text. For example, 1 Timothy 3:16 reads "God was manifest in the flesh."

### **Gothic**

- a. This influential translation was a missionary Bible. "During the 2nd and 3rd centuries the Goths came from the wilds of Scandinavia into the plains of southeastern Europe, north of the Lower Danube and west of the Black Sea. From here they made frequent raids into the rumbling remains of the Roman Empire, and eventually invaded Rome itself in A.D. 410. Given their warlike nature, Augustine reflected the general feeling of thankfulness that the Goths had been Christianized before the sack of Rome. Earlier, in one of their forays into Cappadocia, Asia Minor, Christian captives were brought back and settled in Dacia (Romania). Among these were the grandparents of Ulfilas (little wolf), the 'Apostle of the Goths.' Ulfilas' great accomplishment was to translate the Old and New Testaments into the language of the very people who deported his forebears. The work (about A.D. 350) necessitated the adaptation of Greek and Latin characters into the first Gothic alphabet. Thus, he was the forerunner of the many missionaries who had first to create an alphabet before translation work on the Bible itself could begin. His translation was taken directly from the kind of Greek manuscripts found in the vast majority today. This witnesses powerfully to the fact that in 350 there were many Traditional Text MSS, and that these had long held a place of esteem among God's people. Ulfilas' roots in Asia Minor should also be noted here. The path from Antioch, to Asia Minor, to the world beyond was the route of the God-honoured Text" (Jack Moorman, *A Closer Look*, p. 45).

- b. Was Ulfilas a heretic? “The one shadow over this happy account is the oft repeated inference that ‘in theology, Ulfilas was hospitable to Arianism, or semi-Arianism’ (Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, pp. 376, 77). Except of course in the more obvious cases, this kind of charge should not be accepted unless given with clear evidence (which Metzger and others I have before me have not given). We cannot go into the case of Ulfilas here, but only to point out that Rome has long used this epithet against men who had absolutely nothing to do with Arianism” (Moorman, *Ibid.*, p. 45).
- c. The Gothic version was widely used. “About a century after the death of Ulfilas, the Ostrogothic chief Theodoric invaded northern Italy and founded a mighty empire, the Visigoths being already in possession of Spain. Since the use of Ulfilas’ version can be traced among the Goths of both countries, IT MUST HAVE BEEN THE VERNACULAR BIBLE OF A LARGE PORTION OF EUROPE. Many manuscripts of the version were certainly produced during the fifth and sixth centuries in the writing schools of northern Italy and elsewhere, but only eight copies, most of them quite fragmentary, have survived. ... The Ostrogothic kingdom of Italy was of relatively brief duration (A.D. 488-554), and by the middle of the sixth century it was overthrown, succumbing to the power of the eastern Roman Empire. The survivors left Italy, and the Gothic language disappeared leaving scarcely a trace” (emphasis added) (Bruce Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, pp. 377, 78).
- d. Very little evidence remains of the Gothic. “Of this version six manuscripts are still extant” (Hills, p. 120). These are largely palimpsests, in which the original Gothic was scraped off and something else was written on the parchment. To recover the original reading is obviously a very difficult and imperfect process.
- e. What is known of the Gothic version demonstrates that it is representative of the Traditional Text. “‘The type of text represented in it,’ Kenyon (1912) tells us, ‘is for the most part that which is found in the majority of Greek manuscripts’” (Edward Hills, pp. 174, 175). Jack Moorman analyzed the Gothic using the apparatus in the Nestle Aland 26th edition Greek New Testament (which is based on the 1908 edition of W. Streitberg). He concluded: “Our chief concern is to what extent the remaining MSS have departed from the original Gothic through influence of the Vulgate. They support the AV by nearly 3-1, but there is reason to believe that the margin in the original would have been much greater” (*A Closer Look*, p. 46).
- f. The same results were obtained in an analysis by Justin Savino. He wrote to me on Oct. 23, 2004: “The home page <<http://www.wulfila.be/gothic/manuscripts/>> has much on the subject of the Gothic version and it is from here that I got my Gothic Bible. The results are close to a 3:1 ratio TR: Non-TR readings. There are 32 pro-TR readings to 11 non-TR. The text is most notably missing the Pericope of adultery and the change from ‘God’ to ‘he’ in 1 Tim 3:16.”

## Slavonic

- a. The translation of the Slavonic Bible was begun in the 9th century by two brothers, Cyril Constantine (d. 869) and Methodius (d. 885), who were missionaries to the “half savage” Slavonians. They were from the Byzantine Greek empire, which prior to the schism from Rome in 1054 was “being revitalized by successful missions among the Russians, Bulgars, and Slavs” (*Byzantine Empire*, <http://www.crystalinks.com/byzantine.html>). Cyril and Methodius invented an alphabet, called Cyrillic, and began the translation. Kurt and Barbara Aland claim that at first only lectionaries were produced, then the Gospels in the 10th century and the rest of the New Testament by the 12th century, but they admit it “may have been translated much earlier” (*The Text of the New Testament*, p. 212). The invention of the alphabet and the publication of books in Slavonian resulted in the spread of literacy and in the Christianization, at least, of many Slavonians. It is difficult now to tell to what extent these missionaries preached a saving gospel of grace as opposed to a sacramental gospel. We do know that the desire to produce Bibles in indigenous languages was not characteristic of sacramental missionaries. Not only did Roman Catholic missionaries *not* produce native translations themselves, they did everything they could to hinder those who did produce such translations.
- b. According to *McClintock & Strong* “The Byzantine text ... was the original from which the Slavonic version was made” (see *McClintock & Strong*, “Byzantine Recension”). Kurt and Barbara Aland say, “The base from which the Old Church Slavonic was translated has not been determined (the Russian Orthodox Church claims divine inspiration for it), but most probably it was made from Greek manuscripts of the Byzantine Imperial text type” (Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, 2nd edition, p. 212). The Slavonic reads, “God was manifest in the flesh,” in 1 Timothy 3:16.

## Romaunt or Occitan

The Romaunt or Occitan New Testaments were used by the Waldenses and date back to the 12th century. Romaunt was the language of the troubadours and men of letters in the Dark Ages. It was the predecessor of French and Italian. The Romaunt Bibles were small and plain, designed for missionary work. “This version was widely spread in the south of France, and in the cities of Lombardy. It was in common use among the Waldenses of Piedmont, and it was no small part, doubtless, of the testimony borne to truth by these mountaineers to preserve and circulate it” (J. Wylie, *History of Protestantism*, vol. 1, chapter 7, “The Waldenses”). The Romaunt New Testaments contained the Trinitarian statement in 1 John 5:7.

### 3. The evidence from quotations of ancient “Church Fathers” to the Traditional Text

The third realm of testimony to the original text of the New Testament is found in quotations from the writings of early church leaders.

### Introductory Thoughts about the “Church Fathers”

- a. The term “church fathers” is a misnomer that was derived from the Catholic Church’s false doctrine of hierarchical church polity. These men were not “fathers” of the churches in any scriptural sense and did not have any true authority beyond their individual assemblies; they were merely church leaders from various places who have left a record of their faith in writing. But the Roman Catholic Church exalted men to authority beyond the bounds designated by Scripture, making them “bishops” and “fathers” over the churches located within entire regions, and this unscriptural terminology (“church fathers”) has been adopted even by Protestants and many Baptists.
- b. The writings of “church fathers” are grouped into four divisions: Apostolic Fathers (second century), Ante-Nicene Fathers (second and third centuries), Nicene Fathers (fourth century), and Post-Nicene Fathers (fifth century). Nicene refers to the Council of Nicaea in A.D. 325 that dealt with the problem of Arianism and affirmed the doctrine of Christ’s deity. Thus, the Ante-Nicene Fathers are so named because they lived in the century before this council, and the Post-Nicene, because they lived in the century following the council.
- c. Much more could be said about the “church fathers,” but we are getting off the subject. Regardless of the theological problems associated with ancient church leaders, the fact remains that the quotations they give from the Scripture is an important testimony to the original text, and taken as a whole the quotations from these ancient writings favor the Traditional Text of the Reformation Bibles.

### The Testimony of the Scripture Quotations of the “Church Fathers”

- a. Consider the testimony of John Burgon.
  - (1) Burgon’s research into New Testament quotations from ancient church writings has never been equaled. His unpublished work on the quotations from ancient “fathers,” which resides in the British Museum, consists of 16 thick manuscript volumes containing references to 86,489 quotations. Burgon’s research established that the Traditional Reformation Text was the prominent text of the early centuries.
  - (2) Some 4,383 of these 86,000 quotations are from 76 writers who died before the year 400 A.D. Jack Moorman observes: “Edward Miller carried on the work after Burgon’s death and put the material in a tabulated form showing the times a Church Father witnesses for and against the Received Text. He found the Received Text had the greater support by 2,630 to 1,753 or 3 to 2. Keeping in mind the Alexandrian and Western localities of these 76 Fathers, we have here quite a strong majority for the Received Text. Had the quotations of the Eastern Fathers been available, all indications are that the support would have been quite overwhelming. But the above

evidence shows clearly also that there was a struggle over the text of Scripture in those early centuries. But, there was a clear winner!" (*Modern Bibles the Dark Secret*).

b. Consider the testimony of Dr. Edward F. Hills, who checked Burgon's research and confirmed its accuracy. "In regard to my references to the Church Fathers, I am sure that if you examine the notes to my *King James Defended* and my *Believing Bible Study* you will see that I have taken care to look up all the Burgon's references in the most modern editions available. During the years 1950-55, I spent many weeks at this task. ... In fact, the newer German editions of the Church Fathers differ little from those of the 17th and 18th centuries. Certainly not enough to affect Burgon's arguments" (Letter from Edward Hills to Theodore Letis, February 15, 1980, as quoted in Letis, "Edward Freer Hills Contribution to the Revival of the Ecclesiastical Text," unpublished M.T.S. Thesis, Emory University, 1987). Thus we see the error of the popular argument that Burgon's research was defective because it was not based on the modern critical editions. The critical editions do not change the picture in any substantial manner.

c. Two specific examples of quotations that support the Traditional Text:

(1) Ignatius (d. 107 AD) was a pastor of the great missionary church in Antioch. It is thought that Ignatius knew some of the apostles personally. He was martyred for his faith by being fed to wild beasts in Rome. The Scripture quotations from his surviving writings represent the Traditional Text. For example, he referred to "God existing in flesh" (Ignatius to the Ephesians, 7:1) and "God manifest in human form" (Ignatius to the Ephesians, 19:1). This is an obvious allusion to the important testimony of 1 Timothy 3:16 ("God was manifest in the flesh") as it stands in the Reformation texts and versions.

(2) Polycarp (70 to 155 AD), the pastor of Smyrna, was martyred for his faith by being burned at the stake.

(a) He refers to the important theological test in 1 John 4:3 as follows: "For every one who shall not confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is antichrist..." (Polycarp to the Philippians, 7:1). The modern critical text removes the words "Christ is come in the flesh" and reads, "and every spirit that confesseth not Jesus is not of God." Thus Polycarp confirms the test as we have it in the Greek Received Text and the King James Bible as opposed to the almost meaningless test of the modern versions (even a Jehovah's Witness or a Mormon will "confess Jesus"). Thomas Holland observes that both Lightfoot and Wake confirm that Polycarp is quoting 1 John 4:3 (Lightfoot's *The Apostolic Fathers* and Wake's *The Lost Books of the Bible and the Forgotten Books of Eden*).

- (b) Another example is Polycarp's support for the TR reading of "the judgment seat of Christ" from Romans 14:10 as opposed to the modern version reading of "judgment seat of God" (Polycarp's epistle to the Philippians, 6:2).

## **Conclusion**

The textual evidence through the centuries overwhelmingly supports the Traditional text underlying the Reformation Bibles as opposed to the Alexandrian text underlying the modern versions. After devoting much of his life to investigating the history of the Bible with the objective of determining what biblical text has come down through the centuries, John Burgon concluded:

"Call this text Erasmian or Complutensian,--the text of Stephens, or of Beza, or of the Elzevirs,--call it the 'Received,' or the *Traditional Greek Text*, or whatever name you please;--the fact remains, that a text *has* come down to us which is attested by a general consensus of ancient Copies, ancient Fathers, ancient Versions" (*The Revision Revised*, p. 269).

This testimony cannot be taken lightly. Burgon was a truly eminent textual scholar. Called "that grand old scholar" by Frederick Scrivener, Burgon was a brilliant man, fluent in many languages, and he traveled throughout Europe and parts of the Middle East collating ancient manuscripts; he personally examined the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus. He did probably the most extensive personal textual research into the quotations of "church fathers" that has ever been accomplished.

John Burgon was not only a great scholar; he believed in the absolute infallibility of biblical inspiration.

In my estimation, no man has come up to Burgon's standard in these two realms since his day. I am not in a position to reproduce Burgon's textual researches. I don't have the skills that Burgon had. I have done my best to test the conclusions of the textual scholars using every resource at hand, but at the end of the day I must lean somewhat upon their research. I accept Burgon's conclusion that the Traditional Text has come down to us attested by a general consensus of ancient Copies, ancient Fathers, ancient Versions. When the strange theories of modern textual criticism are rejected, it is evident that the Traditional Reformation text has far more historic authority than the modern critical text.

# QUESTIONS PERTAINING TO TEXTUAL CRITICISM

## WHAT IS MODERN TEXTUAL CRITICISM?

### ANSWER:

1. Textual criticism is the application of modern theories to the recovery of ancient documents. The theories of biblical textual criticism were initially developed over a period of roughly 100 years beginning the late 1700s. During that introductory period its popularity was limited to textual scholars, for the most part, while it was strongly resisted by Bible believers in general. It began to be popularized with the publication of the Westcott-Hort Greek New Testament in 1881. Today modern textual criticism is used in most Bible colleges and seminaries, including in many fundamentalist ones. It is used at Bob Jones University, Central Baptist Theological Seminary, Detroit Baptist College and Seminary, Tennessee Temple University, Liberty University, and many others.

2. Modern textual criticism was devised largely by men who treated the Bible like any other book and who did not believe in the doctrine of Bible preservation or who refused to predicate their textual theories on this doctrine. Consider Karl Lachmann. Bruce Metzger, who exalts Lachmann as one of the most important names in the history of modern textual criticism, admits that Lachmann “ventured to apply to the New Testament the criteria that he had used in editing texts of the classics” (Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 1975, p. xxiii).

3. Modern textual criticism claims that the Greek Received Text that was published in the Protestant Reformation is corrupt and has a special dislike for it.

a. F.J.A. Hort is typical when he described the Received Text as “VILLAINOUS” and “VILE” (*Life and Letters of Fenton John Anthony Hort*, Vol. 1, p. 211). Textual critic Ernest Colwell observed that Hort’s goal was to dethrone the Received Text (Colwell, *Scribal Habits in Early Papyri, The Bible in Modern Scholarship*, Abingdon, 1965, p. 370).

b. Alexander Souter referred to the Received Text as a “SHACKLE” (Souter, *The Text of the New Testament*, 1912, p. 100).

c. Bruce Metzger calls the TR “CORRUPT” and Christian people’s love for it “SUPERSTITIOUS” (Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, 1968, p. 106). He further calls it “DEBASED” and “DISFIGURED” (Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 1975, xxi, xxiii).

d. Barbara Aland called the TR “FLAWED, preserving the text of the New Testament in a

form FULL OF ERRORS” (Barbara Aland, “A Century of New Testament Textual Criticism 1898-1998,” <http://www.bibleresourcecenter.org/vsItemDisplay.dsp&objectID=BF4714BC-53F6-48EB-94FEA6BF73FD88A5&method=display>).

3. The Greek text produced by modern textual criticism is shorter than the Received New Testament by 2,886 words. Modern textual criticism removes or questions dozens of entire verses (Matt. 17:21; 18:11; 23:14; Mk. 7:16; 9:44, 46; 11:26; 15:28; 16:9-20; Lk. 17:36; 23:17; Jn. 5:4; 7:53-8:11; Acts 8:37; 15:34; 24:7; 28:29; Rom. 16:24; 1 Jn. 5:7). It further removes a significant portion of 147 other verses.

4. Modern textual criticism applies to the Bible the general principles of secular documentary criticism that are applied to ordinary books. “In matters of textual criticism the Bible is to be treated like any other ancient book. No special considerations are to be made concerning its claims of inspiration and preservation” (Westcott and Hort, *The New Testament in the Original Greek*, Introduction and Appendix, 1881).

5. Modern textual criticism favors two Greek manuscripts (Sinaiticus and Vaticanus) and a small number of others of similar character above the majority. This handful of Egyptian or Alexandrian (named after Alexandria, Egypt) manuscripts preferred by modern textual critics were called by John Owen in the 17th century “the spurious brood” and by John Burgon in the 19th century the “little handful of suspicious documents.” Since the discovery of the Egyptian papyri in the 20th century, the number of Alexandrian manuscripts has increased; but compared to the vast number that support the Traditional text, they still represent a very tiny minority.

6. The Vaticanus and Sinaiticus (and the other manuscripts which display a similar nature) originated in Egypt, a hotbed of theological heresy. After examining heretical readings in early Egyptian manuscripts, Dr. Edward Hills concluded: “Thus we see that it is unwise in present day translators to base the texts of their modern versions on recent papyrus discoveries or on B (Vaticanus) and Aleph (Sinaiticus). For all these documents come from Egypt, and Egypt during the early Christian centuries was a land in which heresies were rampant. So much was this so that, as Bauer (1934) and van Unnik (1958) have pointed out, later Egyptian Christians seem to have been ashamed of the heretical past of their country and to have drawn a veil of silence across it. This seems to be why so little is known of the history of early Egyptian Christianity. In view, therefore, of the heretical character of the early Egyptian Church, it is not surprising that the papyri, B, Aleph, and other manuscripts which hail from Egypt are liberally sprinkled with heretical readings” (*The King James Version Defended*, p. 134).

7. Vaticanus (Codex B) or Sinaiticus (Codex Aleph), either individually or together, are the source of most of the omissions and glaring changes in the modern versions. Following are a few of these from the Gospels. These readings are still found in the Nestle’s text and the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament and the vast majority of these textual corruptions are followed by the New American Standard Version and the New International Version.



- Matthew 5:22 -- “without a cause” omitted in Aleph and B (thus making Jesus into an evil man because He got angry at times, though never without a cause)
- 6:13 -- “For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen” omitted in Aleph and B
- 9:13 -- “to repentance” omitted in Aleph and B
- 17:21 -- “Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting” omitted in Aleph and B
- 18:11 -- “For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost” omitted in Aleph and B
- 27:34 -- “vinegar” is changed to “wine” in Aleph and B (thus destroying the fulfillment of the prophecy of Psalm 69:21)
- Mark 1:2 -- “the prophets” is changed to “Isaiah the prophet” Aleph, B (thus creating an error in Scripture)
- 2:17 -- “to repentance” omitted in Aleph, B
- 9:29 -- “fasting” omitted in Aleph and B
- 9:44, 46 “Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.” verses omitted in Aleph, B
- 9:45 -- “into the fire that never shall be quenched” omitted in Aleph, B
- 16:9-20 -- entire last 12 verses of Mark’s Gospel omitted in Aleph and B
- Luke 1:28 -- “blessed art thou among women” omitted in Aleph, B
- 2:14 -- “peace, good will toward men” is changed to “peace among men in whom he is well pleased” in Aleph and B
- 4:4 -- “every word of God” omitted in Aleph, B
- 4:8 -- “and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan” omitted in Aleph and B
- 4:18 -- “to heal the brokenhearted” omitted in Aleph, B
- John 3:15 -- “should not perish, but” omitted in Aleph, B
- 4:42 -- “the Christ” omitted in Aleph, B
- 7:8 -- “yet” omitted in Aleph (thus causing Jesus to tell a lie)
- 7:53 - 8:11 -- These 12 verses omitted in Aleph and B

8. The Vaticanus and Sinaiticus contain many readings that denigrate the full deity of Jesus Christ and give evidence that they are representatives of manuscripts that were corrupted by heretics. “The Sabellian and Arian controversies raged in the 3rd and 4th centuries and the copies now held in such high repute among scholars were written in the 4th and 5th centuries. The hostility of these documents to the Trinitarian doctrine impels the mind to the conclusion that their omissions and alterations are not merely the chance errors of transcribers, but the work of a deliberate hand. When we remember the date of the great Trinitarian contest in the Church, and compare it with the supposed date of these documents, our suspicion becomes much more pronounced. ... The so-called oldest codices agree with each other in omitting a number of striking testimonies to the divinity of Christ, and they also agree in other omissions relating to Gospel faith and practice” (Robert Dabney, “The Doctrinal Various Readings of the New Testament Greek,” *Southern Presbyterian Review*, April 1871).

Following are a few examples:

Matthew 19:17 -- “Why callest thou me good?” is changed to “Why do you ask me about what is good?” in both Aleph and B

Luke 23:42 -- “Lord” changed to “Jesus” in Aleph and B, thus destroying this powerful reference to Christ’s deity.

John 1:18 -- “the only begotten son” changed to “the only begotten God” in Aleph and B.

[John Burgon proved that this reading, which appears in only five Greek manuscripts, could be traced to the heretic Valentinus who denied the Godhead of Jesus Christ by making a distinction between the Word and the Son of God (Burgon and Miller, *Causes of Corruption*, pp. 215, 216). “The Gnostics said that Christ was ‘the Beginning,’ the first of God’s creation, and Valentinus referred to Him as ‘the Only-begotten God’ and said that He was the entire essence of all the subsequent worlds (*Aeons*)” (Jay Green, *The Gnostics, the New Versions, and the Deity of Christ*, 1994, p. 74). In the Received Text there is no question that the Word is also the Son and that both are God. The Word is God (Jn. 1:1); the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us (Jn. 1:14); the Word is the Son (Jn. 1:18). By changing Jn. 1:18 to “the only begotten God,” Valentinus and his followers broke the clear association between the Word and the Son.]

---- 1:27 -- “is preferred before me” omitted in Aleph, B

---- 3:13 -- “who is in heaven” omitted in Aleph and B

---- 9:38 -- “Lord, I believe. And he worshipped Him...” omitted in Aleph (thus removing this powerful and incontrovertible confession of Christ as God)

1 Corinthians 15:47 -- “the Lord” omitted in Aleph, B

1 Timothy 3:16 -- “God” is omitted and replaced with “who” in the Sinaiticus (the Vaticanus does not contain this epistle)

1 John 4:3 -- “confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh” changed to “confesseth not Jesus” in B [Every false spirit will “acknowledge Jesus” in a general sense, even Unitarians, Mormons, and Jehovah’s Witnesses, but the spirit of antichrist will not “confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh,” meaning that Jesus Christ is the very Messiah, the very God manifest in the flesh, promised in Old Testament prophecy.]

9. Not only do the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus disagree with the vast majority of other extant manuscripts, but they also disagree with one another in thousands of places! There are 3,036 differences in the Gospels alone, not counting minor errors such as spelling (Herman Hoskier, *Codex B and Its Allies*, vol. II, p. 1). If these two witnesses were put on a witness stand in a court of law, they would be rejected. Not only do they disagree together against the vast majority of other witnesses, but they also disagree with one another as much as they disagree with the majority!

10. Biblical “common sense” informs us that these manuscripts owe their amazing survival to the fact that they are so corrupt. “Nay, who will venture to deny that those codices are indebted for their preservation *solely* to the circumstance, that they were long since recognized as the depositories of Readings which rendered them utterly untrustworthy? ... It must further be admitted, (for this is really not a question of opinion, but a plain matter of fact,) that it is unreasonable to place confidence in such documents” (John Burgon, *The Revision Revised*, pp. 30, 31).

## WHY WE REJECT MODERN TEXTUAL CRITICISM?

**ANSWER:**

### **1. We reject modern textual criticism because its goal is unscriptural.**

a. The goal of modern textual criticism stated:

- (1) Constantine Tischendorf stated the goal of modern textual criticism as “the struggle to REGAIN the original form of the New Testament” (Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 126). This implies, of course, that the original form of the New Testament had been lost prior to the 19th century.
- (2) The very title of Bruce Metzger’s book -- *The New Testament’s Transmission, CORRUPTION, AND RESTORATION* -- describes modern textual criticism’s principle that the Scriptures *were not* divinely preserved, because they must allegedly be recovered after having been lost and corrupted for 1,500 years.

Thus, modern textual criticism is built upon the premise that the original text of the New Testament needed to be restored in the 19th century and it does not claim to be able to do this with certainty.

b. The error of this goal: If this goal is true, then divine preservation is false. In fact, most standard works on textual criticism do not even mention divine preservation. Following are a few examples:

*The New Testament in the Original Greek* (Introduction) by Westcott and Hort (1881)

*The Text of the New Testament* by Kirsopp Lake (1900, 1949)

*Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the Greek New Testament* by Eberhard Nestle (1901)

*The Canon and Text of the New Testament* by Casper Rene Gregory (1907)

*The Text and Canon of the New Testament* by Alexander Souter (1912)

*The Text of the Greek Bible* by F.G. Kenyon (1936, 1975)

*New Testament Manuscript Studies* by Parvis and Wikgren (1950)

*The Text of the New Testament* by Bruce Metzger (1968)

*The Text of the New Testament* by Kurt and Barbara Aland (1981)

### **2. We reject modern textual criticism because its theories are strange and unscriptural.**

**A couple of introductory thoughts:**

a. The principles of modern textual criticism have been in a state of flux for 200 years, and

textual critics pick and choose among these principles as it suits their fancy.

“Driving through Birmingham, England, I passed an ‘establishment’ called ‘The Artful Dodger’. And, frankly, there is not a better way to describe Textual Criticism. It shifts, it turns, it establishes, it overturns, it rewrites, it restates, it examines, it ignores, etc.” -- Jack Moorman, *A Closer Look: Early Manuscripts and the Authorized Version*, p. 9

- b. Therefore, while not all of the following principles are held by any one textual critic, these are standard principles that have been promoted by prominent textual critics.

### **Some of the chief principles of modern textual criticism examined:**

- a. *Modern textual criticism's theory: In matters of textual criticism the Bible is to be treated like any other ancient book.* No special consideration is to be made concerning its claims of inspiration and preservation. “The principles of criticism explained in the foregoing section hold good for all ancient texts preserved in a plurality of documents. In dealing with the text of the New Testament no new principle whatever is needed or legitimate” (Westcott and Hort, *The New Testament in the Original Greek*, vol. 2, Introduction and Appendix, 1881).

*COMMENT:* The Bible cannot be treated like any other book, because it alone has the divine and supernatural element, which holds true not only for its origin but also for its history. Other books were not written by divine inspiration or preserved by divine providence. Other books are not hated by the devil and attacked by false teachers.

- b. *Modern textual criticism's theory: Early Christians were not careful about the text of the New Testament.* “Textual purity, as far as can be judged from the extant literature, attracted hardly an interest. There is no evidence to show that care was generally taken to choose out for transcription the exemplars having the highest claims to be regarded as authentic, if indeed the requisite knowledge and skill were forthcoming” (Westcott and Hort, Introduction to *The New Testament in the Original Greek*, p. 9). “Until the beginning of the fourth century the text of the New Testament developed freely. ... They [scribes] also felt themselves free to make corrections in the text, improving it by their own standards of correctness, whether grammatically, stylistically, or more substantively. This was all the more true of the early period, when the text had not yet attained canonical status...” (Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 69).

*COMMENT:*

- (1) This is a complete denial that the New Testament is the infallibly-inspired and divinely-preserved Word of God, and it flies in the face of what we know about Bible-believing Christians of all ages. Hort was a skeptic when it came to the text of Scripture. We see that Kurt and Barbara Aland paint the same strange picture of the

transmission of the New Testament books.

- (2) This was not the way that true believers treated the New Testament writings. They received the Gospels and epistles as Scripture and were exceedingly careful about how they handled them (i.e., 1 Thess. 2:13). We document this in the book *Faith vs. the Modern Bible Versions*, under Chapter I, section A, “The doctrine of preservation authenticates the traditional Greek New Testament underlying the King James and other Reformation Bibles.”
  - (3) The Spirit of God had put a solemn seal upon the New Testament (Rev. 22:18-19), warning all people against tampering with the Scripture. Only those who had no fear of God would have ignored such a warning.
  - (4) Where do Hort, Aland, and other textual critics get the idea that the early Christians did not care about the New Testament writings and that they treated them haphazardly? This conclusion is based largely on the wretched spiritual condition that existed in Egypt, where the Vaticanus text originated. That area was filled with heretics who had no fear of tampering with the Holy Scriptures and with nominal Christians who had no zeal for God’s Truth. Indeed, it was this type of “Christian” who “felt themselves free to make corrections in the text.” A true, born again believer would never do such a thing. It is the Egyptian manuscripts that are particularly filled with gratuitous and heretical modifications.
  - (5) As for the skill necessary to transmit the New Testament Scriptures in pure form, how much skill is required?
    - (a) The chief requirements are standard literacy and holy carefulness, and the early believers had both of those in full measure.
    - (b) The early churches also had some men of the highest scholastic caliber, such as the apostle Paul.
    - (c) Further, the early churches had something even more important than this, which is the Holy Spirit to enlighten and guide them.
- c. *Modern textual criticism’s theory*: Hort devotes many pages to his theory of Genealogy and Text Families. “All trustworthy restoration of corrupted texts is grounded on the study of their history” (Westcott and Hort, *The New Testament in the Original Greek*, Introduction and Appendix, 1881). Hort claimed that there are four major families of texts: Syrian (Traditional or Byzantine), Western (represented by Codex D), Alexandrian (allegedly an attempt to correct the Western text to the Neutral), and Neutral (allegedly represented by the Vaticanus manuscript and, to a lesser degree, the Sinaiticus). By this means Hort was able to discount the vast majority of extant manuscripts that witness to the Traditional Text and to exalt the tiny number of manuscripts that witness to their favored Egyptian Text.

COMMENT:

- (1) There is no Neutral Text. Modern textual critics since Hort have dropped the neutral category and put Vaticanus and Sinaiticus into the Alexandrian family.
- (2) There is no Western text. Jack Moorman observes: “Codex ‘D’ Bezae is claimed to be the primary representative of this textual family, but -- ‘What we have called the D-text type, indeed, is not so much a text as a congeries of various readings, not descending from any one archetype ... No one MS can be taken as even approximately representing the D-text’ (Kenyon). Colwell observes that the Nestle text (25th edition) denies the existence of the Western text as an identifiable group, saying it is ‘a denial with which I agree.’ Speaking of von Soden’s classification of the Western text, Metzger says, ‘so diverse are the textual phenomena that von Soden was compelled to posit seventeen subgroups.’ And Klijn, speaking of a pure or original western text affirms that ‘such a text did not exist.’” The United Bible Societies Greek New Testament has done away with a symbol for a Western text. The editors of the 4th edition of the UBS Greek N.T. refer to “the so-called Western text” (UBS4, Introduction, p. 5). Kurt and Barbara Aland say, “...the theory of a special ‘Western’ type of the text is improbable from the outset, and even its most passionate proponents never refer to it as ‘Western’ without using quotation marks” (*The Text of the New Testament*, pp. 68, 69).
- (3) Other textual families proposed since Hort have also been discredited. Note this testimony by Kurt and Barbara Aland: “Whatever else may be proposed, especially with reference to the so-called Western, Caesarean, and Jerusalem text types, is theoretical, based on dubious foundations and often built completely in the clouds” (Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 67). It is interesting that the Alands use the same description of these alleged texts (“built completely in the clouds”) as John Burgon did of Westcott and Hort’s theories. In 1964, Kurt Aland said: “These [Alexandrian and Antiochian] are, it seems to me, the only text-types which may be regarded as certain and that only since the fourth century. Everything else is extremely doubtful” (Aland, cited by Eldon Epp, “Decision Points in New Testament Textual Criticism,” *Studies in the Theory and Method of New Testament Textual Criticism*, p. 37).
- (4) There is not even a unified Alexandrian text. Vaticanus and Sinaiticus disagree with one another as much as they disagree with the Traditional Text, more than 3,000 places in the Gospels alone, not counting spelling. John Burgon observed, “It is in fact easier to find two consecutive verses in which these two MSS differ, than two consecutive verses in which they entirely agree.” The papyrus manuscripts, which are also lumped into the Alexandrian category by textual critics, actually have the same kind of mixed text. They disagree with Vaticanus and Sinaiticus and with one another as much as they disagree with the Traditional Text. There is no unified

Alexandrian testimony, just a mass of conflict and confusion. Burgon called it “agreement in disunity.” Wilbur Pickering gives irrefutable evidence of this in *The Identity of the New Testament Text*.

- (5) In reality, the record testifies of only two textual families that have any significant witness through the church age, and that is the Byzantine Greek and the Latin vulgate. I believe the Latin vulgate, for the most part, represents a slight corruption of the Greek Byzantine.
  - (a) The Byzantine Greek text demonstrates a true unity. It is represented by thousands of manuscripts and lectionaries that differ from one another only in small ways. This is admitted by textual critics, and it has been demonstrated that these manuscripts were not copied from one another and that they are not the product of any sort of official or unofficial recension. “With some 85% or more of the 5,000 extant MSS falling into the category of the Received Text, there is in fact only one textual family, the Received. All that remains is so contradictory, so confused, so mixed, that not by the furthest stretch of imagination can they be considered several families of MSS. Rather than face squarely this preponderance of support for the TR, naturalistic scholars with their ingrained bias against that text have found it convenient to talk of three or four families, as if all were basically equals. This was one of the main pillars in the Westcott and Hort theory which enabled them to Construct a new Greek Testament on the fewest possible MSS” (Jack Moorman, *Forever Settled*).
  - (b) The Latin “vulgate” also demonstrates a unity that varies somewhat from the Byzantine in a consistent manner. For example, “God” is typically omitted from 1 Timothy 3:16 in the Latin manuscripts and in those versions that were translated from the Latin.
- (6) As for tracing the lineage of manuscripts, it is impossible to do. We simply do not know the genealogy of the manuscripts. “High time, however, is it to declare that, in strictness, *all this talk about genealogical evidence, when applied to manuscripts is MOONSHINE*. The expression is metaphorical, and assumes that it has fared with MSS. as it fares with the successive generations of a family; and so, to a remarkable extent, no doubt, it has. But then, it happens, unfortunately, *that we are unacquainted with one single instance of a known ms. copied from another known ms. AND PERFORCE ALL TALK ABOUT GENEALOGICAL EVIDENCE, WHERE NO SINGLE STEP IN THE DESCENT CAN BE PRODUCED, IN OTHER WORDS, WHERE NO GENEALOGICAL EVIDENCE EXISTS, IS ABSURD*. The living inhabitants of a village, congregated in the churchyard where the bodies of their forgotten progenitors for 1000 years repose without memorials of any kind, is a faint image of the relation which subsists between extant copies of the Gospels and the sources from which they were derived. That, in either case, there has been repeated mixture is undeniable. But since the parish-register is lost, and not a vestige of

tradition survives, it is idle to pretend to argue on that part of the subject. It may be reasonably assumed, however, that those fifty yeomen, bearing as many Saxon surnames, indicate as many remote ancestors of some sort. That they represent as many families is at least a fact. Further we cannot go. But the illustration is misleading because inadequate. Assemble rather an Englishman, an Irishman, a Scot, a Frenchman, a German, a Spaniard, a Russian, Pole, an Hungarian, an Italian, a Greek, a Turk. From Noah these twelve are all confessedly descended. But if they are silent, and you know nothing whatever about their antecedents, your remarks about their respective 'genealogies' must needs prove as barren as Dr. Hort's about the 'genealogies' of copies of Scripture. *'The factor of Genealogy,' in short, in this discussion, represents a mere phantom of the brain. It is the name of an imagination, not a fact*" (John Burgon, *The Revision Revised*).

- d. *Modern textual criticism's theory: The primary basis for the "recovery" of the Greek text should be firstly, Vaticanus, and secondarily Sinaiticus.* "B [Vaticanus] far exceeds all other documents in neutrality of text. ... It is our belief (1) that the readings of Aleph B [Sinaiticus and Vaticanus] should be accepted as the true readings until strong internal evidence is found to the contrary, and (2) that no readings of Aleph B can safely be rejected absolutely, though it is sometimes right to place them only on an alternative footing, especially where they receive no support from the Versions or the Fathers. ... The fullest comparison does but increase the conviction that their preeminent relative purity is likewise approximately absolute, a true approximate reproduction of the text of the autographs" (Westcott and Hort, Introduction to *The New Testament in the Original Greek*, pp. 171, 225, 276).

Before we analyze this theory, we should note that the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus are still given priority by modern textual critics. The editors of the New International Version admit that they prefer the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus manuscripts: "... in most cases the readings found in older manuscripts, particularly the great Greek uncials Vaticanus and Sinaiticus of the fourth century AD, are to be preferred over those found in later manuscripts, such as those that reflect the TR [Received Text]" (Ronald Youngblood, *The Making of a Contemporary Translation*, p. 152). Kurt and Barbara Aland call the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus "the two important uncials" (*The Text of the New Testament*, p. 292). They call Vaticanus "by far the most significant of the uncials" (*Ibid.*, p. 109). When the new versions say a certain word or verse is not found in the "oldest and best manuscripts," they are referring primarily to Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus, together with a handful of other manuscripts, largely fragmentary, that exhibit similar Egyptian readings.

*COMMENT:*

- (1) Westcott and Hort preferred the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus manuscripts even though they are joined by only a handful of other Egyptian manuscripts in their witness



against the thousands of other extant Greek manuscripts, lectionaries, and versions.

- (2) They ignored the corrupt nature of the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus. After a careful examination of these manuscripts, textual scholar John Burgon concluded that they “exhibit the most shamefully mutilated texts which are anywhere to be met with...” and they are “the most scandalously corrupt copies extant.” We have given some of the evidence for this conclusion.
  - (3) In following Vaticanus and Sinaiticus, modern textual critics are ignoring divine preservation. If this theory is true and if the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus and the handful of Egyptian manuscripts represent the apostolic text, it means that the apostolic New Testament text was discarded by the churches for 1,500 years.
  - (4) Modern textual critics do not pay enough attention to the location of these manuscripts, coming, as they do, from Egypt, that hotbed of heresy. The most reasonable position is to consider the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus corrupt manuscripts that were created in the midst of heresy and rightly rejected by the churches.
  - (5) Modern textual critics have no fear of borrowing from Rome. They make nothing of the fact that Rome brought the Vaticanus to light during the Reformation in an attempt to confuse the biblical issue and to bring disrepute to the Protestant Bibles.
- e. *Modern textual criticism’s theory: The Received Text is the product of an official ecclesiastical revision.* “The Syrian Text must in fact be the result of a ‘Recension’ ... performed deliberately by Editors, and not merely by Scribes. ... It was probably initiated by the distracting and inconvenient currency of at least three conflicting Texts in the same region. ... Each Text may perhaps have found a Patron in some leading personage or see, and thus have seemed to call for a conciliation of rival claims. ... The growing diversity and confusion of Greek Texts led to an authoritative Revision at Antioch:--which (2) was then taken as a standard for a similar authoritative Revision of the Syriac text:--and (3) was itself at a later time subjected to a second authoritative Revision. ... [the final process having been] apparently completed by 350 or thereabouts” (Westcott and Hort, Introduction to *The New Testament in the Original Greek*, pp. 133, 134, 137).

“Nearly all text critics assume that between 250 and 350 A.D. there was a revision of the Greek text which produced the traditional text” (A.H. McNeile, *An Introduction to the Study of the New Testament*, p. 428).

*COMMENT:*

- (1) The theory of recension is how Westcott and Hort accounted for the dominance of the Received Text. “The theories of Westcott and Hort very largely shaped the text adopted by the 1881 Revisers and influenced practically every subsequent

translation on both sides of the Atlantic. Their problem was how to account for the dominance of the 'Majority Text' from the 4th century onwards. Codex B and Codex Aleph were both written in the 4th century, and if they present the text in its purest form, how was it that this remained unrecognised until the middle of the nineteenth century? ... Their theory was that there must have been some kind of deliberate but misguided editorial revision of the Greek Text, probably in Syria, possibly in Antioch, perhaps during the latter part of the 4th century ... According to this theory, this edited text was wrongly permitted to eclipse the 'pure' text exhibited by B and Aleph--until these documents were rehabilitated in the nineteenth century" (Terence Brown, *What Is Wrong with the Modern Versions of the Holy Scriptures?* Trinitarian Bible Society, London, England, Article No. 41).

- (2) There is no historical evidence that the Traditional Text was produced by a Recension. "The weakness of Westcott and Hort's theory of a 4th century Syrian revision which resulted in the substitution of the majority text for the B Aleph text is that such a revision is unknown to history. The whole scheme rests upon a supposition for which there is no historical evidence, and consists largely in making dogmatic assertions based upon uncertainties" (Terence Brown, *What Is Wrong with the Modern Versions of the Holy Scriptures?* Trinitarian Bible Society, Article No. 41). John Burgon, who knew as much about the history of the Bible text as any man in the last two centuries, observed: "They assume everything. They prove nothing. ... the utter absence of one particle of evidence, traditional or otherwise, that it ever did take place, must be held to be fatal to the hypothesis that it did. It is simply incredible that an incident of such magnitude and interest would leave no trace of itself in history" (Burgon, *The Revision Revised*, pp. 264, 293). Burgon called Hort's theory "an excursion into cloud-land; a dream, and nothing more" and "mere moonshine." Frederic Cook was just as blunt: "The supposition [of a Lucian Recension] is a manifest absurdity" (*The Revised Version of the First Three Gospels Considered*, 1882, p. 202).
- (3) Hort called the Traditional Text *Syrian* or *Antiochian* because it was the predominant text of that area in the 4th century, which is actually a loud statement in favor of its apostolic authenticity. Hort said, "The fundamental Text of late extant Greek MSS. generally is beyond all question identical with the dominant Antiochian or Graeco-Syrian Text of the second half of the fourth century" (*The New Testament in the Original Greek*, Introduction, p. 92). It is unreasonable to think that the church at Antioch would look to any other realm in textual matters or would have countenanced any sort of "recension" that "conflated" three competing texts. In fact, it is unreasonable to believe that it would have allowed the cherished apostolic text to become corrupted in a mere three centuries. "Why should the great apostolic and mission-minded church at Antioch send to Alexandria or any other center for Scripture copies by which to correct her own? The Church at Antioch, conscious of her heritage and the excellence of her own first copies of the Scriptures, would have

little reason to consider the resources of others superior. .... Antioch may well have been the prime source of the earliest copies of most of the New Testament Scriptures for newly established churches. ... It might appear more logical to reason that if Antioch would send anywhere for copies of New Testament Scriptures in order to purify its own text, it would most likely send to Ephesus, Galatia, Colosse, Thessalonica, Philippi, Corinth, and Rome in order to acquire more perfect copies of the epistles originally sent to these locales. Another reason for questioning Antioch's dependence upon manuscripts whose provenance was Alexandria is the difference of attitude toward Scripture and its interpretation which existed between the theological schools of the two cities. Beginning as early as Theophilus (died before 188) who, as an advocate of the literal interpretation of Scripture, is considered a forerunner of the 'School of Antioch,' Antioch developed a school of literal interpretation which was almost diametrically opposed to the 'School of Alexandria' with its principles of allegorical interpretation. This makes it difficult to believe that Antioch would look to Alexandria for help in either the earliest period or later when the differences between the schools became even more marked" (Harry Sturz, *The Byzantine Text-type*, pp. 104, 105, 106).

- (4) If Hort's theory of a formal ecclesiastical recension were true, it would mean that the most influential church leaders of the 3rd and 4th centuries rejected the Egyptian text as corrupt, which would be a powerful testimony IN FAVOR OF the Traditional Text! John Burgon observed this in his masterpiece *The Revision Revised*, and it is a fact that devastates the modern textual criticism's theory of recension. Consider the following very carefully. "Somewhere between A.D. 250 and 350, therefore,--('it is impossible to say with confidence' [Hort, p. 137] what was the actual date, but these Editors evidently incline to the latter half of the IIIrd century, i.e. *circa* A.D. 275);--we are to believe that the Ecclesiastical heads of the four great Patriarchates of Eastern Christendom,--Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem, and Constantinople,--had become so troubled at witnessing the prevalence of depraved copies of Holy Scripture in their respective churches, that they resolved by common consent on achieving an authoritative Revision which should henceforth become the standard Text of all the Patriarchates of the East. ... The inference is at least inevitable that men in high place at that time deemed themselves competent to grapple with the problem. Enough was familiarly known about the character and the sources of these corrupt texts to make it certain that they would be recognizable when produced; and that, when condemned by authority, they would no longer be propagated, and in the end would cease to molest the Church. This much, at all events, is legitimately to be inferred from the hypothesis. Behold then from every principal Diocese of ancient Christendom, and in the Church's palmiest days, the most famous of the ante-Nicene Fathers repair to Antioch. They go up by authority, and are attended by skilled Ecclesiastics of the highest theological attainment. Bearers are they perforce of a vast number of Copies of the Scriptures, and (by the hypothesis) *the latest possible dates* of any of these Copies must range between

A.D. 250 and 350. But the Delegates of so many ancient Sees will have been supremely careful, before starting on so important and solemn an errand, to make diligent search for the oldest copies anywhere discoverable: and when they reach the scene of their deliberations, we may be certain that they are able to appeal to not a few codices *written within a hundred years of the date of the inspired Autographs* themselves. Copies of the Scripture authenticated as having belonged to the most famous of their predecessors,--and held by them in high repute for the presumed purity of their Texts,--will have been stowed away--for purposes of comparison and avoidance--specimens of those dreaded Texts whose existence has been the sole reason why (by the hypothesis) this extraordinary concourse of learned Ecclesiastics has taken place. After solemnly invoking the Divine blessing, these men address themselves assiduously to their task; and (by the hypothesis) they proceed to condemn every codex which exhibits a 'strictly Western,' or a 'strictly Alexandrian,' or a 'strictly Neutral' type. In plain English, if codices B, Aleph, and D had been before them, they would have unceremoniously rejected all three... When, therefore, at the end of a thousand and half a thousand years, Dr. Hort ... proposes to reverse the deliberate sentence of Antiquity,--his position strikes us as bordering on the ludicrous. ... Yes, we repeat it,--Dr. Hort is in direct antagonism with the Fathers of the IIIrd and the IVth Century. HIS OWN FANTASTIC HYPOTHESIS OF A 'SYRIAN' TEXT,--the solemn expression of the collective wisdom and deliberate judgment of the Fathers of the Nicene Age (A.D. 250--A.D. 350),--is the best answer which can by possibility be invented to his own pages,--IS, IN OUR ACCOUNT, THE ONE SUFFICIENT AND CONCLUSIVE REFUTATION OF HIS OWN TEXT. ... The essential thing to be borne in mind is that, according to Dr. Hort,--*on two distinct occasions between A.D. 250 and 350*--the whole Eastern Church, meeting by representation in her palmiest days, deliberately put forth that Traditional Text of the N.T. with which we at this day are chiefly familiar. That this is indeed his view of the matter there can at least be no doubt. ... Be it so. It follows that the text exhibited by such codices as B and Aleph *was deliberately condemned* by the assembled piety, learning, and judgment of the four great Patriarchates of Eastern Christendom. At a period when there existed *nothing more modern* than Codices B and Aleph,--*nothing so modern* as A and C,--all specimens of the former class were rejected, while such codices as bore a general resemblance to A were by common consent pointed out as deserving of confidence and *recommended for repeated transcription*" (Burgon, *The Revision Revised*, pp. 278-287).

*NOTE:* Burgon, being an Anglican, reads his ecclesiology back into the historical record. He speaks, for example, of the "Eastern church." Biblically speaking, there is no such thing; there is no "church" that encompasses a realm of territory containing many assemblies. The New Testament is very precise in its use of the term *ecclesia* or *church*. When it is used for a group of churches residing in a territory, such as those in Judea or Galatia or Asia, it always uses the term in the

plural, “the churchES of Judea,” “the churchES of Galatia,” and “the churchES of Asia.” The New Testament term “bishop” is synonymous with “elder” and “pastor.” All three terms describe the same humble office in the local church; these terms never refer to an ecclesiological position that is set up over a plurality of assemblies or a territory. Burgon further uses terminology (“four great Patriarchates”) to describe churches in the 3rd century that would more typically have applied to a later time. While many churches were apostatizing from the apostolic pattern by that date and were forming “bishoprics” and “patriarchates,” a great many were not.

That being said, it is evident that Burgon turned Hort’s Syrian recension theory on its head and demonstrated that if such a thing actually occurred it would provide devastating evidence AGAINST Hort’s Alexandrian text. If churches actually met together in the 3rd or 4th centuries to revise the New Testament text so as to purge away any impurities that had crept in, they would surely have had the resources and understanding to accomplish such a task. They lived only a short time after the passing of the apostles. They would have had the testimony of the apostolic churches themselves, because they still existed. They would have had the testimony of countless treasured manuscripts that have long since disappeared from the record. They would have had an intimate knowledge of the devises of heretics that had operated in the previous century or two. For scholars of the 19th and 20th centuries to claim that they are better able, with the pathetically slim manuscript evidence that has survived from those earliest centuries, to discern the apostolic text than the majority of churches in the 3rd and 4th centuries is simply ridiculous.

- (5) Some contemporary textual critics have abandoned the idea that the Received Text was created through one historical revision, replacing this with the theory that it was created over a long process. But whereas the first idea has no historical evidence, the second is absurd upon its very face. Zane Hodges wisely observes: “No one has yet explained how a long, slow process spread out over many centuries as well as over a wide geographical area, and involving a multitude of copyists, who often knew nothing of the state of the text outside of their own monasteries or scriptoria, could achieve this widespread uniformity out of the diversity presented by the earlier [Western and Alexandrian] forms of text ... An unguided process achieving relative stability and uniformity in the diversified textual, historical, and cultural circumstances in which the New Testament was copied, imposes impossible strains on our imagination” (Hodges, “The Implications of Statistical Probability for the History of the Text,” Appendix C in Wilbur N. Pickering, *The Identity of the New Testament Text*, 1980 edition, p. 168). Indeed.
- (6) If modern textual criticism’s principle of a Recension were true, it would destroy the doctrine of Bible preservation in any conceivably practical sense, because it would mean that the apostolic text was, for all practical purposes, discarded for 15 centuries!

(7) If modern textual criticism's principle of a recension is rejected, the entire superstructure falls to the ground. Why do the modern textual critics reject the Traditional or Majority Text out of hand and give it no serious consideration? Why, for example, can Kurt and Barbara Aland say of a "great many" of the uncials that "since they offer nothing more than a Byzantine text ... they are in consequence quite irrelevant for textual criticism" (*The Text of the New Testament*, p. 104)? They do so on the ground that this text was allegedly created in the 4th century by means of a recension, thus allowing them to treat the thousands of Traditional text manuscripts merely as so many copies of one alleged revision. Without such a theory, they have no reason to despise the witness of the majority of manuscripts. "But it is clear that with this hypothesis of a 'Syrian' text,--the immediate source and actual prototype of the commonly received Text of the N.T.,--stands or falls their entire Textual theory. Reject it, and the entire fabric is observed to collapse, and subside into a shapeless ruin" (Burgon, *The Revision Revised*, p. 294).

f. *Modern textual criticism's theory: The method that the authors of the alleged Recension employed was "conflation"; they forged a new text by combining variant readings from two competing text types* (summarized from Westcott and Hort, Introduction to *The New Testament in the Original Greek*, 1881). *Conflation* means to blend or fuse together. Hort claimed that the Traditional Text conflated readings from the "neutral" text (represented by Vaticanus and Sinaiticus) and the "western" text (represented by Codex D or Codex Bezae). Bruce Metzger accepts this principle and describes it as follows: "What would a conscientious scribe do when he found that the same passage was given differently in two or more manuscripts which he had before him? Rather than make a choice between them and copy only one of the two variant readings (with the attendant possibility of omitting the genuine reading), most scribes incorporated both readings in the new copy which they were transcribing. This produced what is called a conflation of readings, and is characteristic of the later, Byzantine type of text" (*The Text of the New Testament*, p. 200). One example that Hort gave of an alleged conflation was Luke 24:53, where Codex D reads "praising God" and the Vaticanus reads "blessing God" and the Traditional Text has "praising and blessing God." Hort theorized that the scribes who allegedly created the Traditional Text "conflated" the two shorter readings to produce the longer one.

*COMMENT:*

- (1) While Hort, Metzger, and other textual critics speak of conflation authoritatively as if it were a historical fact, they have no evidence *whatsoever* that the Traditional Text is a product of this. It is pure speculation.
- (2) To say that "a conscientious scribe" would conflate two differing manuscripts is to say that God-fearing believers would brazenly modify the Word of God, and we do not believe this is true. In fact, no "conscientious" scribe would so modify the text before him. A scribe's task to copy not create, and a conscientious scribe would not

exceed his duty.

- (3) Hort provided only eight examples (from Mark and Luke) to prove the alleged principle of conflation (Mk. 6:33; 8:26; 9:38; 9:49; Lk. 9:10; 11:54; 12:18; 24:53), but, as Wilbur Pickering observes, “to characterize a whole text for the whole New Testament on the basis of eight examples is foolish” (Pickering, *The Identity of the New Testament Text*, p. 28). John Burgon asked why, if conflation was one of the regular practices of the makers of the Traditional Text, Westcott and Hort could find only eight instances of his phenomenon. “Kenyon candidly admitted that he didn’t think that there were very many more” (Hills, p. 175).
- (4) In fact, the actual examples are even fewer than eight because four of the examples given by Hort do not exhibit any type of “conflation,” since Codex D actually contains a paraphrase of the Traditional Text in these instances (Mark 6:33, Mark 8:26, Luke 9:10, and Luke 11:54).
- (5) It is far more reasonable to assume that the process was omission on the part of the Alexandrian text rather than conflation on the part of the Traditional. We know for a fact that some heretics shortened the Scriptures, and we know that it is more common for copyists to omit words rather than add them. The handful of examples of alleged conflation cannot account for the massive number of omissions. Consider the omission of the dozens of entire verses, for example. “No amplification of B and Aleph could by any process of natural development have issued in the last twelve verses of St. Mark. But it was easy enough for the scribe of B not to write, and the scribe of Aleph consciously and deliberately to omit, verses found in the copy before him, if it were determined that they should severally do so. ... The original text could without any difficulty have been spoilt by leaving out the words, clauses, and sentences thus omitted: but something much more than the shortened text of B was absolutely essential for the production of the longer manuscripts. ... Codex B is discovered not to contain in the Gospels alone 237 words, 452 clauses, 748 whole sentences, which the later copies are observed to exhibit in the same places and in the same words. ... You will see therefore that B, and so Aleph, since the same arguments concern one as the other, must have been derived from the Traditional Text, and not the Traditional Text from those two Codexes” (Burgon and Miller, *The Traditional Text*, pp. 78, 79). “In Luke and Mark, B omits 1 of every 21 words, Aleph omits 1 of every 19 words, and D omits 1 of every 13 words. A [more] reliable copyist of the same era (Codex A) omits only one in 91 words. What would be unexpected about three unreliable witnesses omitting different words in 8 verses of Luke and Mark? For their major premise to even merit consideration they must show that fusion is possible and more credible than independent deletion” (Jeffrey Young, *Examination of Modern New Testament Text Criticism Theory and Methods*, 1995).

- (6) The existence of a “western” text has never been proven and the term is being dropped by textual critics today. The editors of the 4th edition of the UBS Greek N.T. refer to it as “the so-called Western text” (UBS4, Introduction, p. 5). Kurt and Barbara Aland say, “... the theory of a special ‘Western’ type of the text is improbable from the outset, and even its most passionate proponents never refer to it as ‘Western’ without using quotation marks” (*The Text of the New Testament*, pp. 68, 69). The example that Hort gives of a “western” text, Codex D, dates to the 6th century, which is some 200 years older than Vaticanus. He could give no other or earlier example. In fact, Codex D is of little value and appears even to have been back translated into Greek from Latin. “No known manuscript contains so many bold and extensive interpolations (six hundred, it is said, in the Acts alone) ... Mr. Harris from curious internal evidence, such as the existence in the text of a vitiated rendering of a verse of Homer which bears signs of having been retranslated from a Latin translation, infers that the Greek has been made up from the Latin” (Frederick Scrivener, *A Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament*, vol. 1, p. 130). John Burgon observed that D resembles a Targum (a loose paraphrase) more than a transcription. Burgon stated that Codex D omits, substitutes, adds, and transposes some 562 words in only three chapters of Luke, and that 250 of the words that are omitted are unique to this manuscript. Burgon concluded that a carelessly executed manuscript like this bears its own testimony of a lack of authenticity and cannot possibly be trusted to witness to the truth.
- (7) Westcott and Hort do not demonstrate *why* orthodox Christians in the region of Syria, where the apostolic missionary churches thrived, would practice conflation only two and a half centuries after the apostles. What would be the motive? Were they so entirely lacking in the fear of God that they were willing to make up a new text? Why would they give any attention whatsoever to texts coming out of Alexandria, which they knew was a hotbed of heresy and allegoricalism?
- (8) They also do not tell us how such a contrived text could be foisted upon the vast majority of churches so that it became the dominant text of the next 1,500 years.

g. *Modern textual criticism’s theory: The Traditional Text did not exist prior to the middle of the third century.* “Before the middle of the third century, at the very earliest, we have no historical signs of the existence of readings, conflate or other, that are marked as distinctively Syrian by the want of attestation from groups of documents which have preserved the other ancient forms of text” (quoted from Westcott and Hort, Introduction to *The New Testament in the Original Greek*, 1881). Frederic Kenyon called this the “cornerstone” of Hort’s theory, “that readings characteristic of the Received Text are never found in the quotations of Christian writers prior to about A.D. 350” (Kenyon, *Recent Developments in the Textual Criticism of the Greek Bible*, London: Oxford University Press, 1933, pp. 7-8). The reason that this was the cornerstone of Hort’s theory was that he believed it offered irrefutable evidence that the Traditional Text was created by a revision



in the fourth century, since (so he said) it does not appear in the manuscript record prior to that.

*COMMENT:* This is untrue, as the following evidence demonstrates.

- (1) Consider some testimonies of authorities to the existence of the Traditional Text prior to the middle of the third century:

Testimony of Bishop Charles Ellicott, chairman of the English Revised Version translation committee: “The manuscripts which Erasmus used differ, for the most part, only in small and insignificant details, from the great bulk of the cursive MSS. The general character of their text is the same. By this observation the pedigree of the Received Text is carried up beyond the individual manuscripts used by Erasmus ... That pedigree stretches back to remote antiquity. THE FIRST ANCESTOR OF THE RECEIVED TEXT WAS AT LEAST CONTEMPORARY WITH THE OLDEST OF OUR EXTANT MSS, IF NOT OLDER THAN ANY ONE OF THEM” (Bishop Ellicott, chairman of the ERV committee, *The Revisers and the Greek Text of the N.T. by two members of the N.T. Company*, pp. 11-12).

Testimony of John Burgon: Burgon’s research into New Testament quotations from ancient church writings has never equaled. His unpublished index of quotations from ancient fathers, which resides in the British Museum, consists of 16 thick manuscript volumes containing 86,489 references. Burgon’s research established that the Traditional Text was the prominent text of the early centuries. Some 4,383 of these 86,000 quotations were from 76 writers who died before the year 400 A.D. Jack Moorman observes: “Edward Miller carried on the work after Burgon’s death and put the material in a tabulated form showing the times a Church Father witnesses for and against the Received Text. He found the Received Text had the greater support by 2,630 to 1,753 or 3 to 2. Keeping in mind the Alexandrian and Western localities of these 76 Fathers, we have here quite a strong majority for the Received Text. Had the quotations of the Eastern Fathers been available, all indications are that the support would have been quite overwhelming. But the above evidence shows clearly also that there was a struggle over the text of Scripture in those early centuries. But, there was a clear winner!” (*Modern Bibles the Dark Secret*). Of Hort’s claim of superior antiquity for his text, Burgon replied: “You talk of ‘Antiquity.’ But you must know very well that you actually mean something different. You fasten upon three, or perhaps four,--on two, or perhaps three,--on one, or perhaps two,--documents of the IVth or Vth century. But then, confessedly, these are one, two, three, or four *SPECIMENS ONLY* of Antiquity,--not ‘Antiquity’ itself. And what if they should even prove to be *unfair samples* of Antiquity? ... You are for ever talking about ‘old Readings.’ Have you not yet discovered that ALL “Readings’ are ‘OLD’?” (*The Revision Revised*, pp. 243, 44). Burgon’s work has

been despised, ridiculed, mischaracterized, and dismissed out of hand by modern textual critics, but it has never been refuted.

Testimony of the Trinitarian Bible Society of England: “IT MUST BE EMPHASISED THAT THE ARGUMENT IS NOT BETWEEN AN ANCIENT TEXT AND A RECENT ONE, BUT BETWEEN TWO ANCIENT FORMS OF THE TEXT, ONE OF WHICH WAS REJECTED AND THE OTHER ADOPTED AND PRESERVED BY THE CHURCH AS A WHOLE AND REMAINING IN COMMON USE FOR MORE THAN FIFTEEN CENTURIES. The assumptions of modern textual criticism are based upon the discordant testimony of a few specimens of the rejected text recently disinterred from the oblivion to which they had been deliberately and wisely consigned in the 4th century” (*The Divine Original*, TBS article No. 13, nd, p. 7).

Testimony of Harry Sturz, who surveyed all of the available papyri to discover how many contained support for the Traditional Greek Text and published his findings in *The Byzantine Text-Type and New Testament Textual Criticism* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1984). He observes, “The papyri have now demonstrated ‘that the readings which Hort calls *Syrian* existed before the end of the fourth century.’ Byzantine readings have now been proven to be in existence by the end of the second century! ... In regard to the argument based on the silence of the Fathers, it should be observed that, contrary to the statements of WH and their followers, quotations from early Fathers *have* been found in support of Byzantine readings” (*The Byzantine Text-type*, p. 78). Jack Moorman summarizes Sturz’s findings. “He strikes a devastating blow at arguments which seek to minimize the fact that distinctive Byzantine readings do appear in the early papyri. He lists 150 Received Text readings which though not supported by the early Alexandrian and Western manuscripts are read by the mass of later manuscripts and by the early papyri. He lists a further 170 TR readings which again run counter to Vaticanus and Sinaiticus, but in this case find support from the Western manuscripts. These also are supported in the early papyri. In fact STURZ DEMONSTRATES POPYRI SUPPORT FOR A TOTAL OF 839 READINGS WHICH IN VARYING DEGREES WOULD BE CLASSED AS ‘DISTINCTLY BYZANTINE.’ As the papyri is available for only 30% of the New Testament, existing evidence allows us to reasonably project that the story would be the same for the rest of the New Testament. What is especially remarkable about this is, the papyri come from that area where the Alexandrian/shorter text was prevalent. Nearly all of the 267 uncial manuscripts move strongly to the side of the AV Text, with the same being true of the minuscules” (Jack Moorman, *Modern Bibles the Dark Secret*).

(2) Consider some ways that textual critics have sought to undermine these facts:

(a) One mechanism used by the textual critics to discount the aforementioned facts

is to claim that Burgon and Miller were not using the most approved critical editions of “the fathers.” Dr. Edward Hills replies: “In regard to my references to the Church Fathers, I am sure that if you examine the notes to my *King James Defended* and my *Believing Bible Study* you will see that I have taken care to look up all the Burgon’s references in the most modern editions available. During the years 1950-55, I spent many weeks at this task. ... In fact, THE NEWER GERMAN EDITIONS OF THE CHURCH FATHERS DIFFER LITTLE FROM THOSE OF THE 17TH AND 18TH CENTURIES. CERTAINLY NOT ENOUGH TO AFFECT BURGON’S ARGUMENTS” (Letter from Edward F. Hills to Theodore Letis, February 15, 1980, as quoted in Letis, “Edward Freer Hills Contribution to the Revival of the Ecclesiastical Text,” unpublished M.T.S. Thesis, Emory University, 1987).

- (b) Another mechanism whereby the textual critics discount the aforementioned facts is by distinguishing between readings and texts. Admitting that individual Traditional Text readings can be found in the writings of ancient preachers prior to the third century, they claim that the Traditional Text *as a whole* or *as a text* cannot be found in the writings of any one “father.” This is a clever tactic but it is ineffective. “... in the face of substantial evidence they have been forced to a second line of defense: ‘Well, there may be Byzantine readings before 350, but there is no Byzantine Text’! To which we would naturally reply that, given the large number of Byzantine readings, how can you have one without the other?” (Jack Moorman, *A Closer Look*, p. 7).
- (c) Another mechanism that the textual critics use at this point is to claim that the aforementioned Traditional text quotations in the writings of the early church “fathers” were added by later scribes. “... the common practice among patristic scholars is to dismiss distinctively Byzantine readings found in the writings of the Fathers unless the Father expressly comments on the significance of the Byzantine reading. This is due to the hypothesis that the scribes (who also copied the works of the Fathers as well as the New Testament manuscripts) would habitually and deliberately tend to alter the scriptural quotations of the Fathers into those with which they were familiar, namely, the Byzantine readings. ... If the Byzantine readings now summarily dismissed in the early Fathers were legitimately included, the Fathers’ overall text would be seen to be far more ‘Byzantine’ than current scholarly opinion claims. This was Burgon’s original contention, which was dismissed out of hand, due to his use of ‘uncritical’ editions of the Fathers. Current ‘critical’ editions, however, follow the above-mentioned practice of eliminating distinctive Byzantine readings where unconfirmed by direct comment. Were this not so, Burgon’s assertion might find contemporary corroboration” (Maurice Robinson, “The Case for the Byzantine Textform: A New Approach to ‘Majority Text’ Theory,” Southeastern Regional Meeting, Evangelical Theological Society, at Toccoa Falls College, March 8-9, 1991). M. Jacob Suggs observes: “There is little evidence of systematic revision of New Testament citations except in translated

works, and this is paralleled by the practice of modern translators of theological works in quoting Biblical passages in a familiar version rather than supplying a fresh translation” (“The Use of Patristic Evidence in the Search for a Primitive New Testament Text,” *New Testament Studies*, IV, No. 2, Jan. 1958, 140; cited from Sturz, *The Byzantine Text-type*, p. 79, footnote).

(3) Consider some other important considerations in regard to the witness of the early centuries:

- (a) It is important to understand that there are no extensive early writings in existence from the area of Antioch. The vast majority of the earliest extant quotations are from Egypt and Gaul. “Supporters of the WH theory point out that Chrysostom (who flourished in the last half of the fourth century) is the earliest Father to use the Byzantine text. HOWEVER, THEY CUSTOMARILY NEGLECT TO MENTION THAT THERE ARE NO EARLIER ANTIOCHIAN FATHERS THAN CHRYSOSTOM WHOSE LITERARY REMAINS ARE EXTENSIVE ENOUGH SO THAT THEIR NEW TESTAMENT QUOTATIONS MAY BE ANALYZED AS TO THE TYPE OF TEXT THEY SUPPORT. THE SILENCE-OF-THE-FATHERS ARGUMENT HAS BEEN ASKED TO BEAR MORE WEIGHT THAN IT IS ABLE TO SUSTAIN. How can Fathers of other areas using other local text-types be expected to witness to the Antiochian text? And how could it be expected that the Antiochian text (i.e., the early form of it) can be attested by Fathers who have left little or no writings?” (emphasis added) (Harry Sturz, *The Byzantine Text-type*, pp. 80, 81).
- (b) In reality, there are very few manuscripts extant from the earliest centuries from all regions together, far too few to make sweeping conclusions about the textual situation that existed in those earliest centuries. Maurice Robinson observes: “Were a thousand papyrus and uncial MSS extant from before the fourth century which were relatively complete and sufficiently representative of the entire Eastern empire (by the location of their discovery), perhaps one could speak with greater authority than from the 63 fragmentary papyri we currently possess from that era. The resources of the pre-fourth century era unfortunately remain meager, restricted to a limited body of witnesses. Even if the text-critical evidence is extended through the eighth century, there would be only 424 documents, mostly fragmentary” (*New Testament Textual Criticism: The Case for Byzantine Priority*).
- (c) Ordinary New Testament believers would generally have used less expensive papyri as opposed to the more expensive vellum made from animal skins. And apart from a few places with exceedingly dry climates, such as Egypt and the Judean desert, ancient papyri manuscripts simply have not survived. Only a few fragments from the first four centuries have survived even in Egypt.
- (d) Believers in the early centuries would have worn out their Scripture manuscripts quickly. This is true of believers today, but it would have been even truer then,

when New Testament books were used not only for reading, study, and ministry, but also for copying.

- h. *Modern textual criticism's theory: The manuscript record contains ordinary scribal phenomena and does not reflect heretical attacks upon the Scripture.* "It will not be out of place, to add here a distinct expression of our belief that even among the numerous unquestionably spurious readings of the New Testament there are no signs of deliberate falsification of the text for dogmatic purposes" (Westcott and Hort, *The New Testament in the Original Greek*, vol. 2, Introduction and Appendix, 1881).

*COMMENT:*

- (1) In making this claim, Hort ignored the Bible's own warnings that heretics would attack the truth; indeed, this was already occurring during the days of the apostles (e.g., Acts 20:29-30; 2 Cor. 2:17; 11:1-4, 12-15; 2 Thess. 2:2; 2 Tim. 3:13; 2 Pet. 3:1-2, 16; 1 Jn. 2:18-22; 4:1-3; 2 John 8).
  - (2) Hort also ignored the facts of church history. Frederick Scrivener, a prominent textual scholar of the 19th century, testified, "It is no less true to fact than paradoxical in sound, that THE WORST CORRUPTIONS TO WHICH THE NEW TESTAMENT HAS EVER BEEN SUBJECTED, ORIGINATED WITHIN A HUNDRED YEARS AFTER IT WAS COMPOSED; and that Irenaeus and the African Fathers, and the whole Western, with a portion of the Syrian Church, used far inferior MSS. to those employed by Stunica, or Erasmus, or Stephens, thirteen centuries later, when moulding the Received Text" (Scrivener, *A Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament*, II, 4th edition, 1894, pp. 264, 265). We have documented the heretical attacks of the 2nd to the 4th centuries in *Faith vs. the Modern Bible Versions*, Chapter I, Part A, "The Doctrine of Preservation Authenticates the Traditional Greek Text."
  - (3) Though modern textual critics since Westcott and Hort have admitted that there was theological tampering with the manuscripts, they have not given this the prominent role it should play in regard to the extant manuscript record of the 2nd to the 4th centuries. They have not given serious consideration to the possibility that Vaticanus, Sinaiticus, and similar Egyptian manuscripts are the product of such tampering.
- i. *Modern textual criticism's theory: The shorter reading is to be preferred,* because corruption by addition is more likely than corruption by omission. (This is summarized from Westcott and Hort, Introduction to *The New Testament in the Original Greek*, 1881). This rule went back to Johann Wettstein, a Unitarian, and to Johann Griesbach, a modernist. Griesbach was the first to declare Mark 16:9-20 spurious and to omit it from the Greek New Testament.

*COMMENT:*

- (1) This principle has not been proven by actual textual evidence; it is merely a theory designed to support the shorter Alexandrian text. In fact, the evidence points in the other direction, as stated by B.H. Streeter: “The notion is completely refuted that the regular tendency of scribes was to choose the longer reading. ... The whole question of interpolations in ancient MSS has been set in an entirely new light by the researches of Mr. A.C. Clark, Corpus Professor of Latin at Oxford. ... in *The Descent of Manuscripts*, an investigation of the manuscript tradition of the Greek and Latin Classics, he proves conclusively that the error to which scribes were most prone was not interpolation [addition] but accidental omission” (Streeter, *The Four Gospels: A Study of Origins*, 1930).
  - (2) Everyday experience demonstrates the truth of this. When copying something, it is easier to omit things than add things. Philip Mauro, a famous lawyer of the early 20th century who argued cases before the United States Supreme Court, observed: “The commonest of all mistakes in copying manuscripts, or in repeating a matter, are mistakes of omission, or lapses of memory, or the results of inattention. Hence it is an accepted principle of evidence that the testimony of one competent witness, who says he saw or heard a certain thing, carries more weight than that of a dozen who, though on the spot, can only say that they did not see or hear it, or that they do not remember it. Therefore, other things being equal, the affirmative evidence of the other ... ancient Codices and Versions, and that of the ‘Fathers’ who quote those verses as unquestioned Scripture, is an hundred-fold more worthy of credence than the negative testimony of the two [Vaticanus and Sinaiticus] which were allowed to control in settling the text of the R.V.” (Philip Mauro, *Which Version: Authorised or Revised*, 1924). Mauro was referring to the English Revised Version of 1885 and the American Standard Version of 1901, which was formed after the principles of Westcott and Hort.
  - (3) When heretics are tampering with the text, it is easier to get away with omissions than additions.
  - (4) The vast majority of extant manuscripts throughout the church age have the “longer readings,” such as the “long” ending to Mark 16. The shorter Alexandrian text contained in a handful of manuscripts was rejected by God’s people throughout the church age.
- j. *Modern textual criticism’s theory*: “The hard reading is to be preferred to the easy reading” (J.A. Bengel, *Novum Testamentum, Graecum*, p. 420; cited from E.F. Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, 4th edition, p. 64).

*COMMENT:*

- (1) This is another theory that is backed by no evidence but was devised specifically to support the Alexandrian text.
  - (2) Bengel developed this principle because he believed orthodox Christian scribes tended to simplify difficult texts. Thus he believed that orthodox Christians corrupted their own New Testament! This flies in the face of the love that Bible-believing Christians have for the Scriptures and their fear of tampering with God's Word (Deut. 4:2; Prov. 30:6; Isa. 66:2; 2 Thess. 2:17; Rev. 22:18-19).
  - (3) The Bible warns that it is the devil that corrupts the simplicity of God's truth (2 Cor. 11:3).
  - (4) This theory ignores the fact that there were countless heretics tampering with manuscripts and creating spurious ones in the 2nd and 3rd centuries. Wilbur Pickering observes, "In any case, the amply documented fact that numerous people in the second century made deliberate changes in the text, whether for doctrinal or other reasons, introduces an unpredictable variable which invalidates this canon. Once a person arrogates to himself the authority to alter the text there is nothing in principle to keep individual caprice from intruding or taking over--we have no way of knowing what factors influenced the originator of a variant (whoever he was) or whether the result would appear to us to be 'harder' or 'easier.' This canon is simply inapplicable" (Pickering, *The Identity of the New Testament Text*, chapter 4).
  - (5) This theory ignores the fact that many Egyptian manuscripts contain nonsensical readings created by the carelessness and ineptitude of the scribes. The papyri are notorious for this. A nonsensical reading would be the harder reading, but it is foolish to think that it is correct.
- k. *Modern textual criticism's theory*: "When there are many variant readings in one place, that reading which more than the others manifestly favors the dogmas of the orthodox is deservedly regarded as suspicious" (J.J. Griesbach, *Novum Testamentum, Graece*, 2nd edition, 1809, vol. 1, pp. 75-82, cited from E.F. Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, 4th edition, p. 65).

*COMMENT:*

- (1) Griesbach believed that whenever two manuscripts are at variance, and one contains sound doctrine and one contains heresy, the heresy must be preferred! However, we know that the Spirit of God who gave the Scriptures and who has guarded them does not inspire or preserve heresy. He is the "Spirit of truth" (John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13; 1 John 4:6).

(2) Only a heretic such as Griesbach, who denied the infallible inspiration of Scripture and the deity of Jesus Christ, would come up with such a strange theory, and yet he was influential in the field of textual criticism. Westcott and Hort said they venerated the name of Griesbach “above that of every other textual critic of the New Testament” (*New Testament in Greek*, 1881, vol. 2, p. 185). They adopted many of his principles of textual criticism and popularized them in their writings.

1. The Traditional Text is clear and complete because it is the product of an editing process. “The qualities which the authors of the Syrian text seem to have most desired to impress on it are LUCIDITY AND COMPLETENESS. They were evidently anxious to remove all stumbling-blocks out of the way of the ordinary reader, so far as this could be done without recourse to violent measures. ... Both in matter and in diction the Syrian text is conspicuously A FULL TEXT. It delights in Pronouns, Conjunctions, and Expletives and supplied links of all kinds, as well as in more considerable Additions. ... Entirely blameless, on either literary or religious grounds, as regards vulgarized or unworthy diction, yet shewing no marks of either Critical or Spiritual insight, it presents the New Testament in A FORM SMOOTH AND ATTRACTIVE, but appreciably impoverished in sense and force; more fitted for cursory perusal or recitation than for repeated and diligent study” (Westcott and Hort, Introduction to *The New Testament in the Original Greek*, 1881, pp. 134-5).

*COMMENT:*

- (1) This is another theory that was devised specifically to support the shorter, choppier, less lucid Alexandrian text, and it is based on pure speculation. Modern textual critics cannot prove that the Traditional Text is the product of a recension that aimed to create a lucid and complete text. We have already given the reasons for rejecting the Westcott-Hort recension theory.
- (2) From a biblical perspective, it is much more logical to assume that the Scripture was “lucid and complete” and harmonious when it came from the pens of the New Testament apostles and prophets. It is unreasonable to assume that the autographs, given by inspiration of God, were harsh and disharmonious and that they had to be smoothed out later by editors.
- (3) Harry Sturz shows that lucidity and completeness were the hallmark of the Koine style of Greek and that Westcott and Hort were prejudiced against this style by their training in classical Greek. “As is now known, the New Testament was written in the Koine or ‘common’ style of the day. This was not appreciated in the days of Westcott and Hort as it has come to be since the work of Adolf Deissmann, J.H. Moulton and A.T. Robertson. WH came to their study of the New Testament with the background of an ‘Attic-trained judgment.’ This, no doubt, was a factor in their being attracted to Aleph and B, the chief representatives of the Alexandrian text-type. Where there is variation in the text, the Alexandrian manuscripts often tend to



favor the more brief, precise, and Attic-like forms of expression. ... It now appears that the 'exact grammatical school' may have done more than 'preserve' the text at Alexandria. Kilpatrick notes several areas in which Atticism in the early period appears to have introduced changes into the text of the New Testament. One involved the tendency to eliminate Semitisms" (Sturz, *The Byzantine Text-type*, p. 108). Semitism refers to things adopted in the New Testament from Hebrew.

- (4) As for Hort's claim that the Traditional Text exhibits no spiritual insight and that it is impoverished in sense and force, that is his own subjective judgment. Over against Hort's opinion is the judgment of multiplied millions of believers of every major clime and tongue who have delighted in the Traditional Text in the clothing of the Reformation versions and have found it to be infinitely spiritual and forceful, who are of the conviction that the Holy Spirit Himself has witnessed to their hearts that this Text is the infallible Word of God. Over against Hort's opinion is also the judgment of thousands upon thousands of scholarly men of God who, over the past 500 years, have compared the Egyptian text with the Received Text and have found the latter to be much preferred in spiritual insight, sense, and force. We have documented the testimony of many of these men in the book *For Love of the Bible*.
- m. *Modern textual criticism's theory: Bruce Metzger, following Westcott and Hort, believes that the text that is harsh and verbally dissident (characterized by difficulties and contradictions) is to be preferred to a text that is verbally harmonious.* "Since scribes would frequently bring divergent passages into harmony with one another, in parallel passages. ... that reading which involves VERBAL DISSIDENCE is usually to be preferred to one which is verbally concordant. Scribes would sometimes: a) replace an unfamiliar word with a more familiar synonym. b) alter a less refined grammatical form or less elegant expression in accord with contemporary atticing preferences; or c) add pronouns, conjunctions, and expletives TO MAKE A SMOOTHER TEXT" (Bruce Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*). For example, when Alexandrian manuscripts say in Matt. 1:7, 10, that Amos and Asaph were kings of Israel, as the Sinaitic and Vaticanus do, modern textual critics assume this was the original reading, even though it is an obvious mistake, and that later this "verbal dissidence" was "harmonized" and corrected by the "editors" of the Traditional Text. And when "yet" is omitted in John 7:8 in the Sinaitic and Vaticanus, thus creating an error in the text and causing the Lord Jesus to tell a lie, many modern textual critics assume this was the original reading which later was "smoothed out" by "editors" of the Traditional Text.

*COMMENT:*

- (1) This principle is based on pure speculation. Modern textual critics cannot prove that the scribes who copied the Traditional Text created such alterations for such reasons.

- (2) To say that the original text of the New Testament contained mistakes such as the wrong names of kings in Matthew 1 and the omission of “yet” in John 7:8 is to deny the divine inspiration of Scripture.
- (3) In light of the nature of Scripture as the infallible Word of God, the many warnings in Scripture against heretics, and the facts of history that demonstrate the fulfillment of these warnings, it is more reasonable to assume that manuscripts that contain “disharmonious” and “dissident” readings are the product of tampering by heretics or omissions and changes by careless and/or ignorant scribes.
- n. The textual critic can use conjecture to determine the correct reading. “Namely, as a principle of textual criticism, the reading most likely to be the original text is the one which can best explain the rise of the other readings. But while this principle is useful in many passages, it is apparent that IT DEPENDS LARGELY ON A SUBJECTIVE EVALUATION OF THE READINGS AVAILABLE. So especially in difficult instances it needs to be supplemented with as objective criteria AS POSSIBLE” (Barbara Aland, “A Century of New Testament Textual Criticism (1898-1998),” <http://www.bibleresourcecenter.org/vsItemDisplay.dsp&objectID=BF4714BC-53F6-48EB-94FEA6BF73FD88A5&method=display>, 1998).

*COMMENT:*

- (1) Here we see that conjecture is a part of modern textual criticism. It is not often that they will admit this as plainly as Barbara Aland has done in this article, but it is true nonetheless. Hort used the high-sounding terms “conjectural emendation” and “intrinsic probability,” but it refers to nothing more sophisticated than guessing. In describing his father’s textual criticism, Arthur Hort observed: “The obvious method of deciding between variant readings, is for the critic to ask which the author is most likely to have written, and to settle the question BY THE LIGHT OF HIS OWN INNER CONSCIOUSNESS” (*Life of Hort*, Vol. 2, p. 248).
- (2) Barbara Aland gives an example of how this works. Note her discussion of why she believes Acts 8:37 is not Scripture: “But there is a group of manuscripts, some of them old and valuable, which add verse 37: ‘Philip said, If you believe with all your heart, you may. And he replied, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.’ In this instance it is relatively easy to decide which is the original form of the text. The dogmatic nature of verse 37 reflects the early church practice in the late 2nd century of requiring a formal interrogation of a candidate before administering baptism. It is obvious that this is an interpolation suggested by the official’s unanswered question in verse 36 (‘What is to prevent me from being baptized?’)” (Aland, “A Century of New Testament Textual Criticism (1898-1998)”). While Barbara Aland wants her readers to think that she has a firm basis for her conjecture that Acts 8:37 was a later

addition to the Scriptures, it is obvious that she has nothing more than her own guess about what happened. She has NO EVIDENCE WHATSOEVER that Acts 8:37 was added by Christians in the second or third century because they wanted to fortify the book of Acts with their baptismal interrogation practices. While it might be “obvious” to the textual critic that Acts 8:37 is not part of the original book of Acts, it is just as obvious to us that it was.

- (3) What is wrong with conjecture when it comes to the Bible text?
- (a) First, it is not authoritative and can produce nothing substantial. It is an unbelieving principle that weakens the authority of Scripture and gives opportunity for unbelievers to mock its infallibility.
  - (b) To think that we are left to conjecture the original text of Scripture is a blatant denial of divine preservation.
  - (c) To think that Bible believers would tamper with Scripture to make it more theologically conservative is contrary to what we know about them. God has taught His people to tremble before His word (Isa. 66:5) and to fear adding to or taking away from it (Deut. 4:2; Prov. 30:6; Rev. 22:18-19). The early believers received the New Testament as the Word of God (1 Thess. 2:13; Jn. 17:8) and carefully passed it along word by word as the Word of God (Matt. 28:19-20; 2 Tim. 2:2). To believe that true Christians tampered with the Scripture would require absolute proof, and that is something that the textual critics have not given.
  - (d) We know, though, that heretics *will* tamper with the Scripture, because we are told in Scripture that they do so (i.e. 2 Cor. 2:17). The only reason a Bible believer would change something in a Scripture manuscript is if he is convinced that the text or translation is corrupt and needs to be changed to conform to the original. But this is nothing like what Barbara Aland proposes that Bible believers did in regard to Acts 8:37. She is suggesting that they baldly added something to the book of Acts that they knew was not originally a part of it just to make the book more conformable to and supportive of their doctrine.
  - (e) It is therefore more reasonable to suggest, as J.A. Alexander did in 1857, that “this verse, though genuine, was omitted by many scribes, ‘as unfriendly to the practice of delaying baptism, which had become common, if not prevalent, before the end of the 3rd century’” (Alexander, *The Acts of the Apostles*, cited by Edward Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, 4th edition, p. 201).
- o. “Only a soundly outlined history of the text will make it possible to retrace its various stages back to its original form. A theory of the text can then be constructed based on the genealogical relationships of all the extant manuscripts. This is now possible because the *Editio Critica Maior* contains all the variants found in non-Byzantine manuscripts” (Barbara Aland, “A Century of New Testament Textual Criticism 1898-1998,” Bible Resource Center, 1998)

*COMMENT:*

- (1) Here Barbara Aland is proposing a principle of textual criticism that she believes might produce better results than the principles that have been followed heretofore. She admits that the former principles have not resulted in a restoration of the biblical text. “Since Lachmann, and especially since Westcott and Hort, New Testament textual critics have attempted to find objective criteria for establishing the text, BUT WITHOUT ACHIEVING SUCCESS” (Aland, *ibid.*).
  - (2) Her suggestion of a theory of the text based on genealogical relationships of all extant manuscripts is ridiculous, for the simple fact that no one today has such information and the possibility of obtaining such information in a dogmatic and thorough fashion is nonexistent. While textual scholars have done a massive amount of work in collecting, microfilming, cataloging, and collating the extant manuscripts over the last century, they certainly do not know the precise history and genealogical relationships of the vast majority of them.
  - (3) Further, by her own admission, her method ignores the “Byzantine” or Traditional manuscripts, and it is impossible to arrive at the original text when one begins by discarding the majority of witnesses.
- p. *Modern textual criticism’s theory*: “[By the eclectic method the editor] follows now one and now another set of witnesses in accord with what is deemed to be the author’s style or the exigencies of transcriptional hazards” (Bruce Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, pp. 175, 176).

*COMMENT:*

- (1) The word “eclectic” means diverse or free, and the eclectic method of textual criticism refers to a free choice among readings based on this or that principle as preferred by the editor or translator or student. Epp defines the eclectic method as applying “the selected criteria in such a way as to ‘pick’ or ‘choose’ a reading from one or another MS and thereby arrive at a text-critical decision” (“The Eclectic Method,” *Studies in the Theory and Method of New Testament Textual Criticism*, p. 141). Most contemporary textual critics claim to use the eclectic method, and this is true for the editors of the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament, the Revised Standard Version, the New English Bible, and the New International Version. The preface to the NIV says, “The Greek text used in the work of translation was an eclectic one.” Eldon Jay Epp says, “The ‘eclectic’ method is, in fact, the 20th century method of NT textual criticism, and anyone who criticizes it immediately becomes a self critic, for we all use it, some of us with a certain measure of reluctance and restraint, others with complete abandon” (Epp, “The Twentieth Century Interlude in NT Textual Criticism,” *Studies in the Theory and Method of*

*New Testament Textual Criticism*, p. 98).

- (2) The eclectic method focuses more on internal and conjectural criteria than external and objective ones. Influential textual critic Ernest Colwell admits: “In the last generation we have depreciated external evidence of documents and have appreciated the internal evidence of readings; but we have blithely assumed that we were rejecting ‘conjectural emendation’ if our conjectures were supported by some manuscripts. WE NEED TO RECOGNIZE THAT THE EDITING OF AN ECLECTIC TEXT RESTS UPON CONJECTURES” (Colwell, “Scribal Habits in Early Papyri: A Study in the Corruption of the Text,” *The Bible in Modern Scholarship*, edited by J.P. Hyatt, 1965, pp. 371-372). The two principles Metzger identifies as suitable to the eclectic method are “the author’s style” and “the exigencies of transcriptional hazards.” Nothing could be more subjective, more uncertain, more along the lines of guesswork, than these principles. Authors can change their style depending on the subject; determinations based on style are extremely subjective and result in widely conflicting decisions. Some critics, for example, say that Mark 16:9-20 doesn’t fit the style of the author of the rest of Mark’s Gospel, but others say that it does. As for “the exigencies of transcriptional hazards,” which refers to the causes for various readings, whether a scribal error or something else, it is impossible for textual critics in the 21st century to know what particular exigencies produced a certain textual reading more than a millennium and a half ago. Textual critic Albertus Klijn warns: “This method arrives at such varying results that we wonder whether editors of Greek texts and translations can safely follow this road” (Klijn, *A Survey of the Researches into the Western Text of the Gospels and Acts, part two 1949-1969*, Leiden, 1969, p. 65). For ourselves, we have no doubt that “this road” is not safe.
- (3) The eclectic method really means that the individual critic is at liberty to make his own guess based on whatever standard suits his fancy, and it offers no settled or truly objective basis upon which to determine the reading.
- (4) Those who use the eclectic method admit that it cannot produce certainty.
  - (a) One scholar candidly observed that eclectic editions use documents “as drunkards use lampposts--not to light them on their way but to dissimulate their instability” (Ernest Colwell, “Hort Redivivus: A Plea and a Program,” *Studies in Methodology in Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1969, p. 153).
  - (b) Kenneth Clark stated: “The eclectic method cannot by itself create a text to displace Westcott-Hort and its offspring. It is suitable only for exploration and experimentation. ... The eclectic method, by its very nature, belongs to an age like ours in which we know only that the traditional theory of the text is faulty

but cannot yet see clearly to correct the fault” (Clark, cited by Eldon Epp, “Decision Points in New Testament Textual Criticism,” *Studies in the Theory and Method of New Testament Textual Criticism*, p. 36).

- (5) The eclectic method is not really eclectic (meaning diverse or free) but remains secretly faithful to the principles of Westcott and Hort (even though they have been refuted) and produces a New Testament that is almost identical to the W-H text of 1881 *IN SIGNIFICANT DEPARTURES FROM THE RECEIVED TEXT*.
- (a) This is evident by the fact that the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament deletes or questions almost the same number of verses as the Westcott-Hort text (WH-48, UBS-45), deletes almost the same number of significant portions of verses (WH--193, UBS 185), and deletes almost the same number of names and titles of the Lord (WH--221, UBS--212). The same is true for the RSV, NEB, and NIV. They all remove “God” from 1 Timothy 3:16; they all question or remove or seriously question the ending to Mark 16, etc. The so-called eclectic method only results in quite minor variations away from the Westcott-Hort model.
- (b) In the Introduction to the 24th edition of Nestle’s Greek New Testament, editors Erwin Nestle and Kurt Aland make the following admission: “Thus THE TEXT, BUILT UP ON THE WORK OF THE 19TH CENTURY, HAS REMAINED AS A WHOLE UNCHANGED, particularly since the research of recent years has not yet led to the establishment of a generally acknowledged N.T. text” (Erwin Nestle and Kurt Aland, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 24th edition, 1960, p. 62).
- (c) In his 1981 book *The Westcott and Hort Greek New Testament--Yesterday and Today*, Bruce Metzger makes the following plain admission: “The International committee that produced the United Bible Societies’ Greek New Testament, NOT ONLY ADOPTED THE WESTCOTT AND HORT EDITION AS ITS BASIC TEXT, BUT FOLLOWED THEIR METHODOLOGY in giving attention to both external and internal consideration.”
- (d) James Brooks observes that Bruce Metzger, one of the most prominent textual critics of this generation, has not gone much beyond Westcott and Hort: “There is nothing unique about Metzger’s theory of textual criticism. It is simply a refinement of Westcott and Hort’s theory in the New Testament in the Original Greek (1881). ... this theory is dominant today in part because of Metzger’s great influence. It was the theory employed in producing the United Bible Societies Greek text. It is the theory lying behind the Greek text used by most modern versions: The Revised Standard, the New Revised Standard, the New English Bible, the Revised English Bible, the New American Bible, the New American Standard, the Good News Bible, the New International Version...” (Brooks, *Bible Interpreters of the 20th Century*, p. 264).

- q. *Modern textual criticism's theory*: "There are instances where no existing manuscript is likely to preserve the original wording; where none of the variants seem to be right, or where the original text does not make sense as far as current scholarship can determine. In such cases scholars must assume that the original wording of the text has been lost or distorted in the course of the copying process" (Michael Coogan, "Textual Criticism," *New Oxford Annotated Bible*, NRSV, 3rd edition, 2001).

*COMMENT*: This is a standard position among textual critics, that some of the original wording of the Bible has probably been lost; but it is a complete denial of divine preservation.

### **Conclusion:**

- a. We see that the principles of modern textual criticism are strange and unscriptural.
- b. Note that the modern textual critic's rules are loaded in favor of his theories. "You will not have to look at these 'rules' for long before realizing that they are 'weighted' in the direction of their own pre-determined preference for the Alexandrian Text. For example, if the Alexandrian Text is shorter than the Traditional, then one firm rule is 'The shorter reading is to be preferred.' And, if ninety percent of the manuscripts support the Traditional Text and the remaining ten percent must be divided between the Alexandrian, Western and Caesarean texts, then of course, 'numerical preponderance counts for nothing, the Traditional Text is merely one of four competing text types.' And, should it be pointed out that the Alexandrian Text is less distinct doctrinally: then it is an established fact that 'there are no signs of deliberate falsification of the text for doctrinal purposes during the early centuries.' And on it goes!" (Jack Moorman, *Early Manuscripts and the Authorized Version, A Closer Look*, 1990, p. 6).
- c. Note, too, that the principles of modern textual criticism are very complicated. They involve such things as conflation, recension, inversion, eclecticism, conjectural emendation, intrinsic and transcriptional probability, interpolation, statistical probability, harmonistic assimilation, cognate groups, hypothesized intermediate archetypes, stemmatic reconstruction, and genealogical methods. It is impossible to reconcile this scholarly complexity with the simplicity that is in Christ (2 Cor. 11:3) and with the scriptural fact that God has chosen the weak of this world to confound the mighty (Mat. 11:25; 1 Cor. 1:20-29).

### **3. We reject modern textual criticism because its rules are unsettled and constantly changing, and also because the rules are applied in different ways by individual critics.**

Eldon Epp admits, "New Testament textual criticism ... IS ALWAYS IN PROCESS. Its history is a record of various discoveries, insights, methods, and distinctive achievements that provide the basis for further investigation, but WITH FEWER DEFINITIVE CONCLUSIONS OR

FINAL RESOLUTIONS THAN MIGHT BE EXPECTED” (“Decision Points in Textual Criticism,” *Studies in the Theory and Method of New Testament Textual Criticism*, edited by Epp and Gordon Fee, p. 17).

“Different scholars apply the canons very differently. Some place most of the weight on external criteria; others on internal. Some analyze readings starting with internal criteria, others with external. In other words, PEOPLE HAVE DIFFERENT RULES FOR USING THE RULES!” (Robert Waltz, *Canons of Criticism*, <http://www.skypoint.com/~waltzmn/CanonsOfCrit.html>).

A.E. Housman makes this telling statement: “Textual criticism is not a branch of mathematics, NOR INDEED AN EXACT SCIENCE AT ALL. ... IT IS THEREFORE NOT SUSCEPTIBLE OF HARD-AND-FAST RULES. ... A textual critic engaged upon his business is not at all like Newton investigating the motions of the planets: HE IS MUCH MORE LIKE A DOG HUNTING FOR FLEAS” (Housman, “The Application of Thought to Textual Criticism,” *Proceedings of the Classical Association*, August 1921, xviii, London, 1922, pp. 68-69; cited from Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 219). We believe that a dog hunting fleas is, truly, an apt description of modern textual criticism.

B.B. Warfield described textual criticism as a matter of general averages and probabilities, sort of like a game of chance: “All ‘canons of criticism’ are ONLY GENERAL AVERAGES, AND OPERATE LIKE A PROBABILITY BASED ON A CALCULATION OF CHANCES” (Warfield, *An Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, p. 107).

Bruce Metzger makes this amazing admission: “SINCE TEXTUAL CRITICISM IS AN ART AS WELL AS A SCIENCE, IT IS UNDERSTANDABLE THAT IN SOME CASES DIFFERENT SCHOLARS WILL COME TO DIFFERENT EVALUATIONS OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE EVIDENCE” (*The Text of the New Testament*, p. 210). Seeking to establish the original text of the Bible is art! Whereas the Bible is all about absolutes from beginning to end, art has nothing to do with absolutes! To the contrary, settling the text of Holy Scripture is not art; it is a spiritual task of determining the text inspired and preserved by God, and it can only be accomplished through faith and spiritual wisdom, based on biblical principles, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Yet one thing Griesbach, Westcott, Hort, Kenyon, Epp, Streeter, Metzger, or Aland DO NOT mention is faith, biblical principles, and the Holy Spirit! And one thing they all agree on (with their evangelical and fundamentalist disciples) is to discount any textual principle that even hints at being “theological.” The “fideistic” or “faith” approach is rejected out of hand. No wonder nothing is settled in this field.

**4. We further reject modern textual criticism because its fruit has been increasing uncertainty and skepticism, a weakening of the authority of Scripture and the promotion of the ecumenical movement.**

a. *MODERN TEXTUAL CRITICISM HAS RESULTED IN UNCERTAINTY IN THE BIBLICAL*



*TEXT*. Whereas prior to the late 19th century the vast majority of Bible-believing Christians were confident that the Masoretic Hebrew and the Greek Received texts were the preserved Word of God, today there is no real certainty where textual criticism has been accepted. The Masoretic Hebrew has been challenged by the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Septuagint, and other sources, so that some twenty to thirty thousand textual changes have been suggested for the Old Testament. The Greek Received Text has been replaced with a constantly changing, so-called “eclectic” text.

Note the following statements by prominent textual critics of the last 100 years testifying to the gross uncertainty produced by modern textual criticism.

“[The New Testament text is more unsettled] than ever, and PERHAPS FINALLY, UNSETTLED” (Rendel Harris, *Side Lights on New Testament Research*, 1908, p. 3).

“The ultimate text, if there ever was one that deserves to be so called, IS FOR EVER IRRECOVERABLE” (F.C. Conybeare, *History of New Testament Criticism*, 1910, p. 129).

“In spite of the claims of Westcott and Hort and of von Soden, WE DO NOT KNOW THE ORIGINAL FORM OF THE GOSPELS, AND IT IS QUITE LIKELY THAT WE NEVER SHALL” (Kirsopp Lake, *Family 13, The Ferrar Group*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1941, p. vii).

“... it is generally recognized that THE ORIGINAL TEXT OF THE BIBLE CANNOT BE RECOVERED” (R.M. Grant, “The Bible of Theophilus of Antioch,” *Journal of Biblical Literature*, vol. 66, 1947, p. 173).

“The textual history that the Westcott-Hort text represents is no longer tenable in the light of newer discoveries and fuller textual analysis. In the effort to construct a congruent history, our failure suggests that WE HAVE LOST THE WAY, that WE HAVE REACHED A DEAD END, and that only a new and different insight will enable us to break through” (Kenneth Clark, “Today’s Problems,” *New Testament Manuscript Studies*, edited by Parvis and Wikgren, 1950, p. 161).

“... the optimism of the earlier editors has given way to that SKEPTICISM WHICH INCLINES TOWARDS REGARDING ‘THE ORIGINAL TEXT’ AS AN UNATTAINABLE MIRAGE” (G. Zuntz, *The Text of the Epistles*, 1953, p. 9).

“In general, THE WHOLE THING IS LIMITED TO PROBABILITY JUDGMENTS; the original text of the New Testament, according to its nature, must be and remain A HYPOTHESIS” (H. Greeven, *Der Urtext des Neuen*

*Testaments*, 1960, p. 20, cited from Edward Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, p. 67).

“... so far, the twentieth century has been a period characterized by GENERAL PESSIMISM ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF RECOVERING THE ORIGINAL TEXT BY OBJECTIVE CRITERIA” (H.H. Oliver, 1962, p. 308; cited from Eldon Epp, “Decision Points in New Testament Textual Criticism,” *Studies in the Theory and Method of New Testament Textual Criticism*, p. 25).

“The primary goal of New Testament textual study remains the recovery of what the New Testament writers wrote. We have already suggested that TO ACHIEVE THIS GOAL IS WELL NIGH IMPOSSIBLE. Therefore we must be content with what Reinhold Niebuhr and others have called, in other contexts, AN ‘IMPOSSIBLE POSSIBILITY’” (R.M. Grant, *A Historical Introduction to the New Testament*, 1963, p. 51).

“... every textual critic knows that this similarity of text indicates, rather, that WE HAVE MADE LITTLE PROGRESS IN TEXTUAL THEORY SINCE WESTCOTT-HORT; THAT WE SIMPLY DO NOT KNOW HOW TO MAKE A DEFINITIVE DETERMINATION AS TO WHAT THE BEST TEXT IS; THAT WE DO NOT HAVE A CLEAR PICTURE OF THE TRANSMISSION AND ALTERNATION OF THE TEXT IN THE FIRST FEW CENTURIES; and, accordingly, that the Westcott-Hort kind of text has maintained its dominant position largely by default” (Eldon J. Epp, “The Twentieth Century Interlude in New Testament Textual Criticism,” *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Vol. 43, 1974, pp. 390-391).

“... WE FACE A CRISIS OVER METHODOLOGY IN NT TEXTUAL CRITICISM. ... Von Soden and B.H. Streeter and a host of others announced and defended their theories of the NT text, but none has stood the tests of criticism or of time. ... following Westcott-Hort but beginning particularly with C.H. Turner (1923ff.), M.-J. Langrange (1935), G.D. Kilpatrick (1943ff.), A.F.J. Klijn (1949), and J.K. Elliott (1972ff.), A NEW CRISIS OF THE CRITERIA BECAME PROMINENT AND IS VERY MUCH WITH US TODAY: a duel between external and internal criteria and the widespread UNCERTAINTY AS TO PRECISELY WHAT KIND OF COMPROMISE OUGHT TO OR CAN BE WORKED OUT between them. The temporary ‘cease-fire’ that most--but certainly not all--textual critics have agreed upon is called ‘moderate’ or ‘reasoned’ eclecticism’ ... the literature of the past two or three decades is replete with controversy over the eclectic method, or at least is abundant with evidence of THE FRUSTRATION THAT ACCOMPANIES ITS USE...” (Eldon Epp, “Decision Points in New Testament Textual Criticism,” *Studies in the Theory and Method of New Testament Textual Criticism*, 1993, pp. 39-41).

“... we no longer think of Westcott-Hort’s ‘Neutral’ text as neutral; we no longer think of their ‘Western’ text as western or as uniting the textual elements they selected; and, of course, we no longer think so simplistically or so confidently about recovering ‘the New Testament in the Original Greek.’ ... WE REMAIN LARGELY IN THE DARK as to how we might reconstruct the textual history that has left in its wake--in the form of MSS and fragments--numerous pieces of A PUZZLE THAT WE SEEM INCAPABLE OF FITTING TOGETHER. Westcott-Hort, von Soden, and others had sweeping theories (which we have largely rejected) to undergird their critical texts, but we seem now to have no such theories and no plausible sketches of the early history of the text that are widely accepted. What progress, then, have we made? Are we more advanced than our predecessors when, after showing their theories to be unacceptable, we offer no such theories at all to vindicate our accepted text?” (Epp, “A Continuing Interlude in NT Textual Criticism,” *Studies in the Theory and Method of New Testament Textual Criticism*, pp. 114, 115).

“As New Testament textual criticism moves into the twenty-first century, it must shed whatever remains of its innocence, for nothing is simple anymore. Modernity may have led many to assume that a straightforward goal of reaching a single original text of the New Testament--or even a text as close as possible to that original--was achievable. Now, however, REALITY AND MATURITY REQUIRE THAT TEXTUAL CRITICISM FACE UNSETTLING FACTS, CHIEF AMONG THEM THAT THE TERM ‘ORIGINAL’ HAS EXPLODED INTO A COMPLEX AND HIGHLY UNMANAGEABLE MULTIVALENT ENTITY. Whatever tidy boundaries textual criticism may have presumed in the past have now been shattered, and its parameters have moved markedly not only to the rear and toward the front, but also sideways, as fresh dimensions of originality emerge from behind the variant readings and from other manuscript phenomena” (E. Jay Epps, “The Multivalence of the Term ‘Original Text’ In New Testament Textual Criticism,” *Harvard Theological Review*, 1999, Vol. 92, No. 3, pp. 245-281; this article is based on a paper presented at the New Testament Textual Criticism Section, Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, Orlando, Florida, November 1998).

#### The situation with modern textual criticism likened to that of Darwinian evolution

It is evident that the situation in the field of modern textual criticism is similar to that of Darwinian evolution. While many of the foundational principles of Darwin and his early followers have been refuted or seriously challenged, such as the theory that life could spontaneously arise or that natural selection could account for life as we know it or that man descended from apes, the superstructure of Darwinian evolution remains strangely unshaken. Likewise, modern textual criticism in the 21st century sits firmly upon the foundation laid by its architects of the 19th, and

even as the foundational principles have been disproved (e.g., a Lucian Recension, the existence of a neutral text, the reliability of intrinsic and transcriptional probability) the superstructure remains largely and strangely unshaken. In the case of Darwinian evolution, the chief thing that was rejected in the beginning was the doctrine of a Creator, and regardless of how devastatingly the foundational principles of Darwinian evolution are disproved, contemporary adherents of evolution refuse to reconsider the doctrine of a Creator or any form of Intelligent Design. In the case of modern textual criticism, the chief thing that was rejected by Westcott and Hort and other early proponents was the Greek Received Text (and with it any practical doctrine of divine preservation), and regardless of how thoroughly the foundational principles of Westcott and Hort have been refuted by textual critics in the past 100 years, the grandchildren of Westcott and Hort refuse to take a new look at the Received Text. The reason is that the adherents of both disciplines refuse to admit that they must approach these subjects by faith in God and by faith alone, that they can never know the truth about creation or the Bible apart from faith in divine revelation. Any other foundation is shifting sand.

- b. *MODERN TEXTUAL CRITICISM HAS RESULTED IN “THE TYRANNY OF THE EXPERTS.”* “The critical point of departure had been made [with the ascendancy of the Westcott-Hort Text]. No longer was the majority of the Greek manuscripts, preserved by the churches, the basis for recognizing the original reading. From now on, the learned professors would deliver the Christian world from their ‘blindness and ignorance.’ By their scholarly expertise they would deliver to the churches a purer text of the N.T. *Dr. Machen called this kind of scholarship ‘the tyranny of the experts.’ Now the ‘experts’ would rule over the churches and decide for them which variant reading was the acceptable one.* After Westcott and Hort, the Pandora’s box had been opened. As a result, all the evils of German rationalism began to tear at the foundation of the Faith, the Holy Scriptures. This ‘wrestling’ of the Scriptures has continued on until this day in both the higher and lower forms of textual criticism. The situation today involves almost as many different texts of the Greek N.T. as there are scholars. Each ‘scholar’ decides for himself what he will or will not accept as the Word of God. It comes down to two choices. We can accept the text handed down by the churches for nearly two thousand years or accept the findings of modern scholars, no two of which agree. If we go with the scholars, there is no one text that is accepted by all of them. Confusion reigns among the scholars. There is no standard” (Charles Turner, *Why the King James Version*, p. 9; Turner is the founder of the Baptist Bible Translators Institute of Bowie, Texas).
- c. *THE CONTEMPORARY DOCTRINE OF ECLECTICISM HAS ELEVATED THE BIBLE STUDENT AS THE MASTER OF THE TEXT AND HAS RESULTED IN A MASSIVE DECLINE IN THE AUTHORITY OF THE SCRIPTURES IN THIS GENERATION.* The concept of dogmatic interpretation and preaching has been greatly reduced because of this damnable principle. In a typical Bible study in a church that has bought into eclecticism

every individual is an authority unto his or herself as to what Greek manuscript or Greek text or English translation to follow in any given instance. There is no dogmatic authority for any statement, because someone can always come up with an alternative reading. This same principle has greatly weakened the authority of Bible preaching. I recall a visit in August 2003 to Saddleback Church in southern California, where Rick Warren of “Purpose Driven Church” fame is senior pastor. I observed on the way into the auditorium that only a few people carried Bibles, and the reason became clear when I saw the bewildering multiplicity of versions that were used in the preaching. An outline of the sermon was handed out with the bulletin, and six or seven versions were quoted, most of them loose paraphrases or dynamic equivalencies such as the Living Bible, the New Living Translation, The Message, Today’s English Version, and the Contemporary English Version. It would have been impossible to have followed along in one’s Bible. The result is that the people do not bring their own Bibles and do not therefore carefully test the preaching.

d. *THE UNCERTAINTY PRODUCED BY MODERN TEXTUAL CRITICISM HAS GIVEN AMMUNITION TO THE ENEMIES OF THE BIBLE.* They recognize, even if the evangelicals and fundamentalists who have adopted textual criticism do not, that an array of conflicting texts and versions undermines the doctrine of divine inspiration and preservation. Consider two examples:

(1) The Islamic Awareness website contains an article that quotes from the findings of modern textual criticism to cast doubt upon the Bible’s authenticity. The report concludes in this way:

“It is pretty clear that the ‘original’ reading of the New Testament books is not restored. Well, we do not know what the ‘original’ reading is at the first place. The absurd claim that the Bible’s literal text is restored to 99.8% is false as a quick comparison of the critical editions have shown above. The comparative study of the critical editions [published by Kurt and Barbara Aland] show a mere 63% agreement of the variant free verses not taking into consideration the orthographical differences. As far as the claim that the Bible being the word of God and its inerrancy is concerned, the less we talk about it, the better. This is because we do not have the ‘original’ text but myriad of imperfect, often divergent manuscripts from where the ‘original’ text has to be extracted by a committee of humans! Even worse, the ‘best’ reading is decided by voting!” (M.S.M. Saifullah and Abd ar-Rahman Robert Squires, *Textual Reliability of the New Testament*, 1999, <http://www.islamic-awareness.org/Bible/Text/Bibaccuracy.html#3>).

In fact, the Muslims who wrote this article are correct in their assessment of the findings of modern textual criticism. If modern textual criticism is true, the original text of the Bible has not been preserved. Where these Muslims go astray is in their thinking that modern textual criticism is the only genuine approach to the Bible’s text.

- (2) Roman Catholic apologists also use modern textual criticism to undermine the Bible's authority. The catholicapologetics.net web site has at least seven articles that focus on this line of thought. (a) "The 'Scripture Alone' Theory, and the Ending of the Gospel of Mark." (b) "The 200 Contested Verses, and Phrases of the Protestant New Testament: A listing of two-hundred verses and phrases in the just the New testament of KJV that are contested (and in many cases rejected) by many of today's Protestant scholars, and today's modern Protestant translations." (c) "Sola which Scriptura Part 1, The KJV vs. NKJV: The NKJV makes over 100,000 word changes from the old 1611 KJV." (d) "Sola which Scriptura Part 2, The KJV vs. NIV: Which one is right? How much do they differ? Does it affect doctrine? Who changed it? (e) "The 1611 KJV vs. the Present KJV: A Look at some of the Changes made to the text of the King James Version over the years." (f) "The KJV. vs. RV.: A short comparative look at the 1611 King James Version and the 1881 Revised Version." (g) "Here today Gone Tomorrow: A short comparative look some of the verses found in the 1611 King James Version which have 'disappeared' from most modern Protestant Versions of the Bible."

Consider an excerpt from the article "The 'Scripture Alone' Theory, and the Ending of the Gospel of Mark" -- "Another example, of the failure of the 'Scripture Alone' theory, is the ending of the gospel of Mark. Many modern Protestant translations find it difficult to determine how the apostle intended his gospel to end, for example the seven editions listed below actually provide three possible endings for Mark's work. ... One ending stops with 18:8, then there are to other alternate endings, a long conclusion and a short conclusion. The long conclusion is the traditional verse 18:9-20, found in the King James Version. Then there is a alternate short conclusion, about the size of two verses. ... It is hard to hold the 'Scripture Alone' theory when there is no physical authority to look to in order to determine how the book of Mark ends. ... How can one be solely dependant on a book for spiritual guidance, when they cannot even authoritatively determine what are the physical bounds of the text it self? Thank God that as Catholics we have a visible Church to guide us with the authority to determine such matters for us."

The Roman Catholic who wrote this has a point. If modern textual criticism cannot determine the original ending of Mark's Gospel, which is a very important matter, where does this leave the doctrine of the infallible inspiration and complete authority of Scripture?

These are only two examples of how unbelievers use the work of modern textual critics to discredit the Scriptures. There is no doubt that the unbelieving principles and statements of rationalist modern textual critics (who overwhelmingly dominate the field) have given great cause for rejoicing to many unbelievers who would like nothing better than to believe that the Bible is a mere book.

e. MODERN TEXTUAL CRITICISM HAS LED MANY INTO THEOLOGICAL MODERNISM.

- (1) Dr. Edward Hills, who was trained in textual criticism at the doctorate level at Harvard, observed this phenomenon. "... the logic of naturalistic textual criticism leads to complete modernism, to a naturalistic view not only of the biblical text but also of the Bible as a whole and of the Christian faith. For if it is right to ignore the providential preservation of the Scriptures in the study of the New Testament text, why isn't it right to go farther in the same direction? Why isn't it right to ignore other divine aspects of the Bible? Why isn't it right to ignore the divine inspiration of the Scriptures when discussing the authenticity of the Gospel of John or the Synoptic problem or the authorship of the Pentateuch? ... Impelled by this remorseless logic, many an erstwhile conservative Bible student has become entirely modernistic in his thinking. But he does not acknowledge that he has departed from the Christian faith. For from his point of view he has not. He has merely traveled farther down the same path which he began to tread when first he studied naturalistic textual criticism of the Westcott and Hort type, perhaps at some conservative theological seminary. From his point of view his orthodox former professors are curiously inconsistent. They use the naturalistic method in the area of New Testament textual criticism and then drop it most illogically, like something too hot to handle, when they come to other departments of biblical study" (Edward F. Hills, *The King James Version Defended*).
- (2) The theological danger inherent within the practice of textual criticism was admitted from the liberal side by E. Jay Epps of Harvard Divinity School: "Nor (for those who choose to work within a theological framework) is textual criticism a 'safe' discipline -- a phrase I have heard for four decades -- that can be practiced without challenge to theological convictions or without risk to faith commitments or truth assertions. I DOUBT THAT IT EVER WAS 'SAFE' -- AT LEAST FOR ANY WHO HAVE THOUGHT THROUGH THE IMPLICATIONS OF OUR MYRIAD VARIATION UNITS, WITH THEIR INNUMERABLE COMPETING READINGS AND CONCEPTIONS, AS WELL AS THE THEOLOGICAL MOTIVATIONS THAT ARE EVIDENT IN SO MANY. BUT IF IT HAS BEEN A 'SAFE' DISCIPLINE, IT IS SAFE NO MORE. ... Any who embrace it as a vocation will find its intellectual challenges to have been increased a hundredfold by its enlarged boundaries and broadened horizons, which extend into codicology and papyrology and also into related early Christian, classical, literary, and sociological fields, all of which favor accommodation of the richness of the manuscript tradition, WITH ITS MULTIPLICITY OF TEXTS AND ITS MULTIVALENT ORIGINALS, RATHER THAN THE MYOPIC QUEST FOR A SINGLE ORIGINAL TEXT. Both broad training and knowledge, and A CAPACITY TO TOLERATE

AMBIGUITY will be high on the list of requisite qualifications for its practitioners” (E. Jay Epps, “The Multivalence of the Term ‘Original Text’ In New Testament Textual Criticism,” *Harvard Theological Review*, 1999, Vol. 92, No. 3, pp. 245-281; this article is based on a paper presented at the New Testament Textual Criticism Section, Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, Orlando, Florida, November 1998).

- (3) This is a loud warning to those who have ears to hear. What Epps did not say is that all of the many fields into which the modern textual critic is led are dominated today by theological skeptics; and the evangelical or fundamentalist who follows this course is disobeying the Bible by not separating from heretics and is in dire danger of spiritual shipwreck. “Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners” (1 Cor. 15:33).

f. *MODERN TEXTUAL CRITICISM HAS FURTHERED THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT BY BRINGING PROTESTANTS, BAPTISTS, AND CATHOLICS TOGETHER IN THE FIELD OF BIBLE TEXTS, VERSIONS, AND TRANSLATION.* This is a powerful exhibit of the unscriptural fruit of modern textual criticism:

- (1) Whereas the Roman Catholic Church never accepted the Greek Received Text or the Protestant versions based on it and indeed it put translators such as William Tyndale and John Rogers to death, Rome has readily accepted the critical text. Note the following statement by a Roman Catholic: “Catholics should work together with Protestants in the fundamental task of biblical translation ... [They can] work very well together and HAVE THE SAME APPROACH AND INTERPRETATION ... [This] signals a new age in the church” (Patrick Henry, *New Directions in New Testament Study*, Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1979, pp. 232-234).
- (2) The papal proclamation “Divine afflante Spiritu” in 1943 called for an ecumenical Bible. “[T]hese translations [should] be produced in cooperation with separated brothers” (*New American Bible*, New York: World Publishing Co., 1970, p. vii).
- (3) In fact, Rome has conformed its own Vulgate to the modern critical text. In 1965, Pope Paul VI authorized the publication of a new Latin Vulgate, with the Latin text conformed to the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament (Michael de Semlyen, *All Roads Lead to Rome*, p. 201). It was published in 1979 by the German Bible Society.
- (4) In 1966 the Revised Standard Version was published in a “Roman Catholic Edition.” This version included the apocryphal books inserted among the books



of the Old Testament and incorporated Catholic readings such as “full of grace” in Luke 1:28. As a result, the chief editor of the RSV, Luther Weigle, was rewarded the “Papal Knighthood of St. Gregory the Great” in 1966 by Pope Paul VI (Peter Thuesen, *In Discordance with the Scriptures: American Protestant Battles over Translating the Bible*, 1999, p. 142).

- (5) Beginning in 1967, Cardinal Carlo Martini was on the editorial committee for the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament.
- (6) In October 1969, for the first time in its history the Church of England authorized a Catholic Bible for use in its services. The Full Synod of the Canterbury Convocation authorized *The Jerusalem Bible*, which was published in 1966 with the imprimatur of Cardinal Heenan.
- (7) In 1973 the Ecumenical Edition of the Revised Standard Version was published. Also called the “Common Bible,” a copy was presented personally to Pope Paul VI by Bruce Metzger, Herbert May, and others. Metzger described this as follows: “In a private audience granted to a small group, comprising the Greek Orthodox Archbishop Athenagoras, Lady Priscilla and Sir William Collins, Herbert G. May, and the present writer, POPE PAUL ACCEPTED THE RSV ‘COMMON’ BIBLE AS A SIGNIFICANT STEP IN FURTHERING ECUMENICAL RELATIONS AMONG THE CHURCHES” (Metzger, “The RSV-Ecumenical Edition,” *Theology Today*, October 1977).
- (8) The Bible Societies translation projects today are “interconfessional.” In 1987 a formal agreement was made between the Roman Catholic Church and the United Bible Societies that the critical Greek New Testament would be used for all future translations, both Catholic and Protestant (*Guidelines for International Cooperation in Translating the Bible*, Rome, 1987, p. 5). (For more about ecumenical translations see our book *Unholy Hands on God’s Holy Book*, available from Way of Life Literature.)

### **Conclusion of why we reject modern textual criticism**

- a. What is the one key Bible doctrine that overthrows modern textual criticism?

*Answer:* It is the doctrine of divine preservation. According to modern textual criticism the pure Scriptures were discarded in the fourth century and not “recovered” until the 19th. This is one of its fundamental principles and is the reason why textual critics can discard the Traditional Text so flippantly, but such a thing is impossible upon its very face if divine preservation as taught in the Scriptures is true.

- b. Modern textual criticism is an unsettled pseudo-science. It is a “science falsely so called” (1 Tim. 6:20).

- c. Modern textual criticism dismissed the Traditional Text found in the vast majority of Greek manuscripts by claiming that it was the product of an alleged recension that occurred in the early centuries, though there is no evidence for such a thing.
- d. Modern textual criticism is complicated and is therefore suitable only for the scholarly elite.
- e. Modern textual criticism has produced uncertainty, skepticism, and a weakening of the authority of the Bible, and has encouraged the back to Rome movement.

Suggestions for further reading on this topic: (1) John Burgon's exposure of the error of the Westcott-Hort theories, as contained in *The Revision Revised*, is devastating. David Otis Fuller published an abbreviated form of this in *True or False?* (2) Another critique of the Westcott-Hort textual theories is *The Identity of the New Testament Text* by Wilbur Pickering (Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1977). This is available online at <http://www.esgm.org/ingles/imenu.html>. Pickering, who has a Ph.D. in Linguistics from the University of Toronto, dismantles the principles of Westcott and Hort point by point. The research for the first edition of this book was done for a master's thesis Pickering submitted to Dallas Theological Seminary in 1968. The thesis was published in 1973 in *True or False?* (We strongly disagree with Pickering's support for the *Hodges-Farstad Majority Text* and his proposed revision of the Greek Received Text and the King James Bible, but one does not have to agree with all of Pickering's conclusions to benefit from his extensive research in this field.) (3) Edward F. Hills' *The King James Version Defended* contains a masterly refutation of modern textual criticism. (4) An excellent brief summary of the Westcott-Hort theory of textual criticism is contained in Jack Moorman's *Modern Bibles--the Dark Secret*. All of these are available from Bible for Today, 900 Park Ave., Collingswood, NJ 08108.

### **ISN'T THE ACTUAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE RECEIVED TEXT AND THE WESTCOTT-HORT TEXT SMALL AND INSIGNIFICANT?**

Another of the myths perpetuated today by the defenders of the modern versions is that there is very little difference between the Received Text underlying the KJV and other Reformation versions and the Westcott-Hort Greek text underlying the modern versions. Westcott and Hort made this claim in their day, and it is widely repeated today. One of the authors of the book *From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man* says, "... to put this 'thousandth part of the entire text' into perspective, I am looking at the last page of my Greek New Testament. It is numbered 895. Hort's estimate means that if all of the substantial variation between the families was grouped together in one place it would combine to occupy less than one page of my entire Testament" (Mark Minnick, "Let's Meet the Manuscripts," *From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man*, ed. by James B. Williams, 1999, pp. 85, 86). Thus Minnick, a fundamentalist, accepts Hort's claim and concludes that the "substantial" difference between the texts affects the equivalent of less than one page of the New Testament.

## **ANSWER:**

1. In reality, the difference between the texts involves 5,604 changes totaling 9,970 Greek words. That affects 7% of the words in the TR and 45.9 pages of the Greek N.T. The omissions alone total 2,886 words, the equivalent of omitting 1 and 2 Peter!

a. Dr. Donald Waite made his own study of the differences between the Westcott-Hort Greek text and the Received Text and published his findings in *Defending the King James Bible*: “My own personal count, as of August 2, 1984, using Scrivener’s Greek New Testament referred to above [an edition of the Received Text], was 5,604 changes that Westcott and Hort made to the Textus Receptus in their own Greek New Testament text. Of these 5,604 alterations, I found 1,952 to be OMISSIONS (35%), 467 to be ADDITIONS (8%), and 3,185 to be CHANGES (57%). In these 5,604 places that were involved in these alterations, there were 4,366 more words included, making a total of 9,970 Greek words that were involved. This means that in a Greek Text of 647 pages (such as Scrivener’s text), this would average 15.4 words per page that were CHANGED from the Received Text. Pastor Jack Moorman counted 140,521 words in the Textus Receptus. These changes would amount to 7% of the words; and 45.9 pages of the Greek New Testament if placed together in one place.”

b. Jack Moorman also did a firsthand study of the differences, counting every word of the Nestle-Aland Greek text and comparing it with the Received Text. He published this in “Missing in Modern Bibles: Is the full Story Being Told” (Bible for Today, 1981). He concluded that the Nestle-Aland is shorter than the Received Text by 2,886 words (934 MORE words than were omitted in the Westcott-Hort of 1881). This is equivalent to dropping the entire books of 1 Peter and 2 Peter out of the New Testament.

2. Not only is the difference between the critical Greek text and the Received Text large, but the difference is also doctrinally substantial. We have covered this under the question, “Is it true that there are no significant doctrinal differences between the modern versions and the KJV?”

3. The position that downplays the difference between the texts and versions is a dangerous half-truth. On the one hand, it is true that a literal modern version such as the New American Standard contains most of God’s words and that one can teach basic doctrinal truth from it. In this we can see the miraculous way that God has preserved the truth even in the Alexandrian manuscripts that have been damaged by heretical assault and careless scribal corruption. On the other hand, there are significant doctrinal differences between a version based on the critical Greek text and one based on the Traditional Greek text. Again, we deal with this under the section, “Is it true that there are no significant doctrinal differences between the modern versions and the KJV?”

## ISN'T THE CRITICAL GREEK TEXT BASED ON OLDER MANUSCRIPTS?

“... the textual basis of the TR is a small number of haphazardly and relatively late minuscule manuscripts” (D.A. Carson, *The King James Version Debate*, p. 36).

### ANSWER:

While it is true that the Greek manuscripts Erasmus actually had in his possession were relatively late ones, they reflected a text that is at least as old as the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus. Hort claimed that the Traditional or Antiochian Text, as he called it, could not be found prior to the middle of the third century. “Before the middle of the third century, at the very earliest, we have no historical signs of the existence of readings, conflate or other, that are marked as distinctively Syrian by the want of attestation from groups of documents which have preserved the other ancient forms of text” (quoted from Westcott and Hort, Introduction to *The New Testament in the Original Greek*, 1881). Frederic Kenyon called this the “corner-stone” of Hort’s theory, “that readings characteristic of the Received Text are never found in the quotations of Christian writers prior to about A.D. 350” (Kenyon, *Recent Developments in the Textual Criticism of the Greek Bible*, 1933, pp. 7-8). The reason that this was the cornerstone of Hort’s theory was that he believed it offered irrefutable evidence that the Traditional Text was created by a revision in the fourth century, since (so he said) it does not appear in the manuscript record prior to that. He was wrong, as the following facts demonstrate.

#### 1. Testimonies to the antiquity of the Traditional Text:

- a. The Testimony of Bishop Ellicott, chairman of the English Revised Version translation committee: “The manuscripts which Erasmus used differ, for the most part, only in small and insignificant details, from the great bulk of the cursive MSS. The general character of their text is the same. By this observation the pedigree of the Received Text is carried up beyond the individual manuscripts used by Erasmus. ... That pedigree stretches back to remote antiquity. THE FIRST ANCESTOR OF THE RECEIVED TEXT WAS AT LEAST CONTEMPORARY WITH THE OLDEST OF OUR EXTANT MSS, IF NOT OLDER THAN ANY ONE OF THEM” (Bishop Ellicott, chairman of the ERV committee, *The Revisers and the Greek Text of the N.T. by two members of the N.T. Company*, pp. 11-12).
- b. The Testimony of John Burgon: His unpublished index of quotations from ancient fathers, which resides in the British Museum, consists of 16 thick manuscript volumes containing 86,489 references. Burgon’s research established that the Received Text was the prominent text of the early centuries. Some 4,383 of these 86,000 quotations were from 76 writers who died before the year 400 A.D. Jack Moorman observes: “Edward Miller carried on the work after Burgon’s death and put the material in a tabulated form showing the times a Church Father witnesses for and against the Received Text. He found the Received Text had the greater support by 2,630 to 1,753 or 3 to 2. Keeping in mind the Alexandrian and

Western localities of these 76 Fathers, we have here quite a strong majority for the Received Text. Had the quotations of the Eastern Fathers been available, all indications are that the support would have been quite overwhelming. But the above evidence shows clearly also that there was a struggle over the text of Scripture in those early centuries. But, there was a clear winner!" (*Modern Bibles the Dark Secret*). Of Hort's claim of superior antiquity for his text, Burgon replied: "You talk of 'Antiquity.' But you must know very well that you actually mean something different. You fasten upon three, or perhaps four,--on two, or perhaps three,--on one, or perhaps two,--documents of the IVth or Vth century. But then, confessedly, these are one, two, three, or four *SPECIMENS ONLY* of Antiquity,--not 'Antiquity' itself. And what if they should even prove to be *unfair samples* of Antiquity? ... You are for ever talking about 'old Readings.' Have you not yet discovered that ALL "Readings' are 'OLD'?" (*The Revision Revised*, pp. 243, 44). Burgon's work has been despised, mischaracterized, and dismissed out of hand by modern textual critics, but it has never been refuted.

- c. The Testimony of Dr. Edward F. Hills, who checked Burgon's research and confirmed its accuracy. "In regard to my references to the Church Fathers, I am sure that if you examine the notes to my *King James Defended* and my *Believing Bible Study* you will see that I have taken care to look up all the Burgon's references in the most modern editions available. During the years 1950-55, I spent many weeks at this task. ... IN FACT, THE NEWER GERMAN EDITIONS OF THE CHURCH FATHERS DIFFER LITTLE FROM THOSE OF THE 17TH AND 18TH CENTURIES. CERTAINLY NOT ENOUGH TO AFFECT BURGON'S ARGUMENTS" (Letter from Edward Hills to Theodore Letis, February 15, 1980, as quoted in Letis, "Edward Freer Hills Contribution to the Revival of the Ecclesiastical Text," unpublished M.T.S. Thesis, Emory University, 1987).
- d. The Testimony of the Trinitarian Bible Society of England: "IT MUST BE EMPHASISED THAT THE ARGUMENT IS NOT BETWEEN AN ANCIENT TEXT AND A RECENT ONE, BUT BETWEEN TWO ANCIENT FORMS OF THE TEXT, one of which was rejected and the other adopted and preserved by the church as a whole and remaining in common use for more than fifteen centuries. The assumptions of modern textual criticism are based upon the discordant testimony of a few specimens of the rejected text recently disinterred from the oblivion to which they had been deliberately and wisely consigned in the 4th century" (*The Divine Original*, TBS article No. 13, nd, p. 7).
- e. The Testimony of Harry Sturz, who surveyed all of the available papyri to discover how many contained support for the Traditional Text and published his findings in *The Byzantine Text-Type and New Testament Textual Criticism* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1984). He observes, "The papyri have now demonstrated 'that the readings which Hort calls *Syrian* existed before the end of the fourth century.' Byzantine readings have now been proven to be in existence by the end of the second century! ... In regard to the argument based on the silence of the Fathers, IT SHOULD BE OBSERVED THAT,

CONTRARY TO THE STATEMENTS OF WH AND THEIR FOLLOWERS, QUOTATIONS FROM EARLY FATHERS HAVE BEEN FOUND IN SUPPORT OF BYZANTINE READINGS” (*The Byzantine Text-type*, p. 78). Jack Moorman summarizes Sturz’s findings. “He strikes a devastating blow at arguments which seek to minimize the fact that distinctive Byzantine readings do appear in the early papyri. He lists 150 Received Text readings which though not supported by the early Alexandrian and Western manuscripts are read by the mass of later manuscripts and by the early papyri. He lists a further 170 TR readings which again run counter to Vaticanus and Sinaiticus, but in this case find support from the Western manuscripts. These also are supported in the early papyri. In fact STURZ DEMONSTRATES POPYRI SUPPORT FOR A TOTAL OF 839 READINGS WHICH IN VARYING DEGREES WOULD BE CLASSED AS ‘DISTINCTLY BYZANTINE.’ As the papyri is available for only 30% of the New Testament, existing evidence allows us to reasonably project that the story would be the same for the rest of the New Testament. What is especially remarkable about this is that the papyri come from that area where the Alexandrian/shorter text was prevalent. Nearly all of the 267 uncial manuscripts move strongly to the side of the AV Text, with the same being true of the minuscules” (Jack Moorman, *Modern Bibles the Dark Secret*).

2. Some ways that textual critics have sought to undermine these facts:

- a. A mechanism used by the textual critics to discount the aforementioned facts is to claim that Burgon and Miller were not using the most approved critical editions of “the fathers.” Edward Hills replies: “At any rate, Fee’s rebuttal is a very ancient one, rather out of date, namely, the attempt to invalidate Burgon’s patristic references by alleging that the editions of the Church Fathers which he used were old and out of date. Fair-minded naturalistic scholars, however, like Rendel Harris (1909), have recognized that Burgon’s arguments cannot be so easily disposed of. In fact, the newer German editions of the Church Fathers differ little from those of the 17th and 18th centuries. Certainly not enough to affect Burgon’s arguments (Theodore Letis, “Edward Free Hill’s Contribution...,” cited from Jack Moorman, *A Closer Look*, p. 50).
- b. Another mechanism whereby the textual critics seek to discount the aforementioned facts is by distinguishing between readings and texts. Admitting that individual Traditional Text readings can be found in the writings of ancient preachers prior to the third century, they claim that the Traditional Text as a whole or as “a text” cannot be found in the writings of any one “father.” This is a clever tactic but it is ineffective. “... in the face of substantial evidence they have been forced to a second line of defense: ‘Well, there may be Byzantine readings before 350, but there is no Byzantine Text’! To which we would naturally reply that, given the large number of Byzantine readings, how can you have one without the other?” (Jack Moorman, *A Closer Look*, p. 7).
- c. Another mechanism that the textual critics use at this point is to claim that the aforementioned Traditional text quotations in the writings of the early church “fathers”

were added by later scribes. "... the common practice among patristic scholars is to dismiss distinctively Byzantine readings found in the writings of the Fathers unless the Father expressly comments on the significance of the Byzantine reading. This is due to the hypothesis that the scribes (who also copied the works of the Fathers as well as the New Testament manuscripts) would habitually and deliberately tend to alter the scriptural quotations of the Fathers into those with which they were familiar, namely, the Byzantine readings. ... If the Byzantine readings now summarily dismissed in the early Fathers were legitimately included, the Fathers' overall text would be seen to be far more 'Byzantine' than current scholarly opinion claims. This was Burgon's original contention, which was dismissed out of hand, due to his use of 'uncritical' editions of the Fathers. Current 'critical' editions, however, follow the above-mentioned practice of eliminating distinctive Byzantine readings where unconfirmed by direct comment. Were this not so, Burgon's assertion might find contemporary corroboration" (Maurice Robinson, "The Case for the Byzantine Textform: A New Approach to 'Majority Text' Theory," Southeastern Regional Meeting, Evangelical Theological Society, at Toccoa Falls College, March 8-9, 1991). M. Jacob Suggs observes: "There is little evidence of systematic revision of New Testament citations except in translated works, and this is paralleled by the practice of modern translators of theological works in quoting Biblical passages in a familiar version rather than supplying a fresh translation" ("The Use of Patristic Evidence in the Search for a Primitive New Testament Text," *New Testament Studies*, IV, No. 2, Jan. 1958, 140; cited from Sturz, *The Byzantine Text-type*, p. 79, footnote).

3. Other important considerations in regard to the witness of the early centuries:

- a. It is important to understand that there are no extensive early writings in existence from the area of Antioch. The vast majority of extant writings are from Egypt and Gaul. "Supporters of the WH theory point out that Chrysostom (who flourished in the last half of the fourth century) is the earliest Father to use the Byzantine text. **HOWEVER, THEY CUSTOMARILY NEGLECT TO MENTION THAT THERE ARE NO EARLIER ANTIOCHIAN FATHERS THAN CHRYSOSTOM WHOSE LITERARY REMAINS ARE EXTENSIVE ENOUGH SO THAT THEIR NEW TESTAMENT QUOTATIONS MAY BE ANALYZED AS TO THE TYPE OF TEXT THEY SUPPORT.** The silence-of-the-Fathers argument has been asked to bear more weight than it is able to sustain. How can Fathers of other areas using other local text-types be expected to witness to the Antiochian text? And how could it be expected that the Antiochian text (i.e., the early form of it) can be attested by Fathers who have left little or no writings?" (emphasis added) (Harry Sturz, *The Byzantine Text-type*, pp. 80, 81).
- b. There are very few manuscripts extant from the earliest centuries, far too few to make sweeping conclusions about the textual situation that existed in those earliest centuries. Maurice Robinson observes: "Were a thousand papyrus and uncial MSS extant from before the fourth century which were relatively complete and sufficiently representative of the

entire Eastern empire (by the location of their discovery), perhaps one could speak with greater authority than from the 63 fragmentary papyri we currently possess from that era. The resources of the pre-fourth century era unfortunately remain meager, restricted to a limited body of witnesses. Even if the text-critical evidence is extended through the eighth century, there would be only 424 documents, mostly fragmentary” (*New Testament Textual Criticism: The Case for Byzantine Priority*).

- c. The New Testament churches would generally have used less expensive papyri as opposed to the more expensive vellum made from animal skins. And apart from a few places with exceedingly dry climates, such as Egypt, ancient papyri manuscripts simply have not survived. Only a few fragments from the first four centuries have survived even in Egypt.
- d. Believers in the early centuries would have worn out their Scripture manuscripts quickly. This is true of believers today, but it would have been even truer then, when New Testament books were used not only for reading, study, and ministry, but also for copying.

### **WHY DO WE REJECT THE VATICANUS AND SINAITICUS MANUSCRIPTS?**

The Vaticanus and Sinaiticus are ancient Greek codex manuscripts that are preferred by modern textual critics. Kurt and Barbara Aland call the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus “the two important uncials” (*The Text of the New Testament*, p. 292). They call Vaticanus “by far the most significant of the uncials” (*Ibid.*, p. 109). The editors of the New International Version admit that they prefer the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus manuscripts: “... in most cases the readings found in older manuscripts, particularly the great Greek uncials Vaticanus and Sinaiticus of the fourth century AD, are to be preferred over those found in later manuscripts, such as those that reflect the TR [Received Text]” (Ronald Youngblood, *The Making of a Contemporary Translation*, p. 152). In their footnotes, the translators of the New International Version call the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus “the two most reliable early manuscripts” (footnote to Mark 16:9-20).

### **ANSWER:**

1. These manuscripts originated in Egypt, a hotbed of theological heresy. This is why they are commonly called Alexandrian. “Its [Vaticanus] origin is Lower Egyptian. Hort thinks it akin to the text used by Origen in his *Hexapla*” (*Catholic Encyclopedia*, online edition, “Manuscripts of the Bible”). After examining a number of heretical readings in the early Egyptian manuscripts favored by modern textual critics, Dr. Edward Hills concluded: “Thus we see that it is unwise in present-day translators to base the texts of their modern versions on recent papyrus discoveries or on *B* and *Aleph*. For all these documents come from Egypt, and EGYPT DURING THE EARLY CHRISTIAN CENTURIES WAS A LAND IN WHICH HERESIES WERE RAMPANT. So much was this so that, as Bauer (1934) and van Unnik (1958) have pointed out, later Egyptian Christians seem to have been ashamed of the heretical past of their country and to have drawn a veil of silence across it. This seems to be why so little is known of the history of



early Egyptian Christianity. In view, therefore, of the heretical character of the early Egyptian Church, it is not surprising that the papyri, *B*, *Aleph*, and other manuscripts which hail from Egypt are liberally sprinkled with heretical readings” (Edward Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, p. 134).

2. These manuscripts bear evidence of being corrupt above all other Greek uncials or minuscules. Consider this important testimony by John Burgon, who dedicated much of his life to the study of Greek manuscripts and who personally analyzed the Vaticanus in Rome: “When we study the New Testament by the light of such Codexes as B Aleph D L, we find ourselves in an entirely new region of experience; confronted by phenomena not only unique but even portentous. The text has undergone apparently AN HABITUAL, IF NOT SYSTEMATIC, DEPRAVATION; has been manipulated throughout in a wild way. Influences have been demonstrably at work which altogether perplex the judgment. The result is simply calamitous. There are evidences of persistent mutilation, not only of words and clauses, but of entire sentences. The substitution of one expression for another, and the arbitrary transposition of words, are phenomena of such perpetual occurrence, that it becomes evident at last that which lies before us is not so much an ancient copy, as an ancient recension of the Sacred Text. And yet not by any means a recension in the usual sense of the word as an authoritative revision; but only as the name may be applied to the product of individual inaccuracy or caprice, or tasteless assiduity on the part of one or many, at a particular time or in a long series of years. There are reasons for inferring, that we have alighted on five specimens of what the misguided piety of a primitive age is known to have been fruitful in producing. ... THESE CODEXES ABOUND WITH SO MUCH LICENTIOUSNESS OR CARELESSNESS AS TO SUGGEST THE INFERENCE, THAT THEY ARE IN FACT INDEBTED FOR THEIR PRESERVATION TO THEIR HOPELESS CHARACTER. Thus it would appear that an evil reputation ensured their neglect in ancient times; and has procured that they should survive to our own, long after multitudes which were much better had perished in the Master’s service” (Burgon and Miller, *The Traditional Text of the Holy Gospels Vindicated*, 1896, pp. 32, 33).

3. Let’s take a closer look at these manuscripts:

### **THE VATICANUS (B)**

a. Introductory facts:

- (1) The Vaticanus Greek codex gets its name from its location, which is the Vatican Library. Its history is unknown prior to 1475, when it first appeared in that library’s catalog.
- (2) It is thought to date from the mid-4th century and to have originated in Egypt. “Hort was inclined to assign it to Rome, and others to southern Italy or Caesarea; but the association of its text with the Coptic (Egyptian) Versions and with

Origen, and the style of writing (notably the Coptic forms used in some of the titles), point rather to Egypt and Alexandria” (Frederic Kenyon, *The Text of the Greek Bible*).

- (3) It contains most of the Old Testament (except Genesis 1:1 - 46:28; 2 Kings 2, 5-7, 10-13; and Psalm 105:27 - 137:6) but lacks large portions of the New Testament, such as Matthew 3, the Pastoral Epistles (1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon), Hebrews 9:14 - 13:25, and all of Revelation.
- b. Erasmus, the first editor of the printed Received Text, was familiar with the Vaticanus because in 1533 a correspondent in Rome sent him 365 of its readings in a vain attempt to demonstrate their superiority (Frederic Kenyon, *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts*).
- c. The home of Codex Vaticanus is unholy and is certainly not the place one would expect to find the preserved Word of God. I toured the Vatican in 1992 and again in 2003 and 2005 and was astounded at how pagan the place is. It reminds me of the many idolatrous temples we have visited during our years of missionary work in Asia. Fitting to the home of the man who claims the titles and position of Jesus Christ and who accepts adulation, the Vatican is a monument to idolatry and blasphemy and man’s shameless rebellion to God’s Revelation. There are statues and paintings of all sorts of pagan gods and goddesses; there are statues of Mary and the Popes and the “saints” and angels and the infant Jesus and crucifixes. The Vatican Library contains large paintings of Isis and Mercury. The “Cathedra Petri” or “Chair of Peter” contains woodcarvings that represent the labors of Hercules. The massive obelisk in the center of St. Peter’s Piazza is a pagan object from Egypt. Near the main altar of St. Peter’s is a bronze statue of “Peter” sitting in a chair. It is reported that this statue was originally the pagan god Jupiter that was taken from the Pantheon in Rome (when it was a pagan temple) and moved into St. Peter’s Basilica and renamed Peter! Jupiter was one of the chief gods of ancient Rome and was called the “pater” (father) in Latin. One foot of the statue is made of silver and Catholic pilgrims superstitiously touch or kiss it. In fact, the Vatican is one gigantic idol. Rearing up over the great altar over the supposed tomb of St. Peter are massive, golden, spiraling columns that look like coiling serpents. One can almost hear the sinister hiss. The Vatican is also a graveyard. Beneath “St. Peter’s” Basilica are marble caskets containing dead Popes. A life-sized statue of each Pope is carved in marble and reclines on the lid of his casket. Candles and incense are burning profusely. In the supposed tomb of Peter, 99 oil lamps are kept burning day and night. For those familiar with pagan religions, such as Hinduism and Buddhism, the origin of such things is obvious. The place is as eerie and pagan as any temple in darkest India. Pitifully deluded Catholics light their pagan candles in a vain attempt to merit God’s blessing after the fashion of benighted Hindus. There is no biblical authority for any of it. The Lord Jesus warned the Pharisees, “Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition” (Mark 7:9). Thus, the Vatican is one of the last places on earth one would expect to find the preserved Word of God.

- d. Outsiders were not allowed to use the Vaticanus manuscript until the late 1800s. “The Vaticanus New Testament was not seen by scholars until [1809] when Napoleon captured Rome and brought the manuscript back to Paris, where it was studied for a short time [until 1815]. If not for this, it is certain that its contents would still be locked up secure in the Vatican Library today” (<http://www.christianseparatist.org/ast/hist/uncial.htm>). Tischendorf and Tregelles were allowed to look at it between the years 1843-1866 but they were not allowed to copy any of it; they were examined before entering the library to make sure they did not have writing materials and guards were posted to make sure that they made no notes. Tischendorf was forced to wait for several months before being allowed to look at the manuscript for only six hours. Tregelles was allowed to look at the manuscript for three months and each day he memorized a section and then copied it down in the evening. By this means he eventually published his memorized copy of the Vaticanus New Testament. Here is a description of how visitors who were interested in the Vaticanus manuscript were treated by the Catholic authorities: “In 1845 the great English scholar Tregelles was allowed indeed to see it but not to copy a word. His pockets were searched before he might open it, and all writing materials were taken away. Two clerics stood beside him and snatched away the volume if he looked too long at any passage” (Frederic Kenyon, *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts*, 4th ed., 1939, pp. 138-139). It was not until 1868 that the Vatican published the entire Vaticanus New Testament, and that was only because it had become so familiar to scholars by the aforementioned means that the Pope was forced to publish it. The attitude Rome displayed toward those who sought to examine the Vaticanus codex is indicative of an institution that has burned Bible translators, forbidden the reading of the Bible in the vernacular languages, condemned the Bible Societies, and hurled anathemas against those who claim the Bible is the sole authority for faith and practice. While Baptists and Protestants were diligently bringing the Scriptures to light “so the plough-man could understand it” (as stated by translator William Tyndale), Rome was just as diligently trying to keep God’s Word from the common man. This is a historical fact which we have documented in *Faith vs. the Modern Versions* and more extensively in *Rome and the Bible: Tracing the History of the Roman Catholic Church and Its Persecution of the Bible and of Bible Believers*, available from Way of Life Literature, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143.
- e. Westcott and Hort preferred the Vaticanus manuscript as their chief authority above all other Greek manuscripts. It was “their touchstone” (Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 14).
- f. The Vaticanus is very strange and corrupt:
- (1) It was corrected by revisers in the 8th, 10th, and 15th centuries (W. Eugene Scott, *Codex Vaticanus*, 1996).
  - (2) The entire manuscript has been mutilated.

- (a) "... every letter has been run over with a pen, making exact identification of many of the characters impossible" (*Vaticanus and Sinaiticus* - [www.waynejackson.freereserve.co.uk/kjv/v2.htm](http://www.waynejackson.freereserve.co.uk/kjv/v2.htm)). This was probably done in the 10th or 11th century. All of the revision and overwriting "makes precise paleographic analysis impossible" (Scott, *Codex Vaticanus*). Dr. David Brown observes: "I question the 'great witness' value of any manuscript that has been overwritten, doctored, changed and added to for more than 10 centuries" (*The Great Uncials*).
- (b) Missing portions were supplied in the 15th century by copying other Greek manuscripts. This segment (pages 1519-1536) of the manuscript "is catalogued separately as minuscule 1957" (Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 109).
- (c) In the Gospels it leaves out 749 entire sentences and 452 clauses, plus 237 other words, all of which are found in hundreds of other Greek manuscripts. The total number of words omitted in B in the Gospels alone is 2,877 as compared with the majority of manuscripts (Burgon, *The Revision Revised*, p. 75).
- (3) Vaticanus omits Mark 16:9-20, but a blank space is left for that section of Scripture.
- (a) The following testimony is by John Burgon, who examined Vaticanus personally: "To say that in the Vatican Codex (B), which is unquestionably the oldest we possess, St. Mark's Gospel ends abruptly at the eighth verse of the sixteenth chapter, and that the customary subscription (*Kata Mapkon*) follows, is true; but it is far from being the whole truth. It requires to be stated in addition that the scribe, whose plan is found to have been to begin every fresh book of the Bible at the top of the next ensuing column to that which contained the concluding words of the preceding book, has at the close of St. Mark's Gospel deviated from his else invariable practice. HE HAS LEFT IN THIS PLACE ONE COLUMN ENTIRELY VACANT. IT IS THE ONLY VACANT COLUMN IN THE WHOLE MANUSCRIPT -- A BLANK SPACE ABUNDANTLY SUFFICIENT TO CONTAIN THE TWELVE VERSES WHICH HE NEVERTHELESS WITHHELD. WHY DID HE LEAVE THAT COLUMN VACANT? What can have induced the scribe on this solitary occasion to depart from his established rule? The phenomenon (I believe I was the first to call distinct attention to it) is in the highest degree significant, and admits only one interpretation. The older manuscript from which Codex B was copied must have infallibly contained the twelve verses in dispute. The copyist was instructed to leave them out -- and he obeyed; but he prudently left a blank space in *memoriam rei*. Never was a blank more intelligible! Never was silence more eloquent! By this simple expedient, strange to relate, the Vatican Codex is made to refute itself even while it seems to be bearing testimony against the concluding verses of St. Mark's Gospel, by withholding them; for it forbids the inference which, under ordinary circumstances, must have been drawn from that omission. It does more. By leaving room for the verses it omits, it brings into

prominent notice at the end of fifteen centuries and a half, a more ancient witness than itself” (Burgon, *The Last Twelve Verses of the Gospel of St. Mark Vindicated*, 1871, pp. 86-87).

- (b) Wilbur Pickering summarizes this issue: “Codex B is written in three columns and upon completing a book it normally begins the next book at the top of the next column. But between Mark and Luke there is a completely vacant column, the only such column in the codex. Considering that parchment was expensive, the ‘wasting’ of such a space would be quite unusual” (Pickering, *The Identity of the New Testament Text*, appendix F, “Mark 16:9-20 and the Doctrine of Inspiration”).
- (4) Vaticanus identifies itself as a product of gnostic corruption in John 1:18, where “the only begotten Son” is changed to “the only begotten God,” thus perpetuating the ancient Arian heresy that disassociates the Son of God Jesus Christ from God Himself by claiming that the Word was not the same as the Son. In the Received Text John’s Gospel identifies the Son directly with the Word (John 1:1, 18), but by changing “Son” to “God” in verse 18, this direct association is broken in the Vaticanus. John Burgon proved that this reading, which appears in only five Greek manuscripts, could be traced to the heretic Valentinus, who denied the Godhead of Jesus Christ by making a distinction between the Word and the Son of God (Burgon and Miller, *Causes of Corruption*, pp. 215, 216).
- (5) Vaticanus contains the false Roman Catholic apocryphal books such as Judith, Tobias, and Baruch (but not the books of the Maccabees).

## **THE SINAITICUS (ALEPH)**

### a. Its history

- (1) The Sinaiticus codex was discovered by Constantine Tischendorf at St. Catherine’s Monastery (Greek Orthodox) at Mt. Sinai. He discovered the first part in 1844 and the second in 1859. In May 1844, on his way to Mt. Sinai, Tischendorf stopped in Rome and had an audience with Pope Gregory XVI. Like Catholicism, the Greek Orthodox Church has a false gospel of grace plus works and sacraments and holds the unscriptural doctrine of venerating relics. St. Catherine’s Monastery has one entire room filled with skulls!
- (2) Following is the story of how Tischendorf found the Sinaiticus: “In the year 1844, whilst travelling under the patronage of Frederick Augustus, king of Saxony, in quest of manuscripts, Tischendorf reached the Convent of St. Catherine, on Mount Sinai. Here, observing some old-looking documents in a basketful of papers ready for lighting the stove, he picked them out, and discovered that they were forty-three

vellum leaves of the Septuagint Version. He was allowed to take these: but in the desire of saving the other parts of the manuscript of which he heard, he explained their value to the monks, who being now enlightened would only allow him to copy one page, and refused to sell him the rest. On his return he published in 1846 what he had succeeded in getting under the name 'Codex Frederico-Augustanus,' inscribed to his benefactor" (Edward Miller, *A Guide to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, p. 24). Some enemies of the defense of the King James Bible have claimed that the manuscripts were not found in a "waste basket," but they were. That is exactly how Tischendorf described it. "I perceived a large and wide basket full of old parchments; and the librarian told me that two heaps like this had been already committed to the flames. What was my surprise to find amid this heap of papers..." (*Narrative of the Discovery of the Sinaitic Manuscript*, p. 23). John Burgon, who was alive when Tischendorf discovered the Sinaiticus and also personally visited St. Catherine's to research ancient manuscripts, testified that the manuscripts "got deposited in the waste-paper basket of the Convent" (*The Revision Revised*, 1883, pp. 319, 342).

#### b. Some basic facts about Codex Sinaiticus

- (1) The leaves of the codex measure 13 X 15 inches. The text is written in uncial characters, without punctuation except occasional apostrophes and periods. It is written in four columns to the page (except in the poetical books, which are written in two wide columns). There are 48 lines per column (except in the Catholic Epistles, which have 47 lines per column).
- (2) The largest portion of the Sinaiticus (346 leaves, 199 of which are the Old Testament) resides in the British Library and was on display when I visited there on my fifth or sixth trip in April 2003 and was opened to Mark 16, plainly showing the glaring omission of verses 9-20. (Tischendorf eventually persuaded the monks to give the manuscript to the Czar of Russia, and in 1933 the Russian government sold it to the British Museum for 100,000 pounds or about \$500,000. It arrived at the Museum just before Christmas Day, 1933.) Another 43 leaves are at the University Library at Leipzig and 3 partial leaves are at Leningrad. In 1975, the monks at St. Catherine's discovered several leaves from Genesis.

#### c. The strangeness of Codex Sinaiticus

- (1) The Sinaiticus was written by three different scribes and was corrected later by several others. (This was the conclusion of an extensive investigation by H.J.M. Milne and T.C. Skeat of the British Museum, which was published in *Scribes and Correctors of Codex Sinaiticus*, London, 1938.) Tischendorf counted 14,800 corrections in this manuscript (David Brown, *The Great Uncials*, 2000). Dr. F.H.A. Scrivener, who published *A Full Collation of the Codex Sinaiticus* in 1864 testified:

“The Codex is covered with alterations of an obviously correctional character--brought in by at least ten different revisers, some of them systematically spread over every page, others occasional, or limited to separate portions of the Ms., many of these being contemporaneous with the first writer, but for the greater part belonging to the sixth or seventh century.” Thus it is evident that scribes in bygone centuries did not consider the Sinaiticus to represent a pure text. Why it should be so revered by modern textual critics is a mystery.

- (2) A great amount of carelessness is exhibited in the copying and correction. “Codex Sinaiticus ‘abounds with errors of the eye and pen to an extent not indeed unparalleled, but happily rather unusual in documents of first-rate importance.’ On many occasions 10, 20, 30, 40 words are dropped through very carelessness. Letters and words, even whole sentences, are frequently written twice over, or begun and immediately cancelled; while that gross blunder, whereby a clause is omitted because it happens to end in the same words as the clause preceding, occurs no less than 115 times in the New Testament” (John Burgon, *The Revision Revised*). It is clear that the scribes who copied the Sinaiticus were not faithful men of God who treated the Scriptures with utmost reverence. The total number of words omitted in Aleph in the Gospels alone is 3,455 compared with the Greek Received Text (Burgon, p. 75).
- (3) The first of the revisions was done by Pamphilus (who died in 309 A.D.) against Origen’s Hexapla (James Adair, Jr., “Sinaiticus,” *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*). There is a note in the Sinaiticus that says, “Taken and corrected according to the hexapla of Origen: Antonius compared it; I, Pamphilus, corrected it.” The problem with this is that Origen was a heretic of the first order and he changed the text of Scripture on “the authority” of false teachers such as Valentinus, who denied the Godhead of Jesus Christ. Origen taught baptismal regeneration, believed in purgatory, taught that all men and even Satan would eventually be saved, believed in the pre-existence of human souls, claimed that Jesus Christ had an origin, and taught that the Holy Spirit was the first creature made by God, among other heresies.
- (4) Mark 16:9-20 is omitted in the Sinaiticus, but it was originally there and has been erased.
- (5) The sheet containing the end of the Gospel of Mark and the beginning of Luke and the omission of Mark 16:9-20 was added to the manuscript at some point. “Tischendorf, who discovered the codex, warned that those four pages appeared to be written by a different hand and with different ink than the rest of the manuscript. However that may be, a careful scrutiny reveals the following: the end of Mark and beginning of Luke occur on page 3 (of the four); pages 1 and 4 contain an average of 17 lines of printed Greek text per column (there are four columns per page), just

like the rest of the codex; page 2 contains an average of 15.5 lines of printed text per column (four columns); the first column of page 3 contains only twelve lines of printed text and in this way v. 8 occupies the top of the second column, the rest of which is blank (except for some designs); Luke begins at the top of column 3, which contains 16 lines of printed text while column 4 is back up to 17 lines. On page 2 the forger began to spread the letters, displacing six lines of printed text; in the first column of page 3 he got desperate and displaced five lines of printed text, just in one column! In this way he managed to get two lines of v. 8 over onto the second column, avoiding the vacant column (as in B). That second column would accommodate 15 more lines of printed text, which with the other 11 make 26. Verses 9-20 occupy 23.5 such lines, so there is plenty of room for them. It really does seem that there has been foul play, and there would have been no need for it unless the first hand did in fact display the disputed verses. IN ANY EVENT, ALEPH AS IT STANDS IS A FORGERY AND THEREFORE MAY NOT LEGITIMATELY BE ALLEGED AS EVIDENCE AGAINST [THESE VERSES]" (Wilbur Pickering, *The Identity of the New Testament Text*, appendix F, "Mark 16:9-20 and the Doctrine of Inspiration"). F.H.A. Scrivener believed that the same scribe who copied Vaticanus also copied the pages that have been inserted into Sinaiticus. "... strange to relate, it so happens that the very leaf on which the end of St. Mark's Gospel and the beginning of St. Luke's is written (Mark 16:2 -- Luke 1:56), is one of the six leaves of Cod. Aleph which are held to have been written by the scribe of Cod. B. 'The inference,' remarks Scrivener, 'is simple and direct, that at least in these leaves Codd. B Aleph make but one witness, not two'" (Burgon and Miller, *The Traditional Text*, p. 233, quoting Scrivener, *A Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament*, II, p. 337, note 1).

- (6) Sinaiticus includes the apocryphal books (Esdras, Tobit, Judith, I and IV Maccabees, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus) plus two heretical writings, the Epistle of Barnabas and the Shepherd of Hermas. The apocryphal Epistle of Barnabas is filled with heresies and fanciful allegorizing, claiming, for example, that Abraham was familiar with the Greek alphabet and that water baptism saves the soul. The Shepherd of Hermas is a gnostic writing that presents the Adoptionist heresy that the Christ Spirit came upon Jesus at his baptism.
- (7) Sinaiticus exhibits the gnostic influence upon its face. In John 1:18 "the only begotten Son" is changed to "the only begotten God," thus perpetuating the ancient Arian heresy that disassociates the Son Jesus Christ with God Himself by breaking the clear connection between God of John 1:1 with the Son of John 1:18. See the previous remarks under Vaticanus.

4. Vaticanus (B) or Sinaiticus (Aleph), either individually or together, are the source of most of the omissions and glaring changes in the modern versions. "By far the greatest number of innovations, including those which give the severest shocks to our minds, are adopted on the



testimony of two manuscripts, or even of one manuscript, against the distinct testimony of all other manuscripts, uncial and cursive. ... The Vatican Codex, sometimes alone, but generally in accord with the Sinaitic, is responsible for nine-tenths of the most striking innovations in the R.V.” (Frederic Cook, *The Revised Version of the First Three Gospels*, 1882).

Following are a few of these omissions and changes. Lest someone claim that the above situation has changed since the adoption of the “eclectic” system and that the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus are no longer so slavishly followed, let it be noted that these readings are still found in the Nestle’s and the United Bible Societies Greek New Testaments and the vast majority are found in the New American Standard Version, the New International Version, and the Holman Christian Standard Bible.

### **Matthew**

- 5:22 -- “without a cause” omitted in Aleph and B, thus making Jesus into an evil man because He got angry at times (though never without a cause)
- 5:44 -- “... bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and ... which despitefully use you, and” omitted in Aleph and B
- 6:13 -- “For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen” omitted in Aleph and B
- 9:13 -- “to repentance” omitted in Aleph and B
- 12:47 -- “Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee” omitted in Aleph, B
- 19:9 -- “and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery” omitted in Aleph and B
- 12:47 -- “Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee” omitted in Aleph and B
- 17:21 -- “Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting” omitted in Aleph and B
- 18:11 -- “For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost” omitted in Aleph and B
- 19:9 -- “and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery” omitted in Aleph
- 23:14 -- “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation” omitted in Aleph and B
- 25:13 -- “wherein the Son of Man cometh” omitted in Aleph, B
- 27:34 -- “vinegar” is changed to “wine” in Aleph and B, thus destroying the fulfillment of the prophecy of Psalm 69:21

### **Mark**

- 1:2 -- “the prophets” is changed to “Isaiah the prophet” Aleph, B, thus creating an error because the quotation is from both Malachi 3:1 and Isaiah 40:3-5
- 2:17 -- “to repentance” omitted in Aleph, B
- 6:11 -- “Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrhah in the day of judgment, than for that city” omitted in Aleph and B

- 9:29 -- “fasting” omitted in Aleph and B
- 9:44 “Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched” omitted in Aleph, B
- 9:45 -- “into the fire that never shall be quenched” omitted in Aleph, B
- 9:46 “Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched” omitted in Aleph, B
- 10:21 -- “take up the cross” omitted in Aleph, B
- 11:10 -- “in the name of the Lord” omitted in Aleph, B
- 11:26 -- “But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses” omitted in Aleph, B
- 13:14 -- “spoken by Daniel the prophet” omitted in Aleph, B
- 14:68 -- “and the cock crew” omitted in Aleph, B
- 15:28 -- “And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors.” omitted in Aleph, B
- 16:9-20 -- entire last 12 verses of Mark’s Gospel omitted in Aleph and B

**Luke**

- 1:28 -- “blessed art thou among women” omitted in Aleph, B
- 2:14 -- “peace, good will toward men” is changed to “peace among men in whom he is well pleased” in Aleph and B
- 4:4 -- “every word of God” omitted in Aleph, B
- 4:8 -- “and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan” omitted in Aleph and B
- 4:18 -- “to heal the brokenhearted” omitted in Aleph, B
- 6:45 -- “treasure of his heart” omitted in Aleph, B
- 9:55, 56 -- “and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them” omitted in Aleph, B
- 11:2 -- “Our ... which art in heaven” omitted in Aleph, B
- 11:2 -- “Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth” omitted in B
- 11:4 -- “deliver us from evil” omitted in Aleph, B
- 11:11 -- “bread of any of you ... will he give him a stone? or if he ask” omitted in B
- 22:43-44 -- “And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. And being in agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground” omitted in B
- 23:17 -- “(For of necessity he must release one unto them at the feast.)” verse omitted B
- 23:34 -- “Then said Jesus, Father forgive them, for they know not what they do” omitted in B
- 24:12 -- “Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre; and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass” omitted in Aleph and B
- 24:51 -- “and was carried up into heaven” omitted in Aleph

**John**

- 3:15 -- “should not perish, but” omitted in Aleph, B
- 4:42 -- “the Christ” omitted in Aleph, B
- 5:3-4 -- “waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had” omitted in Aleph, B

- 5:16 -- “and sought to slay him” omitted in Aleph, B
- 6:47 -- “on me” omitted in Aleph, B
- 7:8 -- “yet” omitted in Aleph, thus causing Jesus to tell a lie
- 7:53 - 8:11 -- These 12 verses omitted in Aleph and B
- 8:59 -- “going through the midst of them” omitted in Aleph, B
- 16:16 -- “because I go to the Father” omitted in Aleph, B

### **Acts**

- 2:30 -- “according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ” omitted in Aleph, B
- 10:30 -- “fasting” omitted in Aleph and B
- 24:6-8 -- “...and would have judged according to our law. But the chief captain Lysias came upon us, and with great violence took him away out of our hands, Commanding his accusers to come unto thee...” omitted in Aleph, B
- 24:15 -- “of the dead” omitted in Aleph, B
- 28:29 -- “And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves.” verse omitted in Aleph, B

### **Romans**

- 1:16 -- “of Christ” omitted in Aleph, B
- 1:29 -- “fornication” omitted in Aleph, B
- 8:1 -- “who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” omitted in Aleph, B
- 9:28 -- “in righteousness: because a short work” omitted in Aleph, B
- 9:32 -- “of the law” omitted in Aleph, B
- 10:15 -- “preach the gospel of peace” omitted in Aleph, B
- 11:6 -- “But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work” omitted in Aleph, B
- 13:9 -- “Thou shalt not bear false witness” omitted in B
- 14:6 -- “and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it” omitted in Aleph, B
- 14:21 -- “or is offended, or is made weak” omitted in Aleph

### **1 Corinthians**

- 5:7 -- “for us” omitted in Aleph, B
- 6:20 -- “and in your spirit, which are God’s” omitted in Aleph, B
- 7:5 -- “fasting” omitted in Aleph, B
- 7:39 -- “by the law” omitted in Aleph, B
- 10:28 -- “for the earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof” omitted in Aleph, B
- 11:24 -- “Take, eat ... broken” omitted in Aleph, B
- 11:29 -- “unworthily” omitted in Aleph, B
- 11:29 -- “the Lord” omitted in Aleph, B
- 15:47 -- “the Lord” omitted in Aleph, B

### **Ephesians**

- 3:9 -- “by Jesus Christ” omitted in Aleph, B
- 5:30 -- “of his flesh, and of his bones” omitted in Aleph, B

### **Philippians**

---- 3:16 -- “by the same rule, let us mind the same thing” omitted in Aleph, B

### **Colossians**

---- 1:14 -- “through his blood” omitted in Aleph, B

### **Hebrews**

---- 1:3 -- “by himself” omitted in Aleph, B

---- 2:7 -- “and didst set him over the works of thy hands” omitted in B

---- 3:1 -- “Christ” omitted in Aleph, B

---- 3:6 -- “firm unto the end” omitted in B

---- 7:21 -- “after the order of Melchisedec” omitted in Aleph, B

---- 8:12 -- “and their iniquities” omitted in Aleph, B

---- 10:9 -- “O God” omitted in Aleph

---- 10:30 -- “saith the Lord” omitted in Aleph

---- 10:34 -- “in heaven” omitted in Aleph

### **James**

---- 5:16 -- “faults” changed to “sins” in Aleph, B

### **1 Peter**

---- 1:22 -- “through the Spirit” omitted in Aleph, B

---- 2:2 -- “grow thereby” is changed to “grow unto salvation” in Aleph, B

---- 4:1 -- “for us” omitted B

---- 4:3 -- “of our life” omitted in Aleph, B

---- 4:14 -- “on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified” omitted in Aleph, B

---- 5:2 -- “taking the oversight thereof” omitted in Aleph, B

### **2 Peter**

---- 2:17 -- “for ever” omitted in Aleph, B

---- 3:10 -- “in the night” omitted in Aleph, B

### **Jude**

---- 1:4 -- “God” omitted in Aleph and B

---- 1:25 -- “wise” omitted in Aleph, B

5. The Vaticanus and Sinaiticus contain many readings that denigrate and weaken the doctrine of the deity of Jesus Christ and thus give evidence that they are representatives of manuscripts that were corrupted by heretics.

“The Sabellian and Arian controversies raged in the 3rd and 4th centuries and the copies now held in such high repute among scholars were written in the 4th and 5th centuries. The hostility of these documents to the Trinitarian doctrine impels the mind to the conclusion that their omissions and alterations are not merely the chance errors of transcribers, but the work of a deliberate hand. When we remember the date of the great Trinitarian contest in the Church, and compare it with the supposed date of these documents, our suspicion becomes much more pronounced. ... THE SO-CALLED OLDEST CODICES AGREE WITH EACH OTHER IN

OMITTING A NUMBER OF STRIKING TESTIMONIES TO THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST, and they also agree in other omissions relating to Gospel faith and practice” (Robert Dabney, “The Doctrinal Various Readings of the New Testament Greek,” *Southern Presbyterian Review*, April 1871).

Consider some examples of this:

Matthew 19:17 -- “Why callest thou me good?” is changed to “Why do you ask me about what is good?” in Aleph and B; when Christ asked, “Why callest thou me good?” He was challenging the young man as to his conception of His Person, which is evident from the statement He makes immediately thereafter: “there is none good but one, that is, God.” Christ was saying, “If I am good, I am God.” Among those born of Adam’s natural seed there is “none that doeth good” (Rom. 3:12)! Christ was good because He was the seed of the woman, the virgin-born, sinless Son of God.

Mark 9:24 -- “Lord” omitted in Aleph and B

Mark 16:9-20 -- These verses are omitted in Aleph and B, thus making Mark’s gospel end with the disciples in fear and confusion, with no resurrection and glorious ascension.

Luke 2:33 -- “Joseph” is changed to “the child’s father” in Aleph, B

---- 23:42 -- “Lord” is changed to “Jesus” in Aleph and B, thus destroying this powerful reference to Christ’s deity

John 1:18 -- “the only begotten son” changed to “the only begotten God” in Aleph and B.

[John Burgon proved that this reading, which appears in only five Greek manuscripts, could be traced to the heretic Valentinus, who denied the Godhead of Jesus Christ by making a distinction between the Word and the Son of God. In the Received Text there is no question that the Word is also the Son and that both are God. The Word is God (Jn. 1:1); the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us (Jn. 1:14); the Word is the Son (Jn. 1:18). By changing Jn. 1:18 to “the only begotten God,” Valentinus and his followers broke the clear association between the Word and the Son.]

---- 1:27 -- “is preferred before me” omitted in Aleph, B

---- 3:13 -- “who is in heaven” omitted by Aleph and B

---- 6:69 -- “the Christ, the Son of the living God” is changed to “the Holy One of God” in Aleph and B, thus diluting this powerful witness to Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God

---- 9:35 -- “Son of God” changed to “Son of man” in Aleph and B, thus weakening another clear testimony to Jesus as the Son of God

---- 9:38 -- “Lord, I believe. And he worshipped Him” omitted in Aleph, thus removing this powerful and incontrovertible confession of Christ as God

---- 10:14 -- “am known of mine” is changed to “mine own know me” in Aleph and B. “...this change destroys the exquisite diversity of expression of the original, which implies that whereas the knowledge which subsists between the Father and the Son is mutually identical, the knowledge the creature has of the Creator is of a very different sort; and it puts the creature’s knowledge of the Creator on the same level as the Father’s knowledge of the Son, and the Son’s knowledge of the Father” (Philip Mauro, *Which Version: Authorised or Revised?*).

Acts 2:30 -- “according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ” omitted in Aleph and B, thus destroying this clear testimony that Jesus himself fulfills the promise of David as the Christ  
---- 20:28 -- “church of God” changed to “church of the Lord” in Aleph and B. The Traditional Text says plainly that it was God who died on the cross and shed His blood, whereas the Alexandrian text allows for the heretical view that the Jesus that died on the cross is the Lord but that he is not actually God. Jehovah’s Witnesses, for example, follow in the footsteps of ancient 2nd century heretics, claiming Jesus as Lord but not as God.

Romans 14:10 -- “judgment seat of Christ” is changed to “judgment seat of God” in Aleph and B. The “judgment seat of Christ” clearly identifies Jesus Christ with Jehovah God (Isaiah 45:23)

1 Corinthians 15:47 -- “the Lord” omitted in Aleph, B

Ephesians 3:9 -- “by Jesus Christ” omitted in Aleph, B

1 Timothy 3:16 -- “God” is omitted and replaced with “who” in Aleph (codex B does not contain this epistle)

1 John 4:3 -- “confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh” changed to “confesseth not Jesus” in B; every false spirit will “acknowledge Jesus” in a general sense (even Unitarians, Mormons, and Jehovah’s Witnesses), but the spirit of antichrist will not “confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh,” meaning that Jesus Christ is the very Messiah, the very God manifest in the flesh, promised in Old Testament prophecy.

6. Not only do Vaticanus and Sinaiticus disagree in thousands of places with the vast majority of other Greek manuscripts, they disagree with one another in as many or more places! There are 3,036 differences between the Vaticanus and the Sinaiticus *in the Gospels alone*, not counting minor errors such as spelling (Herman Hoskier, *Codex B and Its Allies*, Vol. II, p. 1). Consider the example of Lord’s prayer: “The five Old Uncials (Aleph A B C D) falsify the Lord’s Prayer as given by St. Luke in no less than forty-five words. But so little do they agree among themselves, that they throw themselves into six different combinations in their departures from the Traditional Text; and yet they are never able to agree among themselves as to one single various reading: while only once are more than two of them observed to stand together, and their grand point of union is no less than an omission of the article. Such is their eccentric tendency, that in respect of thirty-two out of the whole forty-five words they bear in turn solitary evidence” (Burgon and Miller, *The Traditional Text*, p. 84).

7. There is therefore clear evidence that Vaticanus, Sinaiticus, and D represent a corrupt text that was the product of tampering by theological heretics in the first three centuries after the apostles.

a. This is documented by John Burgon, who studied the five most ancient Greek uncials for five and one half years. I do not know of any other scholar who has dedicated this amount of research to these manuscripts. Burgon concluded: “Aleph B D [Sinaiticus, Vaticanus, Bezae] are *three of the most scandalously corrupt copies extant*: exhibit *the most shamefully mutilated texts* which are anywhere to be met with: have become, by whatever process (for their history is wholly unknown), the depositories of the largest amount of *fabricated readings*, ancient *blunders*, and *intentional perversions of Truth* which are discoverable in any known copies of the Word of God” (Burgon, *The Revision Revised*, 1883, p. 16).

b. This is also documented by Herman Hoskier in *Codex B and Its Allies: A Study and an Indictment* (London: Bernard Quaritch, 1914).

8. Biblical “common sense” informs us that these manuscripts owe their amazing survival solely to the fact that they are so corrupt. John Burgon, who calls B and Aleph “TWO FALSE WITNESSES,” observes: “We suspect that these two Manuscripts are indebted for their preservation, *SOLELY TO THEIR ASCERTAINED EVIL CHARACTER*; which has occasioned that the one eventually found its way, four centuries ago, to a forgotten shelf in the Vatican library: while the other, after exercising the ingenuity of several generations of critical Correctors, eventually (viz. in A.D. 1844) got deposited in the waste-paper basket of the Convent at the foot of Mount Sinai. Had B and Aleph been copies of average purity, they must long since have shared the inevitable fate of books which are freely *used* and highly prized; namely, they would have fallen into decadence and disappeared from sight” (Burgon, *The Revision Revised*, p. 319; see also pp. 30-31).

If these two witnesses were put on a witness stand in a court of law, they would be rejected. Not only do they disagree together against the vast majority of other witnesses, but they also disagree with one another as much as they disagree with the majority!

### **WAS THE SINAITICUS MANUSCRIPT ACTUALLY FOUND IN A WASTE PAPER CONTAINER?**

A critic of the defense of the King James Bible, who is so clever that he regularly finds errors where none exist, has claimed that the idea that the Sinaiticus was discovered in a waste paper receptacle is a myth.

ANSWER:

1. We have the testimony of Tischendorf himself, the discoverer of the Sinaiticus. He was traveling in 1844 under the patronage of Frederick Augustus, king of Saxony, searching for manuscripts, when he visited St. Catherine’s monastery on Mount Sinai. Here he found some old manuscripts in a basket of papers intended for lighting the stove and upon examination found them to be very ancient. Here are his own words: “In visiting the library of the monastery, in the month of May, 1844, I perceived in the middle of the great hall a large and wide basket full of old parchments; and the librarian, who was a man of information, told me that **TWO HEAPS OF PAPERS LIKE THESE, MOULDERED BY TIME, HAD BEEN ALREADY COMMITTED TO THE FLAMES.** What was my surprise to find amid this heap of papers a considerable number of sheets of a copy of the Old Testament in Greek, which seemed to me to be one of the most ancient that I had ever seen. The authorities of the convent allowed me to possess myself of a third of these parchments, or about forty-three sheets, all the more readily **AS THEY WERE DESTINED FOR THE FIRE**” (When Were Our Gospels Written? An Argument by Constantine Tischendorf. with a Narrative of the Discovery of the Sinaitic Manuscript, New York: American

Tract Society, 1866; an excerpt of this is at <http://rosetta.reltech.org/TC/extras/tischendorf-sinaiticus.html>).

Thus, Tischendorf tells us plainly that the pages of the manuscript were found in a basket of papers intended for lighting the stove. I cannot imagine why anyone would protest against calling this a wastebasket.

2. Further, we have the testimony of John Burgon, who was alive when Tischendorf discovered the Sinaiticus and personally spent time at St. Catherine's doing research into ancient manuscripts. At least three times in his writings Burgon said the manuscripts "got deposited in the waste-paper basket of the Convent" (*The Revision Revised*, 1883, pp. 319, 342; Burgon and Miller, *The Traditional Text of the Holy Gospels Vindicated and Established*, 1896, p. 12). This description of the location where Tischendorf found the Sinaiticus was published widely and was not challenged in Burgon's lifetime.

3. We also have the testimony of other preachers who lived nearer to the day of Tischendorf's discover of the Sinaiticus. For example, the famous preacher T. DeWitt Talmage (1832-1902), in his sermon "Mending the Bible," said: "It is a plain matter of history that Tischendorf went to a convent in the peninsula of Sinai, and was by ropes lifted over the wall into the convent, that being the only mode of admission and that he saw there in the wastebasket for kindling for the fires a manuscript of the holy Scriptures." It is obvious that Talmage was under the impression that the Sinaiticus was discovered in a "wastebasket."

4. Finally, we have the testimony of Bruce Metzger, one of the most prominent textual critics of our day. "While visiting the monastery of St. Catharine at Mount Sinai, he chanced to see some leaves of parchment in a waste-basket full of papers destined to light the oven of the monastery" (Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 43).

### **WHO ARE WESTCOTT AND HORT AND WHAT DID THEY BELIEVE?**

Brooks Foss Westcott (1825-1901) and F.J.A. Hort (1828-1892) were Anglicans who served on the English Revised Version committee and who edited the 1881 Greek New Testament that bears their name. This Greek New Testament was established upon the principles of modern textual criticism that had been developed across the course of the 19th century and was a watershed in that theirs was the first critical Greek New Testament to become widely accepted as a replacement for the Received Text underlying the Reformation Bibles. The current editions of the critical Greek text (Nestles' and the United Bible Societies') differ only in small ways from the Westcott-Hort Text of 1881. Hort was the more outspoken of the two men as pertaining his rationalism. Westcott published commentaries that are still in print today, and he became the "evangelical face" to the Westcott-Hort textual theories, though, as we will see, Westcott was anything but a staunch Bible believer.

Following are some testimonies to the apostasy of Westcott and Hort. (This subject is covered



more thoroughly in our book *Faith vs. the Modern Bible Versions*.)

1. The testimony of men who have studied the doctrines, theories, and lives of Westcott and Hort:

The testimony of Zane Hodges of Dallas Theological Seminary. “The charge of rationalism is easily substantiated for Westcott and Hort and may be demonstrated from direct statements found in their introduction to *The New Testament in the Original Greek*. To begin with, Westcott and Hort are clearly unwilling to commit themselves to the inerrancy of the original Scriptures” (Zane C. Hodges, “Rationalism and Contemporary New Testament Textual Criticism,” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, January 1971).

The testimony of Alfred Martin, Vice President of Moody Bible Institute, in his 1951 doctoral dissertation to the faculty of the Graduate School of Dallas Theological Seminary: “At precisely the time when liberalism was carrying the field in the English churches the theory of Westcott and Hort received wide acclaim. These are not isolated facts. Recent contributions on the subject that is, in the present century following mainly the Westcott-Hort principles and method, have been made largely by men who deny the inspiration of the Bible” (emphasis added) (Alfred Martin, “A Critical Examination of the Westcott-Hort Textual Theory.” Th.D. Thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, May 1951, p. 70).

The testimony of Dr. D.A. Waite, who studied 1,291 pages of Westcott and Hort’s writings and concluded that, among other things, they did not affirm the infallibility of Scripture; they undermined the vicarious substitutionary atonement of Christ; they embraced Fatherhood of God and evolution. Dr. Waite warns that the heresy of Westcott and Hort is subtle. Like many neo-orthodox and modernistic theologians, Westcott and Hort did not so much deny the doctrines of the Word of God directly; they undermined the doctrines with clever doubt and with subtle questioning. Dr. Waite’s *The Theological Heresies of Westcott and Hort: As Seen in Their Own Writings and Heresies of Westcott & Hort* are available from Bible for Today, 900 Park Ave., Collingswood, NJ 08108, <http://www.biblefortoday.org>.

2. The testimony of the biographies of Westcott and Hort published by their sons (Arthur Fenton Hort, *Life and Letters of Fenton John Anthony Hort*, London: MacMillan and Co., 1896, and Arthur Westcott, *Life and Letters of Brooke Foss Westcott, Sometime Bishop of Durham*, London: MacMillan and Co., 1903). Hort’s biography is available as a photocopy reprint from Bible for Today, Collingswood, NJ.

“Further I agree with them [authors of *Essays and Reviews*] in condemning many leading specific doctrines of the popular theology. ... Evangelicals seem to me perverted rather than untrue ... There are, I fear, still more serious differences between us on the subject of authority and especially the authority of the Bible” (Hort writing to Rowland Williams in 1858, cited in *Life and Letters of Fenton John Anthony Hort*, 1958, Vol. I, p. 400).

“All stigmatize him [Dr. Hampden] as a ‘heretic.’ If he be condemned, what will become of me! The battle of the inspiration of Scripture has yet to be fought, and how earnestly I could pray that I might aid the truth in that” (Hort, 1847). [*COMMENT*: Hort knew that he was on the modernistic side of the doctrine of inspiration.]

“But I am not able to go as far as you in asserting the infallibility of a canonical writing” (Hort writing to Westcott in 1860, cited in *Life and Letters of Fenton John Anthony Hort*, Vol. I, p. 422). [*COMMENT*: Hort plainly denied the infallible inspiration of Scripture.]

“For I too ‘must disclaim settling for infallibility.’ In the front of my convictions all I hold is the more I learn, the more I am convinced that fresh doubts come from my own ignorance, and that at present I find the presumption in favor of the absolute truth--I reject the word infallibility--of the Holy Scripture overwhelming” (Westcott writing to Hort in 1860, cited in *Life and Letters of Brooke Foss Westcott*, Vol. I, p. 207). [*COMMENT*: This is standard Westcottism. He wants to hold the Bible as absolute truth but not as infallible, which is impossible except to minds such as Westcott. His writings often appear to be doctrinally sound but he will redefine terms so that what he seems to say is not what he really means; and he contradicts himself as he does in this exchange with Hort, speaking the truth on the one hand while taking it away on the other. In this Westcott was a contrast to Hort, who was more forthright about his unbelief.]

“I am glad that you take the same provisional ground as to infallibility that I do” (Hort writing to Lightfoot in 1860, *Life of Hort*, Vol. 1, p. 424). [*COMMENT*: Thus, after corresponding with his friend Westcott on the issue of biblical inspiration, it was Hort’s understanding that Westcott held the same heretical view of inspiration that he held.]

“But the book which has most engaged me is Darwin. Whatever may be thought of it, it is a book that one is proud to be contemporary with. ... My feeling is strong that the theory is unanswerable” (Hort writing on April 3, 1860, *Life of Hort*, Vol. 1). [*COMMENT*: Darwinianism is a direct assault upon the Scriptures and upon the Gospel (which is predicated upon man’s literal creation, fall, and subsequent need of redemption).]

“No one now, I suppose, holds that the first three chapters of Genesis give literal history--I could never understand how any one reading them with open eyes could think they did--yet they disclose to us a Gospel. So it is probably elsewhere [in the Bible]” (Westcott, writing to the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1890, cited in *Life and Letters of Brooke Foss Westcott*, Vol. II, p. 69). [*COMMENT*: Westcott wrote this in his old age. It is obvious that even when he spoke of the Gospel, he was speaking allegorically, because in his view the very foundation of the Bible was not literal history. Like Plato, Westcott held that myth could present spiritual truth. Of course, the denial of the historicity of Genesis 1-3 is a denial of Redemption and of Jesus Christ, who taught a literal Adam and Eve.]

“If you feel now that it was, to speak humanly, necessary that the Lord should speak of the

‘sun rising,’ it was no less necessary that He should use the names ‘Moses’ and ‘David’ as His contemporaries used them” (Westcott, writing to the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1890, cited in *Life and Letters of Brooke Foss Westcott*, Vol. II, p. 69). [COMMENT: Westcott is saying that modern scholars know that Moses and David are not the historical figures that we find in the Bible, and Jesus knew that, too, but He spoke falsehoods in order to adapt to His listeners.]

“Protestants [must] unlearn their crazy horror of the idea of the priesthood” (Hort, cited in *Life of Hort*, Vol. II, p. 51). [COMMENT: A Bible believer’s “crazy horror of the priesthood” is Spirit-taught. There is no priesthood in the New Testament other than the High Priesthood of Jesus Christ and the general priesthood of all believers. This statement exposed how deeply Hort had been influenced by the Romanizing Tractarian movement.]

“But you know I am a staunch sacerdotalist” (Hort to Lightfoot, 1867, cited in *Life of Hort*, Vol. II, p. 86). [COMMENT: A sacerdotalist is one who believes in a Catholic-like priesthood that mediates between God and men. Again this shows Hort’s affinity with the Rome-leaning Tractarian movement.]

“I have been persuaded for many years that Mary worship and Jesus worship have very much in common in their causes and their results” (Hort to Westcott, 1865, cited in *Life of Hort*, Vol. II, p. 50). [COMMENT: This is another evidence of Hort’s Romeward leanings.]

“After leaving the monastery, we shaped our course to a little oratory which we discovered on the summit of a neighbouring hill. ... Fortunately we found the door open. It is very small, with one kneelingplace; and behind a screen was a ‘Pieta’ the size of life [an image of Mary and the dead Christ] ... Had I been alone I could have knelt there for hours” (Westcott in 1847 on a visit to a Catholic shrine in Europe, cited in *Life of Westcott*, Vol. I, p. 81). [COMMENT: Westcott shared Hort’s enthusiasm for Mary worship and dead ritualism. I have visited many such Catholic shrines in various parts of the world, but unlike Westcott, Rome’s idolatry repels and revolts rather than draws me.]

“The pure Romish view seems to me nearer, and more likely to lead to the truth than the Evangelical” (Hort, cited in *Life of Hort*, 1848, Vol. I, p. 76).

“... the popular doctrine of substitution is an immoral and material counterfeit. ... Certainly nothing could be more unscriptural than the modern limiting of Christ’s bearing our sins and sufferings to his death; but indeed that is only on aspect of an almost universal heresy” (Hort to Westcott, 1860, cited in *Life of Hort*, Vol. I, p. 430). [COMMENT: What Hort called heresy is, in fact, the truth. The atonement of Christ was made through His blood and death, not by His life. We are justified by His blood and reconciled by His death (Rom. 5:9-10). Note that Hort decries a “material” doctrine of the atonement, referring to literal blood and death. This is a “damnable heresy” (2 Pet. 2:1), meaning that those who hold to it cannot be saved.]

“My father’s promised contributions, however, were completed; the most important being his articles on the Alexandrian divines, including Clement, Demetrius, Dionysius, and greatest of all, Origen. For many years the works of Origen were close to his hand, and he continually turned to them at every opportunity” (Arthur Westcott speaking of his father’s love for the heretics of the Alexandrian School, *Life of Westcott*, Vol. 1, pp. 319-320).

Westcott and Hort both loved the writings of Philo, the Gnostic Jew of Alexandria. Hort read Philo more than any other author (*The Life and Letters of Fenton John Anthony Hort*, Vol. II, p. 485). Westcott said he was anxious to learn all he could of Philo (*The Life and Letters of Brooke Foss Westcott*, Vol. I, p. 233).]

3. The testimony of the published writings of Westcott and Hort. [Some of the following is adapted from two books by Dr. Donald Waite of Bible for Today, *Theological Heresies of Westcott and Hort as Seen in Their Own Writings* (1978) and *Westcott’s Denial of Christ’s Bodily Resurrection* (1983).]

“... the prevalent assumption, that throughout the N.T. the true text is to be found somewhere among recorded readings, *does not stand the test of experience*” (Westcott and Hort, Preface, *The New Testament in the Original Greek*, “Limited and Private Issue,” 1870, p. xxi; cited from John Burgon, *The Revision Revised*, p. 28, footnote a). [COMMENT: This statement is a most blatant denial of biblical preservation, assuming that some part of the Scriptures has been lost.]

“In matters of textual criticism the Bible is to be treated like any other ancient book. No special considerations are to be made concerning its claims of inspiration and preservation” (Westcott and Hort, *The New Testament in the Original Greek*, Introduction and Appendix, 1881). [COMMENT: This statement is a direct denial of the supernatural character of the Bible, of its divine inspiration, of the devil’s hatred toward it, and of its providential preservation.]

[Referring to the New Testament manuscripts in the early centuries] “Textual purity, as far as can be judged from the extant literature, attracted hardly an interest. There is no evidence to show that care was generally taken to choose out for transcription the exemplars having the highest claims to be regarded as authentic, if indeed the requisite knowledge and skill were forthcoming” (Westcott and Hort, Introduction to *The New Testament in the Original Greek*, p. 9). [COMMENT: Hort was a complete skeptic when it came to the text of Scripture. He apparently based his conclusions about the handling of the Scriptures from the wretched spiritual condition that existed in Egypt, where his beloved Alexandrian text originated. That area was rife with heretics who had no fear of tampering with the Holy Scriptures and with nominal Christians who had no zeal for God’s Truth. Thus the Alexandrian manuscripts are filled with omissions and gratuitous, careless, and heretical modifications. Contrary to what Hort claims, the true New Testament believers received the Gospels and Epistles as Scripture and were exceedingly careful about how they handled

them (i.e., 1 Thess. 2:13). As for the skill necessary to transmit the New Testament Scriptures in pure form, how much skill is required? The chief requirements are standard literacy and holy carefulness, and the early believers had both of those in full measure. Further, the early churches had some men of the highest scholastic caliber, such as the apostle Paul. Further, the early churches had something even more important than this, which is the Holy Spirit to enlighten and guide them.]

[Commenting on John 14:1] “The belief is ‘in Christ,’ and not in any propositions about Christ” (Westcott, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 1881, p. 200). [COMMENT: In fact, it is impossible to believe in Christ without believing in the propositions made about Christ in the Scriptures. This is the liberal’s method of undermining the doctrine of Christ.]

[Commenting on John 10:29 and 1 John 1:2] “The thought, which is concrete in v. 28, is here traced back to its most absolute form as resting on the essential power of God in His relation of Universal Fatherhood” (Westcott, *The Gospel According to St. John*, p. 159). “The idea of the divine fatherhood, answering to that of human sonship and childship, occupies an important place in the writings of St. John” (Westcott, *The Epistles of St. John*, p. 27). [COMMENT: The heresy of the universal fatherhood of God is nowhere taught in Scripture. Unsaved sinners are not children of God until they come to Him through faith in Jesus Christ. Jesus told the Pharisees that they were children of the devil (John 8:44).]

[Commenting on 1 John 2:2] “Such phrases as ‘propitiating God’ ... are foreign to the language of the N.T.” (Westcott, *The Epistles of St. John*, 1883, p. 87). [COMMENT: In fact, propitiation is always spoken of in the New Testament in relation to God. Sinners have sinned against God and broken His law and they owe a sin debt that is propitiated (satisfied by the payment of a debt) only through the blood and death of Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:25). Thus we see that Westcott, like his friend Hort, held a heretical view of the atonement. This is a “damnable heresy” (2 Pet. 2:1), meaning that those who hold to it cannot be saved.]

[Commenting on John 1:29, 13:31] “...the redemptive efficacy of Christ’s work is to be found in His whole life. ... The redemptive work of Christ essentially was completed [by the time of His discourse in John 13]” (Westcott, *The Gospel According to St. John*, pp. 20, 196). [COMMENT: In fact, the redemption was purchased not by Christ’s life but by His death and blood (1 Pet. 1:18-19; Heb. 9:22). Liberals downgrade the value of Christ’s blood and its necessity for salvation.]

[Commenting on Hebrews 9:12, 14] “I have endeavoured to shew elsewhere that the Scriptural idea of blood is essentially an idea of life and not of death. ... Death again, which makes the blood available, is the seal of the validity of a covenant” (Westcott, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 1889, p. 293, 261). [COMMENT: Westcott again spiritualizes the atonement, downplaying the blood and turning it into a mere metaphor for death, which is a gross heresy. It is the same heresy held today by Eugene Nida and Robert Bratcher, both

associated with the United Bible Societies.]

[Commenting on 1 Peter 1:2, 19] “In the N.T. the blood of Christ is associated with various images which need to be clearly distinguished. There is here [1 Peter 1:2] no direct reference to the idea of purchase or ransom, as in vv. 18, 19... or to the ideal of sacrificial atonement, as in several other books of the N.T. ... The true lesson [of 1 Peter 1:19] is that the language which speaks of a ransom is but figurative language...” (Hort, *The First Epistle of St. Peter*, pp. 23, 80). [COMMENT: In fact, the blood of Christ is always directly associated with the doctrine of ransom and sacrificial atonement. Like Westcott, Hort spiritualizes the blood of Christ and downplays its essential nature in the atonement.]

[Commenting on John 1:33-34] “Christ at this crisis first became conscious as man of a power of the Spirit within Him” (Westcott, *The Gospel According to St. John*, p. 23). [COMMENT: This is the heresy that Christ did not fully understand His nature and mission until the time of His baptism. In fact, He knew this from His childhood (Lk. 2:49).]

[Commenting on John 1:18 and 14:2] “The ‘bosom of the Father’ [like heaven] is a state and not a place. ... heaven is where God is seen as our Father. We dare not add any local limitation, even in thought, to this final conception” (Westcott, *The Gospel According to St. John*, pp. 15, 200). [COMMENT: Westcott allegorized heaven and hell. In fact, heaven is nowhere in Scripture described as a state but always as a place (John 14:1).]

[Commenting on 1 Peter 1:5] “It is hardly necessary to say that this whole local language [“reserved in heaven”] is figurative only...” (Hort, *The First Epistle of St. Peter*, p. 37). [COMMENT: Hort also allegorized heaven.]

[Commenting on John 2:24-25] “A careful study of these passages seems to shew beyond doubt that the knowledge of Christ ... has its analogues in human powers. His knowledge appears to be truly the knowledge of the Son of Man, and not merely the knowledge of the Divine Word, though at each moment and in each connexion it was, in virtue of His perfect humanity, relatively complete” (Westcott, *The Gospel According to St. John*, p. 46). [COMMENT: Westcott downplays the deity of Christ and exalts His humanity in a heretical manner. Christ could not see people in other locations and know what people were thinking by any measure of His humanity. He could only do these things because He was the omniscient God. Further, His knowledge was not “relatively complete.”]

[Commenting on John 1:1] “Because the Word was personally distinct from ‘God’ and yet essentially ‘God,’ He could make Him known. ... Thus we are led to conceive that the divine nature is essentially in the Son” (Westcott, *The Gospel According to St. John*, pp. 2, 3). [COMMENT: This is a gross heresy pertaining to the deity of Christ. He was not distinct from God nor was He merely “essentially” God; He was fully and completely “God manifest in the flesh.”]

[Commenting on Revelation 1:8, “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.”] “This verse must stand alone. The speaker cannot be our Lord, when we consider 1:4 ... and all scriptural analogy is against the attribution of [this] to Christ” (Hort, *The Apocalypse of St. John 1-3*, p. 13). [COMMENT: In fact, Rev. 1:11; 21:6 and 22:13 plainly identify Jesus Christ as the Almighty of Rev. 1:8. The critical Greek New Testament removes this association from Rev. 1:11, but the other two verses are intact even in this corrupt text.]

[Commenting on Revelation 3:14, “the beginning of the creation of God”] “The words might no doubt bear the Arian meaning ‘the first thing created’...” (Hort, *The Apocalypse of St. John 1-3*, p. 36). [COMMENT: Though Hort proceeds to say that the words can “equally well bear” another meaning, the fact remains that he has left his readers with the idea that the Arian heresy that Christ is not the eternal God but was a created being “might” be true.]

[Commenting on John 20:28] “He never speaks of himself directly as God (compare v. 18), but the aim of His revelation was to lead men to see God in Him” (Westcott, *The Gospel According to St. John*, p. 297). [COMMENT: In fact, Jesus did refer to Himself as God and this is why the Jews wanted to kill Him (Jn. 8:58-59; 10:30-33).]

“This Catholicity of the Bible--a Catholicity in subject and in application--is largely dependent upon the fact that the Bible is MAINLY historical. It has pleased God to reveal Himself in and through life. And the record of the revelation is literary and NOT DOGMATIC” (Westcott, *Of the Revelation of the Risen Lord*, 1902, p. x). [COMMENT: Thus Westcott states that the Bible is not fully historical nor is it dogmatic. This is a plain denial of the supernatural inspiration of Scripture.]

“I believe in the resurrection of the flesh. ... The ‘flesh’ of which we speak as destined to a resurrection is not that material substance which we can see and handle, measured by properties of sense” (Westcott, *The Historic Faith*, p. 136). [COMMENT: Thus Westcott denied the bodily resurrection by redefining terms.]

[Commenting on Acts 9] “For us the appearance to St. Paul would certainly in itself fail to satisfy in some respects the conditions of historic reality--it might have been an internal revelation--but for him it was essentially objective and outward...” (Westcott, *The Gospel of the Resurrection*, 4th edition 1879, p. 95). [COMMENT: Thus Westcott denied the physical reality of Christ’s resurrection appearances to Paul, questioning its “historic reality” and stating that Paul might have merely seen Christ mystically rather than physically.]

### **ISN’T IT TRUE THAT MODERN VERSIONS ARE NO LONGER BASED ON WESTCOTT AND HORT?**

As the theories of textual criticism which underlie the Westcott-Hort Greek New Testament of

1881 have been somewhat discredited by textual critics of the 20th century, it is not surprising that modern version proponents today sometimes disassociate themselves from Westcott-Hort and claim that they merely use an “eclectic” Greek text. James White, author of the popular and influential but misguided book “The King James Only Controversy,” makes this claim. He says, “While modern Greek texts are not identical to that created by Westcott and Hort, one will still find defenders of the AV drawing in black and white, saying that all modern versions are based upon their work” (White, p. 99).

**ANSWER:**

1. This position dodges the real issue, which is the fact that the Westcott and Hort theories and Greek New Testament represented the signal departure from the Received Text that is found today in the popular theories of textual criticism. Westcott and Hort built upon the foundation established by their predecessors, such as Griesbach, Lachmann, and Tischendorf, adapting the textual theories of these men into their own unique blend. Their Greek New Testament represents the first *popular* departure from the Greek Received Text.

2. Many modern textual critics admit the continuing dramatic influence of Westcott and Hort.

a. Bruce Metzger is one of the most influential textual critics alive today. He is one of the editors of the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament and the author of many widely used books on textual criticism. Metzger says, “... though the discovery of additional manuscripts has required the realignment of certain groups of witnesses, the general validity of THEIR CRITICAL PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES IS WIDELY ACKNOWLEDGED BY TEXTUAL SCHOLARS TODAY” (Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, 1964, p. 137). In his 1981 book *The Westcott and Hort Greek New Testament--Yesterday and Today*, Metzger makes the following plain admission: “The International committee that produced the United Bible Societies’ Greek New Testament, NOT ONLY ADOPTED THE WESTCOTT AND HORT EDITION AS ITS BASIC TEXT, BUT FOLLOWED THEIR METHODOLOGY IN GIVING ATTENTION TO BOTH EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL CONSIDERATION” (Metzger, cited in *Bible Interpreters of the 20th Century*, p. 264).

b. James Brooks states: “There is nothing unique about Metzger’s theory of textual criticism. It is simply a refinement of Westcott and Hort’s theory in the New Testament in the Original Greek (1881). ... this theory is dominant today in part because of Metzger’s great influence. It was the theory employed in producing the United Bible Societies Greek text. It is the theory lying behind the Greek text used by most modern versions: The Revised Standard, the New Revised Standard, the New English Bible, the Revised English Bible, the New American Bible, the New American Standard, the Good News Bible, the New International Version, and to a lesser extent, also the Jerusalem Bible and the New Jerusalem Bible” (Brooks, *Bible Interpreters of the 20th Century*).



- c. Consider the following quotation by Ernest Cadman Colwell, a textual scholar who published a number of widely used grammars and textbooks: “**THE DEAD HAND OF FENTON JOHN ANTHONY HORT LIES HEAVY UPON US.** In the early years of this century Kirsopp Lake described Hort’s work as a failure, though a glorious one. But **HORT DID NOT FAIL TO REACH HIS MAJOR GOAL. HE DETHRONED THE TEXTUS RECEPTUS.** ... Hort’s success in this task and the cogency of his tightly reasoned theory shaped—**AND STILL SHAPES**—the thinking of those who approach the textual criticism of the NT through the English language” (emphasis added) (Ernest Cadman Colwell, “Scribal Habits in Early Papyri: A Study in the Corruption of the Text,” *The Bible in Modern Scholarship*, ed. J.P. Hyatt, New York: Abingdon Press, 1965, p. 370).
- d. In the introduction to the 24th edition of Nestle’s Greek New Testament, editors Erwin Nestle and Kurt Aland make the following admission: “Thus **THE TEXT, BUILT UP ON THE WORK OF THE 19TH CENTURY, HAS REMAINED AS A WHOLE UNCHANGED,** particularly since the research of recent years has not yet led to the establishment of a generally acknowledged N.T. text” (Erwin Nestle and Kurt Aland, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 24th edition, 1960, p. 62).
- e. Merrill Parvis said, “... no great advance has been made in the method of textual study since the days of Westcott and Hort” (*The Study of the Bible Today and Tomorrow*, 1947, p. 58).
- f. Frederick Kenyon said: “Westcott and Hort’s theory was epoch-making in the fullest sense of the term. In spite of certain criticisms and modifications, which appear to be well founded, and of which mention will have to be made below, **THIS THEORY HOLDS THE FIELD AMONG SCHOLARS TODAY**” (Kenyon, *Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, p. 308).
- g. Gordon Fee notes, “... it is fair to say that, whether intentionally or not, the mainstream of NT textual criticism since Westcott and Hort has moved toward modifying and advancing their work” (“Textual Criticism of the New Testament,” *Studies in the Theory and Method of New Testament Textual Criticism*, p. 12).
- h. In 1993 Eldon Epp wrote: “... our popular critical texts are still so close to that of WH ... every textual critic knows that this similarity of text indicates, rather, that we have made little progress in textual theory since Westcott-Hort; that we simply do not know how to make a definitive determination as to what the best text is; that we do not have a clear picture of the transmission and alteration of the text in the first few centuries; and, accordingly, that the Westcott-Hort kind of text has maintained its dominant position largely by default” (Epp, “The Twentieth-Century Interlude in NT Textual Criticism,” *Studies in the Theory and Method of New Testament Textual Criticism*, p. 87).
- i. Bart Ehrman concurs: “Apart from a handful of passages, principally in Luke (the so-called

Western non-interpolations), our current printed editions (i.e., the UBSGNT4 and NA26) differ little from Westcott and Hort's of 1881. Where they do differ, it is primarily in exegetically immaterial ways" (Ehrman, "The Use and Significance of Patristic Evidence for NT Textual Criticism," *New Testament Textual Criticism, Exegesis, and Church History*, edited by B. Aland and F. Delobel, 1994, p. 122, f 16).

- j. Zane Hodges summarizes as follows: "MODERN TEXTUAL CRITICISM IS PSYCHOLOGICALLY 'ADDICTED' TO WESTCOTT AND HORT. Westcott and Hort, in turn, were rationalists in their approach to the textual problem in the New Testament and employed techniques within which rationalism and every other kind of bias are free to operate. The result of it all is a methodological quagmire where objective controls on the conclusions of critics are nearly nonexistent. It goes without saying that no Bible-believing Christian who is willing to extend the implications of his faith to textual matters can have the slightest grounds for confidence in contemporary critical texts" (emphasis added) (Zane C. Hodges, "Rationalism and Contemporary New Testament Textual Criticism," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, January 1971, p. 35).

3. The Vaticanus and Sinaiticus are still given priority by modern textual critics.

- a. The Nestles' Greek New Testament combines the readings of the Sinaiticus and the Vaticanus, as it was based on Tischendorf (who gave preference to the Sinaiticus) and Westcott/Hort (who gave preference to the Vaticanus). "This B Aleph text of the nineteenth century gained universal currency in Eberhard Nestle's *Novum Testamentum Graece*, as it was based upon the editions of Tischendorf and Westcott-Hort together with that of Bernhard Weiss (which also gave preference to B)" (Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 103).
- b. The Nestle's text was, in turn, merged with the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament beginning with the 3rd edition in 1975, bringing the latter more in line with the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus. J.K. Elliott observes: "... the general verdict of UBS 3rd edn. is that its text is closer to Westcott and Hort's text. It is in many ways a 'safer' text than the first and second UBS editions insofar as many more of the readings of Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus appear in the UBS 3rd edn." (Elliott, "The United Bible Societies Greek new Testament: A Short Examination of the Third Edition," *The Bible Translator*, 30, 1979, p. 138).
- c. The editors of the New International Version admit that they prefer the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus manuscripts: "... in most cases the readings found in older manuscripts, particularly the great Greek uncials Vaticanus and Sinaiticus of the fourth century AD, are to be preferred over those found in later manuscripts, such as those that reflect the TR [Received Text]" (Ronald Youngblood, *The Making of a Contemporary Translation*, p. 152).

3. Though the Nestles and the United Bible Societies Greek texts claim to be “eclectic,” the fact is that they are almost identical to the W-H text of 1881 *IN SIGNIFICANT DEPARTURES FROM THE RECEIVED TEXT AND IN PASSAGES THAT HAVE EXTENSIVE DOCTRINAL SIGNIFICANCE*. The W-H text of 1881 and the latest edition of the United Bible Societies’ text differ only in relatively minor points. *BOTH REPRESENT THE SAME TYPE OF TEXT WITH THE SAME TYPE OF DEPARTURES FROM THE RECEIVED TEXT*. They follow the type of text found in the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus, which the Reformation era Greek editors believed was a doctrinally corrupt text that was modified during the theological battles of the early centuries after the apostles.

- a. Jack Moorman counted only 216 instances in which the Nestle-Aland 26th edition apparatus departs from the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus. “216 departures over 559 pages of text, or one departure for every 2.6 pages, or about one departure in every 32 verses. How can this be called ‘eclecticism’? ... In short, the ‘Standard Text’ is just as bound to Aleph and B, as the one drafted by Westcott and Hort over one hundred years ago. And it is these two manuscripts which strike the greatest blow at the doctrinal heart of the Bible” (Moorman, *A Closer Look: Early Manuscripts and the Authorized Version*, p. 11).
- b. An extensive comparison of the TR against the WH text, the Nestle’s Text, the UBS text, and key English versions was done by the late Everett Fowler and was published in his book *Evaluating Versions of the New Testament* (available from Bible for Today, Collingswood, NJ). The following conclusions are brought out by this research:
  - (1) Both the W-H and the UBS delete or question almost the same number of verses (WH--48, UBS--45).
  - (2) Both delete almost the same number of significant portions of verses (WH--193, UBS 185).
  - (3) Both delete almost the same number of names and titles of the Lord (WH--221, UBS--212).

**Conclusion:** It is a fact that the Westcott-Hort text represents the first widely accepted departure from the Received Text in the post-Reformation era, and the modern English versions descend directly from the W-H text. The Westcott-Hort Greek text is very significant and its editors are highly significant to the history of textual criticism. Any man who discounts the continuing significance of Westcott-Hort in the field of Bible texts and versions is either lacking in information or is trying to throw up a smoke screen to hide something.

### **SHOULD 1 JOHN 5:7 BE IN THE BIBLE SINCE IT HAS MINORITY SUPPORT AMONG THE GREEK MANUSCRIPTS?**

1 John 5:7-8 in the Greek Received Text and the King James Bible reads: “For there are three

that bear record in heaven, THE FATHER, THE WORD, AND THE HOLY GHOST: AND THESE THREE ARE ONE. AND THERE ARE THREE THAT BEAR WITNESS IN EARTH, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.”

The capitalized words, called the *Johannine Comma*, are omitted in the modern Greek texts and English versions. (The term “comma” described “a group of words isolated as a single group.”)

It would seem, in fact, that modern textual critics despise the traditional Trinitarian statement in 1 John 5:7-8 more than any other passage in the Received Text.

Bruce Metzger calls it “spurious” (*The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, p. 101). Kurt and Barbara Aland have no doubt that it is inauthentic, speaking of “the impossibility of its being at all related to the original form of the text of 1 John” (*The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions*, p. 311). This is typical of how 1 John 5:7 is treated by textual critics.

Beginning with the publication of the English Revised Version of 1881, the *Johannine Comma* has been omitted from practically every modern English translation, including the ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV, TEV, Living Bible, the Message, New Living Translation, the CEV, and the Holman Christian Standard Bible.

#### **ANSWER:**

This is one of the most important verses in the Bible on the doctrine of the Trinity and one of the most important witnesses to the full Deity of Jesus Christ; and for the following reasons I am convinced that 1 John 5:7 as it stands in the Greek Received Text and the King James Bible is divinely inspired Scripture. In fact, I am in good company, for hundreds of thousands of regenerate, Christ-loving men and women of God throughout the world (I have personally preached to many thousands of them in 15 different countries) are convinced by the Spirit of God that the *Johannine Comma* is inspired Scripture. We must not be overawed by textual scholars, regardless of how they look down upon those who do not accept their judgments. They do not possess secret knowledge nor do they have secret wisdom. They do not know anything that we cannot check for ourselves. I do not want to speak disrespectfully, for I do not despise learning (though I do despise pomposity); but it is true nonetheless that they are only men and not gods.

The very fact that they almost never mention faith or the Spirit of God in the context of these matters is most fearfully telling.

Now we will turn to our reasons for holding to 1 John 5:7.

Consider, first, **THE THEOLOGICAL ARGUMENT**. “The strength of forgery or interpolation is similarity and not uniqueness. The Trinitarian formula, ‘Father, Word, and Holy Spirit’ is

unique not only for John but for all NT writers. The usual formula, ‘Father, Son, and Holy Spirit’ would have been assuredly used by a forger. [Incidentally, this argument is an antidote for rationalists who repudiate the authenticity of the Petrine authorship of 2 Peter. Peter uses a unique spelling for his name (*Sumeon*), which is also the first word of the Epistle, to demonstrate his mark of authorship. What forger would pass three dollar bills? Only the authority, the government, would attempt such a unique action.]” (Dr. Thomas Strouse, *A Critique of D.A. Carson’s The King James Version Debate*, 1980).

Another consideration is **THE GRAMMATICAL ARGUMENT**. “The omission of the Johannine Comma leaves much to be desired grammatically. The words ‘Spirit,’ ‘water’ and ‘blood’ are all neuters, yet they are treated as masculine in verse 8. This is strange if the Johannine Comma is omitted, but it can be accounted for if it is retained; the masculine nouns ‘Father’ and ‘word’ in verse 7 regulate the gender in the succeeding verse due to the power of attraction principle. The argument that the ‘Spirit’ is personalized and therefore masculine is offset by verse 6 which is definitely referring to the personal Holy Spirit yet using the neuter gender. [I. H. Marshall is a current voice for this argument: ‘It is striking that although Spirit, water, and blood are all neuter nouns in Greek, they are introduced by a clause expressed in the masculine plural ... Here in 1 John he clearly regards the Spirit as personal, and this leads to the personification of the water and the blood’ *The Epistles of John* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 1978), p. 237n.] Moreover, the words ‘that one’ (*to hen*) in verse 8 have no antecedent if verse 7 is omitted, [Marshall calls this construction ‘unparalleled,’ p. 237] whereas if verse 7 is retained, then the antecedent is ‘these three are one’ (*to hen*)” (Strouse, *A Critique of D.A. Carson’s The King James Version Debate*).

The grammatical argument has been treated lightly by modern textual critics, but its importance was understood by GREGORY NAZIANZUS (Oration XXXII: Fifth Theological Oration: “On the Holy Spirit,” A.D. 390; see Michael Maynard, *A History of the Debate over 1 John 5:7-8*), FREDERIC NOLAN (*An Inquiry into the Integrity of the Greek Vulgate or Received Text of the New Testament*, 1815), ROBERT DABNEY (“The Doctrinal Various Readings of the New Testament Greek,” 1891), THOMAS MIDDLETON (*The Doctrine of the Greek article: applied to the criticism and illustration of the New Testament*, 1833), MATTHEW HENRY (Commentary on the Whole Bible, 1706), EDWARD F. HILLS (*The King James Bible Defended: a Space-age Defense of the Historic Christian Faith*, 1956), LOUIS GAUSSEN (*The Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures*, 1934), to name a few. I take my stand with these men.

Consider, too, **THE ARGUMENT FROM THE PURPOSE OF JOHN’S WRITINGS AND OF THE NATURE OF THOSE TIMES**.

“Regarding the issue at hand, such a distinct literary/historical coherence fully supports the inclusion of the *Johannine Comma*. The resounding theme of the Gospel of John is the divinity of Jesus Christ. Such is summed up in John 10:30, when Jesus says, ‘I and my Father are one.’ This same theme is prevalent in the Epistle, being concisely and clearly stated in 5:7-8. The Comma truly bears coherence with the message of John’s Gospel in this sense. It serves as an

occasion to introduce the doctrine of the Trinity as the original readers prepared to study the attached Gospel. Although Christ's divinity is inferred throughout the epistle, one is not confronted with such succinct declaration as is conveyed in the Comma. If this passage is omitted, it seems that the theme of John's Gospel would lack a proper introduction.

“It is interesting to note that one of the earliest allusions to the *Johannine Comma* in church history is promulgated in connection to the thematic statement made by the Lord in John 10:30. [The fact that this allusion was made less than two centuries after the completion of the New Testament serves as convincing external evidence for the authenticity of the *Johannine Comma*.] Cyprian writes around A.D. 250, ‘The Lord says ‘I and the Father are one’ and likewise it is written of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, ‘And these three are one.’” [*The Ante-Nicene Fathers: Translations of the Writings of the Church Fathers Down to A.D. 325* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1926), 5:423.] The theological teaching of the Comma most definitely bears coherence with the overriding theme of John's Gospel. There is no reason to believe that the verse is not genuine in this sense, for it serves as a proper prelude to the theme of the Gospel which, historically speaking, most likely accompanied the Epistle as it was sent out to its original audience.

“The heresy of Gnosticism is also of notable importance with regard to the historical context surrounding the *Johannine Comma*. This ‘unethical intellectualism’ had begun to make inroads among churches in John's day; its influence would continue to grow up until the second century when it gave pure Christianity a giant struggle. [Robertson, 6:200] Generally speaking, Gnosticism can be described as a variety of syncretic religious movements in the early period of church history that sought to answer the question, ‘What must I do to be saved?’ The Gnostic answer was that a person must possess a secret knowledge. Proponents of Gnosticism claimed to possess a superior knowledge and so were called Gnostics.] One of the major tenets of Gnosticism was the essential evil of matter; the physical body, in other words, was viewed as evil. According to this line of thought, Jesus Christ could not have been fully God and fully man, for this would have required him to possess an evil physical body.

“The seeds of the Gnostic heresy seem to be before John's mind in his first epistle; nine times he gives tests for knowing truth in conjunction with the verb *ginosko* (to know). [1 John 2:3, 5; 3:16, 19, 24; 4:2, 6, 13; 5:2] This being said, the *Johannine Comma* would have constituted an integral component of the case the Apostle made against the false teachings of the Gnostics, especially with regard to the nature of Christ. Robertson notes that John's Gospel was written to prove the deity of Christ, assuming his humanity, while 1 John was written to prove the humanity of Christ, assuming his deity. [Robertson, 6:201] He goes on to say, ‘Certainly both ideas appear in both books.’ If these notions are true, then the Comma is important to John's polemic. Jesus Christ, the human Son of God, is the eternal, living Word (cf. John 1:1). The Word, along with the Father and the Holy Spirit, bears witness to ‘he that came by water and blood,’ even Jesus Christ (1 John 5:6). This assertion would have flown right into the face of Gnosticism” (Jesse M. Boyd, “And These Three Are One: A Case for the Authenticity of 1 John 5:7-8,” 1999, <http://www.ovrind.com/Bible/casefor1john57.html>).

Another consideration is ***THE ARGUMENT FROM THE GREEK MANUSCRIPT RECORD***. D.A. Carson, probably following Bruce Metzger's *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (3rd edition corrected, 1975), claims there are only four MSS containing the Johannine Comma. In fact, the UBS 4th Greek N.T. lists 8 manuscripts that contain the comma, four in the text (61, 629, 2318, 918) and four in the margin (88, 221, 429, 636).

When considering the Greek manuscript evidence for or against the *Johannine Comma*, it is important to understand that there are only five manuscripts dating from the 2nd to the 7th century that even contain the fifth chapter of 1 John (Michael Maynard, *A History of the Debate over 1 John 5:7-8*, Tempe, AZ: Comma Publications, 1995). None of the papyrus contains this portion of Scripture.

Further, it is important to understand that some Greek manuscripts cited by editors in the 16th and 17th centuries are no longer extant. The Complutensian Bible, produced by several Catholic scholars, was based on Greek manuscripts obtained from the Vatican library and elsewhere. They included 1 John 5:7 on the authority of "ancient codices" that were in their possession. Further, Robert Stephens, who produced several editions of the Greek Received Text, obtained ancient Greek manuscripts from the Royal Library at Paris. He refused to allow even one letter that was not supported by what he considered to be the best Greek manuscripts. When he compared these manuscripts to the Complutensian, he found that they agreed. In the margin of the 3rd edition of his Greek N.T. he said seven of the 15 or 16 Greek manuscripts in his possession contained the *Johannine Comma*. Theodore Beza borrowed these manuscripts from Robert Stephens' son Henry and further testified that 1 John 5:7 is found in "some ancient manuscripts of Stephens."

In the 16th and 17th centuries, both the Catholic and the Reformation editors were convinced of the authenticity of 1 John 5:7 based on the Greek manuscript evidence that was before them.

It is probable that some of this evidence has been lost. Consider the following important statements:

"Erasmus, in his Notes on the place, owns that the Spanish Edition took it from a Vatican MS, and Father Amelote, in his Notes on his own Version of the Greek Testament, affirms, that he had seen this verse in the most ancient copy of the Vatican Library. The learned *Author of the Enquiry into the Authority of the Complutensian Edition of the New Testament* [Richard Smalbroke], in a letter to Dr. Bentley, from these and many other arguments, proves it to be little less than certain, that the controverted passage 1 Joh. v.7 was found in the ancient Vatican MS, so particularly recommended by Pope Leo to the Editors at Complutum" (Leonard Twells, *A Critical Examination of the Late New Text and Version of the New Testament*, 1731, II, p. 128).

"Can we peruse the account which is given of the labours of Laurentius Valla [he collated the Latin against the Greek in the 15th century], of the Complutensian Editors of the Old and New Testaments, of Robert Stephens, the Parisain printer, and of Theodore Beza, without believing,

that they found this passage in several valuable Greek manuscripts? All those learned and honourable men could not surely have combined to assert, in the face of the Christian world, that they had examined and collated manuscripts which contained this verse. Where would be our candour and charity, if we should suppose them capable of such an intentional and deliberate falsification of the Scriptures, and of doing this in concert? Would not this be to rob them of their honest and well-earned reputation, for learning and worth, for probity and honour, and to stigmatize them as cheats and impostors? It is supposed, that those Greek manuscripts which were used by the first editors of the New Testament, have been lost by being neglected, or destroyed after they had been used for this purpose. The manuscripts which were used by the Complutensian Editors, under the direction of Cardinal Ximenes, it is said, were never returned to the library of the Vatican, but are either lost, or lie concealed in some of the libraries in Spain. The manuscripts which were borrowed by Robert Stephens, from the Royal Library at Paris, have never found their way back thither, or at least, they are not now, it is said, in that Library. ... Though, however, it could be proved, that there did not exist at this hour, a single Greek manuscript which exhibited the verse in question, yet still the testimonies of their former existence, which have been produced, should overbalance, it is conceived, in the view of every unprejudiced mind, any unfavourable presumption arising from this circumstance” (Robert Jack, *Remarks on the Authenticity of 1 John v. 7*, <http://www.1john57.com/RJack.htm>).

Consider, too, ***THE ARGUMENT FROM THE GREEK LECTIONARIES AND PRINTED BIBLES***. It is a fascinating fact that though the majority of extant Greek manuscripts do not contain 1 John 5:7, many of the lectionaries of the Greek Orthodox Church do contain it, as do the printed Greek Bibles. The lectionaries are Scripture passages organized to be read in the churches.

The printed lectionaries in the Greek Orthodox Church since the 16th century have often included 1 John 5:7. This is an important fact, because it is not reasonable to believe that the Greek Orthodox Church would “correct” its own text from Latin.

1 John 5:7 was in the *Apostolos* or *Collection of Lessons (5th century)*, “read in the Greek Church, out of the Apostolical Epistles, and printed at Venice, An. 1602. *Velut ab Antiquis seculis recepta Lectio*, says Selden de Synedriis, l.2, c.4. Art. 4. This Lectionary is as old as the fifth century. Vide Millii Prol. 1054, and Mr. Martin’s *Dissertation*, Part I. c. 13” (Leonard Twells, *A Critical Examination of the Late New Text and Version of the New Testament*, 1731, II, p. 129).

1 John 5:7 was in the lectionary *Ordo Romanus (A.D. 730)* (Twells, II, p. 133). The Trinitarian text was to be read between Easter and Whitsuntide, “as we learn from Durandus, a writer of the fourteenth century, in his *Rationale of Divine Offices*.”

The Greek Orthodox Church’s printed New Testaments, both ancient and modern, contain 1 John 5:7. Again, it not possible to believe that they would include this on the basis of anything other than evidence from Greek. Being keepers of the Greek language, they would despise the



Latin.

Another consideration is ***THE ARGUMENT FROM THE LATIN MANUSCRIPT RECORD***. The majority of Latin New Testament manuscripts from the past 900 years contain 1 John 5:7. Further, some of the most ancient also contain it. “It is not true, that the most ancient Latin MSS. Of the New Testament want the celebrated passage of 1 John 5:7. For the Bible of Charlemagne revised and corrected by the learned Alcuin, has that text by the confession of our adversaries, and they have not been able to produce an older MS. Where it is missing. The only pretended one of this sort, is Mabillon’s Lectionary, which after all is not strictly a MS. of the New Testament, nor written in Latin but in a mixed language, called Teutonick-French, or Gallo-Teutonick” (Twells, II, p. 153).

***THE ARGUMENT FROM THE WRITINGS OF ANCIENT CHURCH LEADERS***. Following are some quotations that refer to the *Johannine Comma* from church writings dating to the first eight centuries of the church age:

**Tertullian (c. 200 A.D.)** -- “The connection of the Father in the Son, and of the Son in the Comforter, makes an unity of these three, one with another, which three are one,--not one person; in like manner as it is said, I and my Father are one, to denote the unity of substance, and not the singularity of number” (*Against Praxeas*, II, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*). “We find, therefore, that about A.D. 200, not much more than an hundred years after this Epistle was written, Tertullian refers to the verse in question, to prove that the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are one in essence; a satisfactory evidence, that this doctrine, though asserted by some in our time, to be a dangerous novelty, was really the acknowledged faith of Christians in those early times” (Robert Jack, *Remarks on the Authenticity of 1 John v. 7*, <http://www.1john57.com/RJack.htm>).

**Cyprian of Carthage (c. 250 A.D.)** -- “The Lord says ‘I and the Father are one’ and likewise it is written of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, ‘And these three are one’” (*De Unitate Ecclesiae*, [*On The Unity of the Church*], *The Ante-Nicene Fathers: Translations of the Writings of the Church Fathers Down to A.D.325*). Here Cyprian quotes from John 10:30 and 1 John 5:7. Nowhere else in Scripture do we find the words “and these three are one.” “It is true that Facundus, a 6th-century African bishop, interpreted Cyprian as referring to the following verse, but, as Scrivener (1883) remarks, it is ‘surely safer and more candid’ to admit that Cyprian read the Johannine comma in his New Testament manuscript ‘than to resort to the explanation of Facundus’” (Edward Hills, p. 210). Leonard Twells adds, “This noble testimony invincibly proves, that the passage now under debate, was in approved copies of the third century” (*A Critical Examination of the Late New Text and Version of the New Testament*, 1731, II, p. 134).

**Athanasius (c. 350 A.D.)** quotes 1 John 5:7 at least three times in his works (R.E. Brown, *The Anchor Bible*, Epistles of John, 1982, p. 782). “Among the works of Athanasius which are generally allowed to be genuine, is a Synopsis of this Epistle. In his summary of the fifth chapter, he seems plainly to refer to this verse, when he says, ‘The Apostle here teaches, the

unity of the Son with the Father' [Du Pin, Art. "Athanasius," London Edition, vol. 8, p. 34]. But it would be difficult to find any place in this chapter where this unity is taught, save in the seventh verse" (Jack, *Remarks on the Authenticity of 1 John v. 7*).

**Priscillian (380 A.D.)**, who was beheaded in 385 by Emperor Maximus on the charge of heresy, quoted 1 John 5:7. "As John says 'and there are three which give testimony on earth, the water, the flesh the blood, and these three are in one, and there are three which give testimony in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, and these three are one in Christ Jesus'" (*Liber Apologeticus*).

**Idacius Clarus (380 A.D.)**, Priscillian's principal adversary and accuser, also cited 1 John 5:7 (Hills, p. 210).

**Jerome (382 A.D.)** -- Jerome not only believed that the *Johannine Comma* was Scripture but he testified that "irresponsible translators left out this testimony in the Greek codices" (*Prologue to the Canonical Epistles*; quoted from Strouse, *A Critique of D.A. Carson's "The King James Version Debate"*). Jerome said further in his Prologue: "...these Epistles I have restored to their proper order; which, if arranged agreeably to the original text, and faithfully interpreted in Latin diction, would neither cause perplexity to the readers, nor would the various readings contradict themselves, especially in that place where we read the unity of the Trinity laid down in the Epistle of John. In this I found translators (or copyists) widely deviating from the truth; who set down in their own edition the names only of the three witnesses, that is, the Water, Blood, and Spirit; but omit the testimony of the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; by which, above all places, the Divinity of the father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit is proved to be one" (*Prologue to the Canonical Epistles*; quoted from Ben David, *Three Letters Addressed to the Editor of The Quarterly Review, in which is Demonstrated the Genuineness of The Three Heavenly Witnesses--1 John v. 7*, London, 1825, <http://www.1john57.com/threeletters3.htm>).

**Theodorus (4th century)** -- In "A treatise on one God in the Trinity, from the Epistle of John the Evangelist" he stated that John, in his Epistle, presents God as a Trinity (Ben David, "Three Letters Addressed to the Editor of *The Quarterly Review*, in which is Demonstrated the Genuineness of The Three Heavenly Witnesses--1 John v. 7," London, 1825, <http://www.1john57.com/threeletters3.htm>). Ben David observes: "This is a remarkable testimony, as it implies the existence and notoriety of the verse about the middle of the fourth century."

**Gregory of Nazanzius (4th century)** -- "What about John then, when in his Catholic Epistle he says that there are Three that bear witness, the Spirit and the Water and the Blood? Do you think he is talking nonsense? First, because he has ventured to reckon under one numeral things which are not consubstantial, though you say this ought to be done only in the case of things which are consubstantial. For who would assert that these are consubstantial? Secondly, because he had not been consistent in the way he has happened upon his terms; for after using Three in the masculine gender he adds three words which are neuter, contrary to the definitions and laws

which you and your grammarians have laid down. For what is the difference between putting a masculine Three first, and then adding One and One and One in the neuter, or after a masculine One and One and One to use the Three not in the masculine but in the neuter, which you yourself disclaim in the case of Deity?" (*The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*). "Metzger claims that 'the passage is quoted by none of the Greek Fathers.' Such a bold assertion is also misleading because Gregory of Nazanzius (a Greek Church Father from the fourth century), although not directly quoting the passage, specifically alludes to the passage and objects to the grammatical structure if the Comma is omitted (Metzger, on the other hand, would have one to believe that the Greek Church Fathers knew nothing of the passage)" (Jesse Boyd, "And These Three Are One: A Case for the Authenticity of 1 John 5:7-8," 1999, <http://www.ovrln.com/Bible/casefor1john57.html>).

**Eucherius of Lyons (434 A.D.)** -- "... in a tract, called *Formulae Spiritualis Intelligentiae*, c. 11, para. 3, 4, sets down both the seventh and eighth verses of the fifth chapter of St. John's first epistle, in the same order as our printed editions have them, precluding thereby the common cavil, that the seventh verse is only a mystical explication of the eighth" (Twells, II, p. 135).

**Vigilius Tapsensis (484 A.D.)** -- "... twice in his books concerning the Trinity, printed among the Works of Athanasius (viz. Book first, and seventh) and also in his Tract against Varimadus the Arian, under the name of Idacius Clarus, cites 1 John 5:7" (Twells, II, p. 135).

**Victor Vitensis (484 A.D.)** -- "... contemporary with Vigilius, writes the *History of the Vandalic Persecution*, in which he sets down a Confession of Faith, which Eugenius Bishop of Carthage, and the orthodox bishops of Africa, offered to King Hunnerick, a favourer of the Arians, who called upon those bishops to justify the catholic doctrine of the Trinity. In this Confession, presented Anno 484, among other places of Scripture, they defended the orthodox clause from 1 John 5:7, giving thereby the highest attestation, that they believed it to be genuine. Nor did the Arians, that we can find, object to it. So that the contending parties of those days seem to have agreed in reputed that passage authentic" (Twells, II, pp. 135, 136).

**Eugenius at the Council of Carthage (485 A.D.)** -- "...and in order that we may teach until now, more clearly than light, that the Holy Spirit is now one divinity with the Father and the Son. It is proved by the evangelist John, for he says, 'there are three which bear testimony in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one'" (Victor of Vitensis, *Historia persecutionis Africanae*, quoted from Michael Maynard, *A History of the Debate over 1 John 5:7-8*, p. 43). We will see say more about the significance of this quotation.

**Fulgentius Ruspensis (507 A.D.)** -- "... another orthodox writer of the same country, cites the controverted words in three several places of his Works. Which further evinces, that the Arians about Hunneric, had not been able to disprove that text. For if they had, no writer for the Catholic side of the question, would have dared to use a baffled testimony, whilst the memory of that defeat was yet recent" (Twells, II, p. 136).

**Cassiodorus (550 A.D.)** -- "... a patrician of Rome, a person remarkable for zealously recommending the choice of ancient and correct copies of the Bible to the monks under his direction, for their constant use, copies purged from error by collation with the Greek text; and that, in doubtful places, they should consult two or three ancient and correct books. So affectionately concerned was he for the purity of the sacred text, that whilst he left the correcting of other books to his Notaries, he would trust no hand but his own in reforming the Bible. Further, he himself declares, that he wrote his *Treatise of Orthography*, purposely to promote the faithful transcribing of the Scripture. It must therefore be of considerable importance, in the present dispute, to know that the reading of his copy, 1 John 5:7. And of all his Tracts, none was so likely to satisfy our curiosity as that entitled *Complexiones*, which were short and running notes, on the apostolical epistles and Acts, and the Revelation. ... But Cassiodorus's *Complexiones* were given up for lost, among other treasures of ancient literature, when, soon after the learned and judicious Mr. Martin had ended his labours upon this subject, that piece was unexpectedly found in the Library of Verona, and published at Florence by Scipio Maffei [Francesco Scipione Maffei (1675-1755)], An. 1721. And from thence we have all the satisfaction we can desire, that the contested passage was in Cassiodorus's copy. For in his comment on 1 John 5:1 and following verses, he concludes with these words: *Testificantur in Terra tria Mysteria, Aqua, Sanguis, & Spiritus: quae in Passione Domini leguntur completa: in Caelo autem Pater, & Filius, & Spiritus Sanctus, & hi tres unus est Deus.* [The three mysteries testify (bear witness) on earth, the water, blood and the spirit, which are read in full in the passion of (our) Lord: likewise, in heaven, the Father, and Son, and the Holy Spirit, and these three, one is God.] After which he proceeds to cite and explain the ninth verse of that chapter" (Twells, II, pp. 136, 137).

**Maximus, a Greek writer (645 A.D.)**, author of the *Disputes in the Council of Nice* (among the works of Athanasius) cites therein 1 John 5:7 (Twells, II, p. 129).

**Isidore Mercator (785 A.D.)** "is supposed to have forged the Decretal Epistles published by him. In the first of Pope Hyginus, 1 John 5:7,8 are cited, though the present order of them is inverted, as it was probably in Cassiodorus's copy also. The spurious character of these epistles no way hurts their authority, for the contested text being in the copies of those times" (Twells, II, p. 137).

**Ambrosius Authpertus (8th century)**, "of the same age, wrote a commentary upon the Revelations yet extant, in which the words of 1 John 5:7 are brought in as explicatory of Revelation 1:5" (Twells, II, p. 138).

In the *Glossa Ordinaria* of **Walafrid Strabo (9th century)**, "a work universally approved, we see the passages of the three Witnesses in Heaven, both in the text and the commentary" (Twells, II, p. 138).

"Lastly, we find no one Latin writer complaining of this passage (which appears to have been extant in many copies from the fifth century inclusive) as an interpolation, which is a very good

negative evidence, that no just objection could be made to its genuineness. The Preface of Jerome blames some translators for omitting it, but till the days of Erasmus, the insertion of it was never deemed a fault” (Twells, II, p. 138).

**THE ARGUMENT FROM THE COUNCIL OF CARTHAGE.** As we have seen, Eugenius, spokesman for the African bishops at the Council of Carthage (485 A.D.), quoted 1 John 5:7 in defense of the deity of Jesus Christ against the Arians. The bishops, numbering three to four hundred, were from Mauritania, Sardinia, Corsica, and the Balearick Isles, and they stood in defense of the Trinity. They “pawned their lives as well as reputation, for the verity of that disputed passage” (Twells, II, p. 147). Eugenius said: “...and in order that we may teach until now, more clearly than light, that the Holy Spirit is now one divinity with the Father and the Son. It is proved by the evangelist John, for he says, ‘there are three which bear testimony in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one’” In spite of claims to the contrary by those who oppose the *Johannine Comma*, the fact that 1 John 5:7 was quoted at the fifth century Council of Carthage is a nearly irrefutable argument in favor of its apostolic authenticity. “Charles Butler, in *Horae Biblicae* [Part II, *A Short Historical Outline of the Disputes Respecting the Authenticity of the Verse of the Three Heavenly Witnesses of 1 John*, 1807], offered an interesting 12-point rebuttal to the opposers of the *Comma*. Such is a lengthy treatise and will not be employed word for word but adequately summarized. Butler pointed out that the Catholic Bishops were summoned to a conference where they most certainly expected the tenets of their faith to be attacked by the Arians (the Arians denied the deity of Jesus Christ). Therefore, they would have been very careful about what they included in their proposed confession, seeing as all power was in the hands of their angry Arian adversaries. The bishops included the *Johannine Comma* as a first line of defense for their confession of Christ’s deity. If the Arians could have argued what present-day opposers of the verse say (the *Comma* was is no Greek copy and in only a few Latin copies), what would the bishops have replied? If we are to believe that they were unable to hold out one Greek copy, no ancient Latin copy, and no ancient father where the verse could be found, **THE ARIANS COULD HAVE RIGHTLY ACCUSED THEM ON THE SPOT OF FOLLOWING A SPURIOUS PASSAGE AND BEING GUILTY OF PALPABLE FALSEHOOD.** It is almost certain that these bishops would not have exposed themselves to such immediate and indelible infamy. They volunteered to include the *Comma* in their confession despite the existence of many long treatises that had been written by the ancient defenders of the Trinity in which the verse had not been mentioned. Such treatises would have served as ample evidence, but the bishops cited 1 John 5:7-8 instead. Obviously, they had no fear that any claim of spuriousness could be legitimately dashed upon them. If the verse were attacked, the bishops could have produced Greek copies, ancient Latin copies, and ancient fathers in its defense. The *Comma*, however, was not attacked by the Arians and the Catholic bishops (302 of them) were exiled to different parts of Africa, exposed to the insults of their enemies, and carefully deprived of all temporal and spiritual comforts of life. It is ludicrous to think that these men could undergo such persecution and suffering for their belief of the deity of Jesus Christ only to insert a spurious verse into God’s Word as their first line of defense. **THE AFRICAN BISHOPS MUST HAVE HAD WEIGHTY TESTIMONY TO THE COMMA IN THEIR MANUSCRIPTS. AS A RESULT, THEY WERE ABLE TO SUCCESSFULLY**

EMPLOY THE PASSAGE AS THEY DEFENDED THEIR FAITH BEFORE THE ARIAN ACCUSERS” (Jesse Boyd, *And These Three Are One: A Case for the Authenticity of 1 John 5:7-8 Rooted in Biblical Exegesis*, 1999).

**THE ARGUMENT FROM THE ASSEMBLY GATHERED BY CHARLEMAGNE.** “About the close of the eighth century, the Emperor Charlemagne assembled all the learned men that were to be found in that age, and placed Alciunus, an Englishman of great erudition, at their head; instructing them to revise the manuscripts of the Bible then in use, to settle the text, and to rectify the errors which had crept into it, through the haste or the ignorance of transcribers. To affect this great purpose, he furnished them with every manuscript that could be procured throughout his very extensive dominions. IN THEIR *CORRECTORIUM*, THE RESULT OF THEIR UNITED LABOURS, WHICH WAS PRESENTED IN PUBLIC TO THE EMPEROR, BY ALCIUNUS, THE TESTIMONY OF THE THREE (HEAVENLY) WITNESSES IS READ WITHOUT THE SMALLEST IMPEACHMENT OF ITS AUTHENTICITY. This very volume Baronius affirms to have been extant at Rome in his lifetime,\* in the library of the Abbey of Vaux-Celles; and he styles it ‘a treasure of inestimable value.’ [\* He was born in or about A.D. 1538, and died in A.D. 1607. Du Pin confirms this account of Baronius, v. vi. p. 122. Travis p. 24.] It cannot be supposed, that these divines, assembled under the auspices of a prince zealous for the restoration of learning, would attempt to settle the text of the New Testament, without referring to the Greek original; especially since we know, that there were, at that time, persons eminently skilled in the Greek language. THEY MUST HAVE HAD ACCESS TO PERUSE MANUSCRIPTS WHICH HAVE LONG SINCE PERISHED; AND THEIR RESEARCHES MIGHT IN ALL PROBABILITY EXTEND EVEN TO THE AGE OF THE APOSTLES. Here, then, is evidence, that this verse has been acknowledged as a part of Scripture, during more than a thousand years” (Robert Jack, *Remarks on the Authenticity of 1 John v. 7*, <http://www.1john57.com/RJack.htm>).

**THE ARGUMENT FROM ITS PRESERVATION AMONG BIBLE BELIEVERS.** The Lord Jesus Christ indicated that His Words would be preserved through the process of the Great Commission, as the Scriptures were received, kept, taught, and passed on to the next generation by Bible-believing churches (Matt. 28:18-20). This is guaranteed by the Christ’s power and his continual presence among the churches. When we look at church history in this light, the issue of 1 John 5:7 becomes plainer. Consider the versional evidence in favor of this verse:

1 John 5:7 is found in some of the **Syriac** manuscripts, though not the majority (*The New Testament Translated from the Syriac Peshito Version*, James Murdock, 1852, note on 1 John 5:7). 1 John 5:7 was printed in Gutbier’s *Lexicon Syricum concerdatntiale omnes N.T. Syriaci* (1664); it is obvious, therefore, that Gutbier found this important verse in Syriac manuscripts with which he was familiar. It was also printed by E. Hutter in 1599 in the Syriac portion of his polyglot (e-mail from Michael Maynard, May 11, 2005).

1 John 5:7 was in the **old Latin** that was used by Bible believers in Europe. Dr. Frederick Nolan (1784-1864) spent 28 years tracing the history of the European Italic or Old Latin version and in

1815 published his findings in *An Inquiry into the Integrity of the Greek Vulgate or Received Text of the New Testament, in which the Greek manuscripts are newly classed, the integrity of the Authorised Text vindicated, and the various readings traced to their origin*. Nolan believed that the old Latin got its name Italic from the churches in northern Italy that remained separated from Rome and that this text was maintained by separatist Waldensian believers. He concluded that 1 John 5:7 “was adopted in the version which prevailed in the Latin Church, previously to the introduction of the modern Vulgate” (Nolan, *Integrity of the Greek Vulgate*, pp. xvii, xviii).

1 John 5:7 was in the **Latin “vulgate”** that had a wide influence throughout the Dark Ages. The Catholic Church used it, but so did many non-Catholic believers. Bruce Metzger observes that the oldest manuscript of the Jerome vulgate, Codex Fuldensis (A.D. 546), does not include the Johannine Comma; but this fact is overwhelmed by other evidence. For one, we have seen that Jerome himself believed 1 John 5:7 was genuine Scripture and testified that heretics had removed it from some manuscripts. Second, 1 John 5:7 is found in the vast majority of extant Latin manuscripts, 49 out of every 50, according to Scrivener. Third, 1 John 5:7 is found in many of the most ancient Latin manuscripts, such as Ulmensis (c. 850) and Toletanus (988). The *Johannine Comma* is found “in twenty-nine of the fairest, oldest, and most correct of extant Vulgate manuscripts” (Maynard, *A History of the Debate over 1 John 5:7-8*, p. 343).

1 John 5:7 was in the **Romaunt or Occitan** New Testaments used by the Waldenses dating back to the 12th century. This was the language of the troubadours and men of letters in the Dark Ages. It was the predecessor of French and Italian. The Romaunt Bibles were small and plain, designed for missionary work. “This version was widely spread in the south of France, and in the cities of Lombardy. It was in common use among the Waldenses of Piedmont, and it was no small part, doubtless, of the testimony borne to truth by these mountaineers to preserve and circulate it” (J. Wylie, *History of Protestantism*, vol. 1, chapter 7, “The Waldenses”). I examined the copy of the Romaunt New Testament located at the Cambridge University Library in April 2005, but it does not have the Epistles of John. The following is from Justin Savino <dojustly@sbcglobal.net>, May 11, 2005: “The Zurich codex I have that is similar to the Dublin a Grenoble (or so I am told) does have 1 John 5:7. The direct quote is "Car trey son que donan testimoni al cel lo payre e lo filh e lo sant spirit e aquesti trey son un." Translated, "but three are there that five testimony in heaven the father and the son and the holy spirit and these three are one.”

1 John 5:7 was in the **Tepl**, which is an old German translation used by Waldenses from the 14th through the 15 centuries. Comba, who wrote a history of the Waldenses, said the Tepl was a Waldensian translation (Comba, *Waldenses of Italy*, pp. 190-192). Comba sites two authorities, Ludwig Keller and Hermann Haupt, for this information. Comba also states that the Tepl was based on old Latin manuscripts rather than the Jerome vulgate. The Tepl’s size identifies it with the small Bibles carried by the Waldensian evangelists on their dangerous journeys across Europe.

1 John 5:7 was in the old **French** translations. A translation of the whole Bible in **French** first

appeared in the 13th century, and “a much used version of the whole Bible was published in 1487 by Jean de Rely” (Norlie, *The Translated Bible*, p. 52).

1 John 5:7 was in the old **German** translations, which first appeared in the 13th and 14th centuries. A complete German Bible appeared before the invention of printing (Norlie, p. 53). There were at least 12 different editions of the Bible into German before the discovery of America in 1492. The first printed German Bible appeared in 1466 (Price, *The Ancestry of Our English Bible*, 1934, p. 243). These were Latin-based versions.

1 John 5:7 was in the **Spanish** Bibles, beginning with the one printed in Valencia in 1478 by Bonifacio Ferrer (M’Crie, *History of the Reformation in Spain*, p. 191).

It is probable that 1 John 5:7 was in the **Bohemian** or **Czech** Bible printed by the Brethren in 1488.

1 John 5:7 stood uncontested in **English** Bibles for 500 years. The first English New Testament, completed by John Wycliffe and his co-laborers in 1380, contained this verse. The *Johannine Comma* was in the Tyndale New Testament of 1526, the Coverdale of 1535, the Matthew’s of 1537, the Great Bible of 1539, the Geneva of 1557, the Bishops of 1568, and the King James Bible of 1611. The first English Bible of any importance to remove the verse was the Revised Version of 1881 and the first English Bible which had any chance of superseding the KJV to remove 1 John 5:7 was the New International Version of 1973 and this version has still not taken over the sales of the King James Bible. From the time of the British Empire to the present, English has been a prominent world language. It is the international language in these modern times, the language of commerce, aviation, and science. The witness of the English Bible, therefore, has great significance.

Thus we see that the Trinitarian statement of 1 John 5:7 comes down to us by the hands of Bible believers and churches that held the apostolic faith at great cost through the Dark Ages, through the Protestant Reformation, up to our very day. In light of Matthew 28:19-20, this is a strong witness to its apostolic authenticity.

***THE ARGUMENT FROM THE NATURE OF TRUE CHRISTIANITY.*** Some textual critics believe the *Johannine Comma* entered the manuscript record accidentally from a marginal note, but I do not consider this likely. It is much more likely that one of two things has occurred in regard to the *Johannine Comma*. Either it was removed by heretics or it was added by “orthodox” Christians. In light of the Bible’s teaching, which of these is more probable? The Bible teaches us that true believers are zealous for the words of God. They receive God’s Word (Jn. 17:8; 1 Thess. 2:13), keep it (Jn. 14:23; 17:6), hide it in their hearts (Ps. 119:11), proclaim it (2 Tim. 4:2), and contend for it (Jude 3). They keep it without spot (1 Tim. 6:14), referring to the smallest details. They have a “jots and tittles” attitude toward it (Mat. 5:18). They are taught to pass it along to the next generation in its completeness (Mat. 28:20; 2 Tim. 2:2). Heretics, on the other hand, have no fear of God’s Word and are willing to corrupt it (2 Cor. 2:17). Thus, the



possibility that true Bible believers added anything to the apostolic Scriptures is less than slim, while the possibility that heretics attacked the Scriptures is a certainty.

**THE ARGUMENT FROM THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THOSE TIMES.** The following is excerpted from Robert Lewis Dabney, “The Doctrinal Various Readings of the New Testament Greek,” *Discussions: Evangelical and Theological*, Vol. 1, 1891, p. 350-390). This first appeared in the *Southern Presbyterian Review*, April 1871: “We must also consider the time and circumstances in which the passage was written. John tells his spiritual children that his object is to warn them against seducers (2.26), whose heresy was a denial of the proper Sonship and incarnation (4.2) of Jesus Christ. We know that these heretics were Corinthians and Nicolaitanes. Irenaeus and other early writers tell us that they all vitiated the doctrine of the Trinity. Cerinthus taught that Jesus was not miraculously born of a virgin, and that the Word, Christ, was not truly and eternally divine, but a sort of angelic ‘Aion’ associated with the natural man Jesus up to his crucifixion. The Nicolaitanes denied that the ‘Aion’ Christ had a real body, and ascribed to him only a phantasmal body and blood. It is against these errors that John is fortifying his ‘children’ and this is the very point of the disputed 7th verse. If it stands, then the whole passage is framed to exclude both heresies. In verse 7 he refutes the Corinthian by declaring the unity of Father, Word and Spirit, and with the strictest accuracy employing the neuter HEN EISIN to fix the point which Cerinthus denied--the unity of the Three Persons in One common substance. He then refutes the Nicolaitanes by declaring the proper humanity of Jesus, and the actual shedding, and application by the Spirit, of that water and blood of which he testifies as on eyewitness in the Gospel.

**THE ARGUMENT FROM THE SILENCE OF 1500 YEARS OF CHURCH HISTORY.** “It is an observation, we apprehend, of considerable importance, on this part of the subject, that till we descend to modern times, no objection was ever advanced against the authenticity of the verse in question. Jerome complains of the omission of it by unfaithful translators; and declares, that the best Greek manuscripts of his time contained it; for he appeals, as we have seen, in behalf of his version, to the authority of these manuscripts. Jerome died A.D. 420, and ever since his days, the verse has not only maintained its place in the Scriptures, but has been uniformly quoted and referred to, by writers of the first eminence for learning and integrity, in every succeeding age. If we should suppose for a moment, that it is spurious, is it not wonderful that this was never discovered till modern times? Is it not wonderful, that during the period of one thousand four hundred years, which intervened between the days of Praxeas and the age of Erasmus, not a single author can be mentioned who ever charged this verse with being an interpolation or forgery. Had it been, in any of those ages, even suspected to be spurious, would its adversaries, especially the Arians, have been merely silent when it was produced against them? Would they not have exclaimed aloud against those who quoted it? Would they not have filled the Christian world with invectives against them, for their falsehood and impiety, in thus attempting to corrupt the Word of God? That the Arians in those times never pretended to deny the authenticity of the verse in question, is a phenomenon which should be accounted for by those who contend that it is spurious” (Robert Jack, *Remarks on the Authenticity of 1 John v. 7*, <http://www.1john57.com/RJack.htm>).

***THE ARGUMENT FROM THE FACT THAT IT WAS HERETICS AND UNBELIEVERS WHO WERE AT THE FOREFRONT OF THE CALL FOR THE REMOVAL OF 1 JOHN 5:7 IN THE 17TH TO THE 19TH CENTURIES.*** We have seen that there was no serious challenge to the authenticity of 1 John 5:7 throughout the church age until the 19th century, but who was it in the 19th century that was calling so loudly for its removal from the Bible? It was theological modernists and Unitarians who were at the forefront of the call for the removal of “God” from 1 Timothy 3:16 and the *Johannine Comma* from 1 John 5:7. Does this not speak loudly in favor of these passages? We have documented this history in our 477-page book *For Love of the Bible: The Battle for the King James Version and the Received Text from 1800 to Present*. We have documented this even more extensively in *The Modern Bible Version’s Hall of Shame*.

Terence Brown, the former editorial secretary of the Trinitarian Bible Society of London, England, made this observation: “The last century has witnessed a steady drift away from the deity of Christ and towards ‘unitarianism’. It is not surprising that scholars who have been caught up in this tide of unbelief should welcome the support of these unreliable documents” (Brown, *God Was Manifest in the Flesh*, Trinitarian Bible Society, nd).

One of the first to attack 1 John 5:7 was an Arian named Sandius, in 1670.

The next attack came from the pen of Roman Catholic priest Richard Simon in the book *Histoire Critique du Vieux Testament (Critical History of the Old Testament)*, published in 1678. Simon was a forerunner of German higher criticism, denying that Moses was the author of the Pentateuch.

Another attack upon 1 John 5:7 came from the pen of the famous historian Edward Gibbon (1737-94) in *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776, 1788). He argued that Christians added the Trinitarian statement and other things to the New Testament centuries after it was first written. Gibbon was a skeptic after the fashion of Voltaire and did not believe in the divine inspiration of the Scriptures.

A reply was given to Gibbon’s charges by George Travis, Archdeacon of Chester, who published *Letters to Edward Gibbon, Esq., author of the History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire; in defence of the authenticity of the seventh verse of the fifth chapter of the First Epistle of St. John*. (Chester, 1784; other editions were published in 1785 and 1794).

At this juncture Greek classical scholar Richard Porson (1759-1808) of Cambridge entered the fray on the side of unbelief. In 1790 he published *Letters to Mr. Archdeacon Travis, in answer to his defence of the three heavenly witnesses, 1 John v.7*. It is instructive to understand that Porson was a skeptic in regard to the Trinity (Lynn Winters, *Our Judaic-Christian Heritage*, section III, chapter 3). Porson was also a great lover of liquor, saying, “I would sooner drink ink than not drink at all.”

The Unitarians loved the critical Greek text from the days of German modernists Johann Semler (1725-91) and Johann Griesbach (1745-1812) onward.

Semler himself published an attack upon 1 John 5:7 entitled, *Historical and Critical Collections, relative to what are called the proof passages in dogmatic theology*, Vol. I. on 1 John v. 7.

Prominent Unitarian leader Joseph Priestly attempted to publish a new English version based on the Greek text of Griesbach, and the project was well advanced when the manuscript was destroyed in a fire in 1791. Priestly's successor, Thomas Belsham, continued to make this project his primary objective.

When the Unitarian Book Society was formed, one of its main objects was the translation of a new English version based on the Griesbach critical text. In 1808, instead of making its own translation, it published an "improved" edition of the 1796 translation by William Newcome of Ireland "chiefly because it followed Griesbach's text" (Earl Wilbur, *A History of Unitarianism in Transylvania, England, and America*, 1952, p. 339; see also P. Marion Simms, *The Bible in America*, pp. 255-258). The complete title was "The New Testament, an improved version upon the basis of Archbishop Newcome's new translation with a corrected text and notes critical and explanatory." It was published in London by Richard Taylor & Co., in 1808 and the following year in America by William Wells of Boston. This publication "drew the fire of the orthodox by omitting as late interpolations several passages traditionally cited as pillars of Trinitarian doctrine" (Wilbur, *A History of Unitarianism*, p. 339), such as "God" in 1 Tim. 3:16 and the Trinitarian statement in 1 John 5:7.

Officials at Harvard College in 1809 published an American edition of Griesbach's critical Greek N.T., because its text criticism was "a most powerful weapon to be used against the supporters of verbal inspiration" (Theodore Letis, *The Ecclesiastical Text*, p. 2). This was about the time that Harvard capitulated to Unitarianism. Thus, the enemies of Biblical inspiration understood in that day that modern textual criticism weakens key doctrines and undermines the authority of the Bible.

The Universalist Abner Kneeland published a New Testament in Greek and English in 1823. The Greek was Griesbach's and the English was a revised edition of Belsham's. Kneeland was the minister of the First Independent Church of Christ, called Universalist, in Philadelphia. Kneeland later became a deist.

The Unitarian John Gorham Palfrey published an English New Testament in 1828 based on Griesbach's Greek. His work appeared anonymously.

In 1869 the American Unitarian Association of Boston published *The New Testament, translated from the Greek text of Tischendorf*, edited by George R. Noyes.

In 1902 the Jehovah's Witness Watchtower Bible & Tract Society began publishing the *Emphatic Diaglott* by B.F. Wilson. This private interlinear was first published in 1865 and was based on the Griesbach critical Greek New Testament and "the various readings of the Vatican Manuscript, No. 1209 in the Vatican Library." Wilson was affiliated with the Disciples of Christ, which held the heresy of baptismal regeneration, and was also associated with a cult called the "Restitution Church of God." The Jehovah's Witnesses have printed several hundred thousand copies of the *Emphatic Diaglott*.

Many of the foundational modern textual critics were Unitarians or theological modernists who denied the deity of Jesus Christ, including Johann Semler (1725-91), Edward Harwood (1729-94), Johann Griesbach (1745-1812), George Vance Smith (1816-1902), Ezra Abbot (1819-1884), Joseph Henry Thayer (1828-1901), William Sanday (1843-1920), Caspar Gregory (1846-1917), and Henry Vedder (1853-1935).

In the 17th to 19th centuries the lines were clearly drawn, and those who believed the Bible and stood for evangelical Bible doctrine were on the side of 1 John 5:7, while those who were heretical in doctrine and/or agnostic in faith that were aligned against it. There were exceptions, but this was definitely the rule.

The battle was only lost in the 20th century when "Christianity" was dramatically weakened by the onslaught of end-time heresy and compromise.

***WHY DID ERASMUS ADD THE JOHANNINE COMMA TO HIS 3RD EDITION GREEK NEW TESTAMENT?*** There are two popular myths regarding Erasmus and 1 John 5:7 that are parroted by modernists, evangelicals, and even fundamentalists today who defend the modern versions against the KJV.

The first myth is that Erasmus promised to insert the verse if a Greek manuscript were produced. This is stated as follows by Bruce Metzger: "Erasmus promised that he would insert the *Comma Johanneum*, as it is called, in future editions if a single Greek manuscript could be found that contained the passage. At length such a copy was found--or made to order" (Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, 1st and 2nd editions).

The second myth is that Erasmus challenged Edward Lee to find a Greek manuscript that included 1 John 5:7. This originated with Erika Rummel in 1986 in her book *Erasmus' Annotations* and was repeated by James White in 1995 (*The Truth about the KJV-Only Controversy*).

In *A History of the Debate over 1 John 5:7,8*, Michael Maynard records that H.J. de Jonge, the Dean of the Faculty of Theology at Rijksuniversiteit (Leiden, Netherlands), has refuted both myths. de Jonge, a recognized specialist in Erasmian studies, refuted the myth of a promise in 1980, stating that Metzger's view on Erasmus' promise "has no foundation in Erasmus' work.

Consequently it is highly improbable that he included the difficult passage because he considered himself bound by any such promise.” He has also refuted the new myth of a challenge (which Rummel devised in reaction to the burial of the promise myth). In a letter of June 13, 1995, to Maynard, de Jonge wrote:

I have checked again Erasmus' words quoted by Erika Rummel and her comments on them in her book *Erasmus' Annotations*. This is what Erasmus writes [on] in his *Liber tertius quo respondet ... Ed. Lei*: Erasmus first records that Lee had reproached him with neglect of the MSS. of 1 John because Er. (according to Lee) had consulted only one MS. Erasmus replies that he had certainly not used only one ms., but many copies, first in England, then in Brabant, and finally at Basle. He cannot accept, therefore, Lee's reproach of negligence and impiety.

'Is it negligence and impiety, if I did not consult manuscripts which were simply not within my reach? I have at least assembled whatever I could assemble. Let Lee produce a Greek MS. which contains what my edition does not contain and let him show that that manuscript was within my reach. Only then can he reproach me with negligence in sacred matters.'

From this passage you can see that Erasmus does not challenge Lee to produce a manuscript etc. What Erasmus argues is that Lee may only reproach Erasmus with negligence of MSS if he demonstrates that Erasmus could have consulted any MS. in which the *Comma Johanneum* figured. Erasmus does not at all ask for a MS. containing the *Comma Johanneum*. He denies Lee the right to call him negligent and impious if the latter does not prove that Erasmus neglected a manuscript to which he had access.

In short, Rummel's interpretation is simply wrong. The passage she quotes has nothing to do with a challenge. Also, she cuts the quotation short, so that the real sense of the passage becomes unrecognizable. She is absolutely not justified in speaking of a challenge in this case or in the case of any other passage on the subject (emphasis in original) (de Jonge, cited from Maynard, p. 383).

Jeffrey Khoo observes further: “Yale professor Roland Bainton, another Erasmusian expert, agrees with de Jonge, furnishing proof from Erasmus' own writing that Erasmus' inclusion of 1 John 5:7f was not due to a so-called 'promise' but the fact that he believed 'the verse was in the Vulgate and must therefore have been in the Greek text used by Jerome'” (Jeffrey Khoo, *Kept Pure in All Ages*, 2001, p. 88).

Edward F. Hills, who had a doctorate in textual criticism from Harvard, testifies: “...it was not trickery that was responsible for the inclusion of the *Johannine Comma* in the Textus Receptus, but the usage of the Latin speaking Church” (Hills, *The King James Version Defended*).

In the 3rd edition of *The Text of the New Testament* Bruce Metzger corrected his false assertion about Erasmus as follows: “What is said on p. 101 above about Erasmus' promise to include the *Comma Johanneum* if one Greek manuscript were found that contained it, and his subsequent suspicion that MS 61 was written expressly to force him to do so, needs to be corrected in the light of the research of H. J. DeJonge, a specialist in Erasmusian studies who finds no explicit

evidence that supports this frequently made assertion” (Metzger, *The Text of The New Testament*, 3rd edition, p. 291, footnote 2). The problem is that this myth continues to be paraded as truth by modern version defenders.

**WHY DID THIS TRINITARIAN TESTIMONY DROP OUT OF MOST EXTANT GREEK MANUSCRIPTS?** The omission in the Greek manuscripts was probably brought about by the heresy of Sabellianism or Arianism.

Dr. Hills argued that the omission arose during the Sabellian controversy. “In the second place, it must be remembered that during the 2nd and 3rd centuries (between 220 and 270, according to Harnack), the heresy which orthodox Christians were called upon to combat was not Arianism (since this error had not yet arisen) but Sabellianism (so named after Sabellius, one of its principal promoters), according to which the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit were one in the sense that they were identical. Those that advocated this heretical view were called Patripassians (Father-sufferers), because they believed that God the Father, being identical with Christ, suffered and died upon the cross, and Monarchians, because they claimed to uphold the Monarchy (sole-government) of God. It is possible, therefore, that the Sabellian heresy brought the *Johannine comma* into disfavor with orthodox Christians. The statement, these three are one, no doubt seemed to them to teach the Sabellian view that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit were identical. And if during the course of the controversy manuscripts were discovered which had lost this reading in the accidental manner described above, it is easy to see how the orthodox party would consider these mutilated manuscripts to represent the true text and regard the *Johannine comma* as a heretical addition. In the Greek-speaking East especially the *comma* would be unanimously rejected, for here the struggle against Sabellianism was particularly severe. Thus it was not impossible that during the 3rd century amid the stress and strain of the Sabellian controversy, the *Johannine comma* lost its place in the Greek text but was preserved in the Latin texts of Africa and Spain, where the influence of Sabellianism was probably not so great” (Edward Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, pp. 212, 213).

It is also possible that the Arians corrupted this passage of Scripture. “It is well known, that the Arians are expressly accused by many of the Latin fathers, of having corrupted the Scriptures, of expunging passages, and of strangely mutilating them, during the time that they were in power. [This was particularly objected to them by Hilary of Poitiers, Hilary the deacon, Ambrose, and Salvianus.] Socrates, Greek ecclesiastical historian who flourished in the fifth century, directly accuses them, of having garbled this very Epistle; for the purpose of separating, between the Divinity and humanity of Christ. ... When we consider further, that Arianism became for a season the reigning religion, especially in the East, where it obtained much more than in the West, may we not in this way be able to account, in some measure, for the silence of the Greek fathers with respect to this verse? The Western Church never became so generally Arian, as the Eastern; of course it might be expected, that the verse was more likely to be found in the writings of Latin, than of Greek fathers; and accordingly we perceive that this is the case” (Robert Jack, *Remarks on the Authenticity of 1 John v. 7*, <http://www.1john57.com/RJack.htm>).

***CONCLUDING POINT: THERE IS A STRANGE HYPOCRISY TO THE CLAIM BY TEXTUAL CRITICS THAT 1 JOHN 5:7 HAS SLIGHT TEXTUAL AUTHORITY.*** Whereas the Received Text does contain a few readings that have small support in the Greek manuscripts (but are represented broadly in the Latin), the Critical Greek Text contains HUNDREDS of readings that have small support in both the Greek and the Latin manuscripts! One of the principles of Westcott and Hort was this: “A few documents are not, by reason of their paucity, appreciably less likely to be right than a multitude opposed to them” (Introduction to the Westcott-Hort Greek New Testament, 1881, p. 45).

The United Bible Societies Greek New Testament, the latest edition of the Westcott-Hort text, repeatedly questions and omits verses with far less textual authority than the Trinitarian statement of 1 John 5:7. Most of the significant omissions are made on the authority of Aleph and B (sometimes both together; sometimes one standing alone), and a bare handful of similar manuscripts and versions.

For example, the word “fasting” is removed from Mark 9:29 in the Westcott-Hort text, the Nestles’ text, the UBS text, and all of the modern versions on the “authority” of its omission in Aleph, B, two minuscules (0274, 2427), one Old Latin, and the Georgian version.

The entire last 12 verses of the Gospel of Mark are omitted are seriously questioned on the “authority” of only three Greek manuscripts, Aleph, B, and the minuscule 304 (plus some slight witness by versions that were influenced by the Alexandrian Text).

The UBS text puts Matthew 21:44 in brackets on the “authority” of only one uncial (the terribly unreliable D), one minuscule, plus 7 Old Latin and one Syriac manuscripts. This is flimsy textual authority, to say the least.

Sometimes, in fact, the modern textual critics don’t have even this much “authority” for their changes. 104 times in the book of Matthew, the 3rd edition of the UBS Greek N.T. prints a reading that either is “found in no manuscript (34 times) or is found in only one Greek manuscript of the more than 5,300 existing” (Wilbur Pickering, *Some Relevant Considerations for New Testament Textual Criticism*, from his web site, <http://www.esgm.org/ingles/imenu.html>).

I, for one, believe the apostle John wrote the Trinitarian statement in 1 John 5:7 under divine inspiration.

A recommended resource for further study is Michael Maynard, *A History of the Debate over 1 John 5:7-8: a tracing of the longevity of the Comma Johanneum, with evaluations of arguments against its authenticity* (Tempe, AZ: Comma Publications, 1995).

## WHAT ABOUT THE LAST TWELVE VERSES OF THE GOSPEL OF MARK?

In most modern Bible versions, Mark 16:9-20 is omitted or separated from the rest of the Gospel with a footnote questioning its authenticity. This originated with critical editions of the Greek text developed in the 19th century and popularized by the Westcott-Hort Greek New Testament. The first standard English Bible to question this passage was the English Revised Version (ERV) of 1881, which separates Mk. 16:9-20 from the rest of the text and has a footnote saying, "The two oldest Greek manuscripts, and some other authorities, omit from v. 9 to the end. Some other authorities have a different ending to the Gospel." The Westcott-Hort Greek Text of 1881 separates these verses from the rest of the text with double brackets. The New International Version separates this passage from the rest of the text with a line and a blank space and a note reading, "The two most reliable early manuscripts do not have Mark 16:9-20."

In spite of these assaults, we know that that this passage is inspired Scripture. The following brief study reveals the error of questioning its authenticity.

### *THE MANUSCRIPT EVIDENCE WITNESSES TO THE AUTHENTICITY OF MARK 16:9-20.*

The following is from *The Future of the Bible* by Jakob Van Bruggen:

"One of the most discussed passages is Mk. 16:9-20. In the New American Bible (NAB), three possibilities are given successively in the translation: 'The Longer Ending,' 'The Shorter Ending,' and 'The Freer Logion,' a manuscript from the fourth or fifth century. In this way, the suggestion is raised very strongly that Mark 16 originally ended at v. 8 or that the original sequel to verse 8 was lost. The NAB creates the impression that the majority textual tradition was rather bold to complete the chapter. This procedure throws doubt on the Majority Text and raises the question of how often additions occur in other passages that cannot be traced.

"The notes in the NAB, however, correct this impression. The 'Freer Logion' occurs in only one Greek manuscript (fourth to fifth century). The 'Shorter Ending' is found only in a few late Greek manuscripts. The normal ending (Mk. 16:9-20), however, seems to originate from the first century and seems to be accepted as genuine in the majority of manuscripts. The NAB translators really objected to this ending only because the vocabulary and style of Mk. 16:9-20 are said to deviate from the rest of Mark. Yet such objections have nothing to do with the determination of the text, but rather with the question of how one judges the text.

"With regard to the normal ending of Mark 16, W.R. Farmer concludes: 'In fact, external evidence from the second century for Mk. 16:9-20 is stronger than for most other parts of that Gospel' (W.R. Farmer, *The Last Twelve Verses of Mark*, p. 31). Jerome knew that there were manuscripts in his time that omitted Mk. 16:9-20, but he was personally convinced of the authenticity of these verses. There are only three known Greek manuscripts that end at 16:8, and one of them [Codex Sinaiticus] has a large open space after verse 8. All the remaining Greek manuscripts contain verses 9-20 after Mark 16:1-8, and most of them do not have a single note or insertion of other data. Mk. 16:1-20 has both the authority of the Majority Text, as well as the authority of the oldest text. If it still remains uncertain whether Mk. 16:9-20 is well attested textually, then very little of any of the text of



the New Testament is well attested” (Van Bruggen, *The Future of the Bible*, pp. 130, 131).

It is important to note that even in the Vaticanus and the Sinaiticus the witness against Mark 16:9-20 is not clear.

In the Vaticanus a prominent blank space is left where Mark 16:9-20 should be. The following testimony is by John Burgon, who examined Vaticanus personally: “To say that in the Vatican Codex (B), which is unquestionably the oldest we possess, St. Mark’s Gospel ends abruptly at the eighth verse of the sixteenth chapter, and that the customary subscription (*Kata Mapkon*) follows, is true; but it is far from being the whole truth. It requires to be stated in addition that the scribe, whose plan is found to have been to begin every fresh book of the Bible at the top of the next ensuing column to that which contained the concluding words of the preceding book, has at the close of St. Mark’s Gospel deviated from his else invariable practice. HE HAS LEFT IN THIS PLACE ONE COLUMN ENTIRELY VACANT. IT IS THE ONLY VACANT COLUMN IN THE WHOLE MANUSCRIPT -- A BLANK SPACE ABUNDANTLY SUFFICIENT TO CONTAIN THE TWELVE VERSES WHICH HE NEVERTHELESS WITHHELD. WHY DID HE LEAVE THAT COLUMN VACANT? What can have induced the scribe on this solitary occasion to depart from his established rule? The phenomenon (I believe I was the first to call distinct attention to it) is in the highest degree significant, and admits only one interpretation. The older manuscript from which Codex B was copied must have infallibly contained the twelve verses in dispute. The copyist was instructed to leave them out -- and he obeyed; but he prudently left a blank space in *memoriam rei*. Never was a blank more intelligible! Never was silence more eloquent! By this simple expedient, strange to relate, the Vatican Codex is made to refute itself even while it seems to be bearing testimony against the concluding verses of St. Mark’s Gospel, by withholding them; for it forbids the inference which, under ordinary circumstances, must have been drawn from that omission. It does more. By leaving room for the verses it omits, it brings into prominent notice at the end of fifteen centuries and a half, a more ancient witness than itself” (Burgon, *The Last Twelve Verses of the Gospel of St. Mark Vindicated*, 1871, pp. 86-87).

As for the Sinaiticus, though Mark 16:9-20 is omitted, it was originally there and has been erased. The sheet containing the end of the Gospel of Mark and the beginning of Luke and the omission of Mark 16:9-20 was added to the manuscript at some point. “Tischendorf, who discovered the codex, warned that those four pages appeared to be written by a different hand and with different ink than the rest of the manuscript. However that may be, a careful scrutiny reveals the following: the end of Mark and beginning of Luke occur on page 3 (of the four); pages 1 and 4 contain an average of 17 lines of printed Greek text per column (there are four columns per page), just like the rest of the codex; page 2 contains an average of 15.5 lines of printed text per column (four columns); the first column of page 3 contains only twelve lines of printed text and in this way v. 8 occupies the top of the second column, the rest of which is blank (except for some designs); Luke begins at the top of column 3, which contains 16 lines of printed text while column 4 is back up to 17 lines. On page 2 the forger began to spread the letters, displacing six lines of printed text; in the first column of page 3 he got desperate and displaced

five lines of printed text, just in one column! In this way he managed to get two lines of v. 8 over onto the second column, avoiding the vacant column (as in B). That second column would accommodate 15 more lines of printed text, which with the other 11 make 26. Verses 9-20 occupy 23.5 such lines, so there is plenty of room for them. It really does seem that there has been foul play, and there would have been no need for it unless the first hand did in fact display the disputed verses. IN ANY EVENT, ALEPH AS IT STANDS IS A FORGERY AND THEREFORE MAY NOT LEGITIMATELY BE ALLEGED AS EVIDENCE AGAINST [THESE VERSES]" (Wilbur Pickering, *The Identity of the New Testament Text*, appendix F, "Mark 16:9-20 and the Doctrine of Inspiration"). F.H.A. Scrivener believed that the same scribe who copied Vaticanus also copied the pages that have been inserted into Sinaiticus. "... strange to relate, it so happens that the very leaf on which the end of St. Mark's Gospel and the beginning of St. Luke's is written (Mark 16:2 -- Luke 1:56), is one of the six leaves of Cod. Aleph which are held to have been written by the scribe of Cod. B. 'The inference,' remarks Scrivener, 'is simple and direct, that at least in these leaves Codd. B Aleph make but one witness, not two'" (Burgon and Miller, *The Traditional Text*, p. 233, quoting Scrivener, *A Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament*, II, p. 337, note 1).

*THE DOCTRINE OF PROVIDENTIAL PRESERVATION POINTS TO THE GENUINENESS OF MARK 16:9-20.* The Lord Jesus Christ promised to be with His churches to the end of the age, and He instructed them to keep His words from generation to generation (Mat. 28:19-20). This is the "how" of Bible preservation in the church age. The Old Testament was kept by the Jews (Rom. 3:1-2). The New Testament was kept by the churches in the context of the Great Commission. In this light, there is no doubt about the authenticity of Mark 16:9-20. It has been in the Bibles used by God's people down through the centuries. Mark 16:9-20 was in the Syriac Peshitta, the Latin, the Gothic, most of the Georgian and the Coptic, and the Slavonic. It was in the Waldensian Bibles (the Romaunt and the Tepl, for example). It was in the Lollard Bible of the 14th and 15th centuries. It was in the Tyndale, the Coverdale, the Matthew, the Geneva, and the Bishops Bibles. In fact, it was in all of the standard English translations prior to 1881. It was in all of the Reformation Bibles, the German (1521), French (1528), Spanish (1569), Slovenian (1584), French Geneva (1588), Welsh (1588), Hungarian (1590), Dutch Statenvertaling (1637), Italian Diodati (1641), Finnish (1642), Irish (1685), Romanian (1688), Latvian (1689), Lithuanian (1735), Estonian (1739), Georgian (1743), Portuguese (1751), Gaelic (1801), Serbo-Croatian (1804), Yiddish (1821), Albanian (1827), Slovak (1832), Norwegian (1834), Russian (1865), Turkish (1827), Bulgarian (1864), etc. It was in the Bibles that were translated into all of the major languages of the world during the great revival/missionary era of the 16th through the 19th centuries, including the major languages of Africa and India. It is folly to question the authenticity of this passage because of two unreliable manuscripts (Sinaiticus and Vaticanus) which were hidden away for centuries in the pope's library and in an eerie monastery at the foot of Mt. Sinai and for which there is no evidence that they were ever used by God's people.

*THERE IS ALSO THE INTERNAL WITNESS TO THE AUTHENTICITY OF MARK 16:9-20.* To end the Gospel of Mark at verse eight of chapter 16 leaves the disciples amazed and afraid. It

ends the Gospel with no resurrection; no victory; no Great Commission; no ascension; no preaching of the gospel with signs following. Who would want to remove such a portion of Scripture from the Bible? I believe the devil would.

John Burgon gave a powerful defense of this passage in *The Last Twelve Verses of the Gospel according to S. Mark Vindicated against Recent Critical Objectors and Established* (London: James Parker and Co., 1871). A reprint of this is available from the Dean Burgon Society, 900 Park Ave., Collingswood, NJ 08108. 800-564-6109, BFT@BibleForToday.org.

### **SHOULD THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS BE USED TO MODIFY THE MASORETIC HEBREW OLD TESTAMENT?**

The Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered in eleven caves near Khirbet (meaning *ruins*) Qumran by the northwest shore of the Dead Sea in the 1940s and 1950s. They were deposited there in earthen jars and survived through the centuries because of the dry climate of that region and the remoteness and difficult accessibility of the caves. As of 2004, there were 13 theories about who lived nearby and who deposited the manuscripts. The most prominent theory is that the scrolls were owned by a Jewish cult called the Essenes who lived in the nearby community. The manuscripts were probably stored in haste as the community fled the approaching Roman Army, which was in Judea to put down the Jewish revolt between A.D. 66-70.

Approximately 800 different original manuscripts have been identified (representing copies of roughly 350 titles), but most have survived only in fragments. In fact only about 12 scrolls are more or less intact; the others were discovered in some 25,000 fragments. Most of the scrolls are in Hebrew, but about 25% are in Arabic and a few are in Greek. The scrolls are generally thought to date from about 250 B.C. to 100 A.D., though this is not certain. Dating of manuscripts is not an exact science and there are conflicting opinions among scholars.

In the early 1950s the ruins of Qumran, located near the caves, was excavated and the remnant of an Essenes community was discovered.

The first batch of Dead Sea Scrolls was discovered in 1947 by an Arab youth who was following his goat that had wandered away. In 1955 all of these scrolls became the possession of the state of Israel. They include the following: (1) *Isaiah A*, an almost complete copy of Isaiah in Hebrew, thought to date back to the second century before Christ; written on leather pieces sewn together and extending to about 24 feet in length; (2) *Isaiah B*, another copy of Isaiah in Hebrew, reasonably complete from chapter 41 onwards but containing only fragments of earlier chapters; (3) a copy in Hebrew of the first two chapters of Habakkuk with a verse-by-verse commentary also in Hebrew; (4) the *Rule of the Community*, a code of rules written in Hebrew; (5) a collection of hymns in Hebrew; (6) the *Rule of War*, a description in Hebrew of ancient warfare; (7) an Aramaic paraphrase of Genesis 5 to 15 (Edward Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, p. 101).

Other batches of scrolls were subsequently found in the same area between 1952 and 1956. Cave 4 contained some 15,000 scroll fragments, identified eventually as the remains of 574 separate manuscripts, including fragments of every Old Testament book except Esther. The manuscripts are in a greatly deteriorated condition and most of the legible fragments are very small.

About 200 of the 800 manuscripts are books of the Hebrew Bible. This includes 39 copies of Psalms, 36 of Deuteronomy, 22 of Isaiah, 17 of Exodus, 15 of Genesis, 13 of Leviticus, and 8 of Numbers (most in fragmentary condition).

Though there were different groups of Essenes and there was a variety of doctrine and practice, most of the Essenes were celibate and did not have children. Separate communities were formed for women and men. “They repudiate marriage because they look on woman as a selfish creature and specially addicted to jealousy and hypocrisy, thus likely to dissolve their brotherhood. A man bound to a woman is hampered by his affection, is no longer a free man but a slave” (Philo as quoted by Eusebius). Those who entered the cult were required to give up private possessions and personal wealth. Property was held in common and all wages were turned over to the general manager of the community. They were ascetic, abstaining from common pleasures such as warm baths. They adopted a common style of dress (all in white when not working) and lived regimented lives, rising, eating, working, and sleeping at appointed times. They had to swear that they would keep the societies’ doctrines secret from outsiders. Some were pacifists. They rejected the blood sacrifice of animals. They were known for their visions and predictions of future events and the interpretation of dreams. Pliny wrote of the Essenes in his *Natural History*, saying that they dwelt on the west side of the Dead Sea, which is where the scrolls were found, and describing them as “a wonderful race without women, without money, associates of the palms” (*International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*). They held an extreme view of the sovereignty of God that led to fatalism. Some have theorized that the apocryphal books such as *Esdra*s and *The Assumption of Moses* were written by the Essenes, because they are the product of a school that professed to have secret sacred books and for other reasons. They were looking for three messiahs rather than one. They believed there would be a prophet messiah, a priest messiah, and a prince messiah, not understanding that the One Messiah is prophet, priest, and king.

Isaiah A and Isaiah B from the first Dead Sea cave contain the traditional Masoretic Hebrew text. In fact, the Isaiah A scroll, which possibly dates to about 150 B.C., matches the 10th century Aleppo Codex word for word! “Of the 166 words in Isaiah 53, there are only seventeen letters in question. Ten of these letters are simply a matter of spelling, which does not affect the sense. Four more letters are minor stylistic changes, such as conjunctions. The remaining three letters comprise the word ‘light’, which is added in verse 11, and does not affect the meaning greatly. ... Thus, in one chapter of 166 words, there is only one word (three letters) in question after a thousand years of transmission -- and this word does not significantly change the meaning of the passage” (Josh McDowell, *Evidence That Demands a Verdict*, Josh McDowell).

Scrolls that were found in other caves, though, contain variations from the Masoretic text. F.M. Cross divides the text types into “Egyptian, Palestinian, and Proto-Masoretic varieties” (Edward Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, p. 102). We should also note that much of this type of scholarship falls into the category of guesswork because of the paucity of resources that scholars possess from that era.

It is these variations that are used by modern textual critics to “correct” the Masoretic Text.

**ANSWER:**

1. *The doctrine of preservation tells us that the Dead Sea Scrolls should not be used to correct the Masoretic Hebrew Old Testament.* The Dead Sea Scrolls that differ from the Masoretic Text should not be used to modify the Masoretic Text because they are curious texts only discovered in modern times. Prior to the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in the 1940s, no Hebrew manuscripts were known to exist other than the Masoretic. For 1900 years these manuscripts lay hidden away in their remote caves. They were not used by the Albigenses or the Waldenses, nor by the Lollards or Hussites or the Anabaptists; they were not used by the editors of the great Greek and Hebrew printed texts of the Reformation era. They were not used by the translators of the great missionary Bibles that were broadcast to the ends of the earth from the 16th to the 19th centuries. Modern textual critics would have us believe that the preserved Word of God was hidden in the sands of Egypt and in strange monasteries and in the Pope’s library and in remote caves, but Bible believers know better than this.
2. *The conflicting opinions of the scholars tell us that the Dead Sea Scrolls should not be used to correct the Masoretic Hebrew Old Testament.* The textual scholars do not agree on hardly anything when it comes to the Dead Sea Scrolls. They don’t agree on their date, with some claiming that they were written in the 2nd century before Christ and others claiming with equal vehemence that they were written in the first and second centuries after Christ. G.R. Driver, for example, believes the scrolls date to the first and early second century A.D. Scholars also don’t agree on how many textual varieties are represented by the scrolls or on the source of those varieties. “Thus we see that, despite the new discoveries, our confidence in the trustworthiness of the Old Testament text must rest on some more solid foundation than the opinions of naturalistic scholars. For as the Qumran studies demonstrate, these scholars disagree with one another. What one scholar grants another takes away. Instead of depending on such inconstant allies, Bible-believing Christians should develop their own type of Old Testament textual criticism, a textual criticism which takes its stand on the teachings of the Old Testament itself and views the evidence in the light of these teachings. Such a believing textual criticism leads us to full confidence in the Masoretic (Traditional) Hebrew text which was preserved by the divinely appointed Old Testament priesthood and the scribes and scholars grouped around it” (Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, p. 102).
3. *The heretical nature of the Essenes tells us that the Dead Sea Scrolls should not be used to*

*correct the Masoretic Hebrew Old Testament.* Dr. Donald Waite observes: “These Essenes left the Hebrew synagogue in Jerusalem. They left the Jewish beliefs their fathers had. They were an offshoot and a false, heretical cult. There are two reasons for questioning these Dead Sea Scrolls where they might differ with the Masoretic Hebrew text: (1) They might have had corrupt Hebrew texts that they began with, at least in some places; (2) They might have been careless in the transmission of these texts. These are both unknown, hence, they should never be used to replace the Masoretic Hebrew text. They could have changed the text in a hundred different ways. I don’t know why any version should take a Dead Sea Scroll reading over the Masoretic traditional text, the historical text which had been guarded so meticulously. Yet in some instances this is done” (Waite, *Defending the King James Bible*).

### **WAS THE KOINE GREEK OF THE NEW TESTAMENT COLLOQUIAL?**

One of the arguments used to support the modern Bible translation theory of dynamic equivalency is as follows: The New Testament was written in *koine* or colloquial Greek rather than in classical or academic Greek; therefore, translations of the New Testament should aim for a colloquial or simple level of linguistic style.

#### **ANSWER:**

The following is from *The Word of God in English* by Leland Ryken. The author, who is a professor of English at Wheaton College, writes in defense of literal or formal Bible translation as opposed to dynamic equivalency. (Note, Ryken is not a defender of the Greek Received Text.)

1. The New Testament was written in a type of *koine* Greek as opposed to classical, but this does not mean that the New Testament was written in simplistic or “street” language. *Koine* was not only the language of the street and marketplace; it was also the language of the synagogue and theological treatise.

2. The Old Testament was not written in a dialect or in some sort of *koine* Hebrew, and the New Testament is filled with quotations from the Old Testament and is influenced by the Old Testament Hebrew even in its very vocabulary. “The result is that NEW TESTAMENT KOINE GREEK IS NOT JUST LIKE EVERYDAY COLLOQUIAL DISCOURSE of the New Testament era. As a Greek scholar notes, ‘The Greek of the New Testament is ... set apart from the Greek of the marketplace throughout the Mediterranean world by the large Semitic element which it contains’ (Nigel Turner, *Grammatical Insights into the New Testament*, 1965, p. 183).

3. New Testament *koine* Greek is frequently different from the *koine* used in everyday conversation. Classicist Nigel Turner wrote an article that surveys the wide range of ways in which the Greek language of the New Testament rises to literary status, including parallels to contemporary writers considered accomplished literary and philosophical figures (Nigel Turner, ‘The Literary Character of New Testament Greek,’ *New Testament Studies*, 20, 1974, 107-114). A.H. Nichols surveys the work of Rydbeck, Silva, Horsley, and Porter in arguing that ‘few

scholars, now, would give unqualified assent' to the earlier view of Kenneth Pike that the language of the New Testament is the language of the street (Anthony Nichols, "Translating the Bible: A Critical Analysis of E.A. Nida's Theory of *Dynamic Equivalency and Its Impact Upon Recent Bible Translations*," dissertation, University of Sheffield, 1996, 215-220).

### **DON'T THE POPYRI PROVE THAT THE ALEXANDRIAN TEXT IS THE BEST?**

The **Oxyrhynchus papyri** consist of 400,000 fragments that were discovered by Grenfell and Hunt of Oxford University in a dump outside the city of Oxyrhynchus, Egypt, in 1900. The papyri were inside of stuffed crocodiles. These papyri represent all sorts of documents and most are too fragmentary or too discolored to read. In 2005 some scholars examined one fragment of Revelation using high tech photo techniques and found that it reads 616 in Revelation 13:18 instead of 666. David Parker of the University of Birmingham claims that 616 was the original reading and that it refers to the Emperor Caligula ("666 wrong number of prophetic beast?" WorldNetDaily, May 8). What a flimsy basis for overthrowing the traditional text of Scripture!

The **Chester Beatty Papyri**, which were acquired in 1930-31, are housed in the Beatty Museum in Dublin. These were found in a pot on the east bank of the Nile south of Cairo (Edward Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, p. 130) and were sold to Philadelphia millionaire Chester Beatty by an Arab while he was vacationing in the Middle East. Nothing more is known about the history of these ancient manuscripts.

The more than 50 papyrus documents belonging to the **Bodmer Library** were purchased by M. Martin Bodmer in Geneva in the mid-1950s from E.N. Adler of London (Hills, pp. 129, 130). Bodmer is a "Genevan bibliophile and humanist" and the founder of the Bodmer Library of World Literature at Coligny, a suburb of Geneva (Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 39).

It is possible that the Beatty and the Bodmer collections originally came from the same place, as a fragment of Bodmer p66 (from chapter 19 of John) has been found among the Chester Beatty Papyri (Hills, p. 130).

### **ANSWER:**

1. The papyri owe their survival to the fact that they were located in Egypt and they therefore reflect an Egyptian or Alexandrian text. "Our oldest extant manuscripts are the papyri. They are the remains of a kind of text which did not live very long, and rather than spread widely among God's people suffered an early death and burial in the sands of Egypt. ... As with Aleph and B, the papyri were soon discarded by early believers, with few copies made" (Jack Moorman, *A Closer Look: Early Manuscripts and the Authorized Version*, pp. 16, 17). After examining a number of heretical readings in early Egyptian manuscripts, Edward Hills concluded: "Thus we see that it is unwise in present day translators to base the texts of their modern versions on recent

papyrus discoveries or on B and Aleph [Vaticanus and Sinaiticus]. For all these documents come from Egypt, and Egypt during the early Christian centuries was a land in which heresies were rampant. So much was this so that, as Bauer (1934) and van Unnik (1958) have pointed out, later Egyptian Christians seem to have been ashamed of the heretical past of their country and to have drawn a veil of silence across it. This seems to be why so little is known of the history of early Egyptian Christianity. In view, therefore, of the heretical character of the early Egyptian Church, it is not surprising that the papyri, B, Aleph, and other manuscripts which hail from Egypt are liberally sprinkled with heretical readings” (Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, 1984, p. 134). Even modern textual critics acknowledge this problem. Eldon Epp says: “... how representative, really, of the earliest history of the NT text are these earliest papyri? What assurance do we have that these randomly surviving MSS represent in any real sense the entire earliest period of the text? Subsidiary questions appear: First, all of these documents come from one region, Egypt. Can we be satisfied with Egypt as the exclusive locale for viewing this earliest history of the text? Was Egypt in the third century AD representative of the NT text for all of Christianity at that period? Was any NT book written in Egypt? ... Does not Egypt then represent at best a secondary and derivative stage in the history of the NT text? After all, is it not merely an accident of history ... that papyrus almost exclusively survives only in the dry sands of Egypt?” (Epp, “Decision Points in New Testament Textual Criticism,” *Studies in the Theory and Method of New Testament Textual Criticism*, 1993, p. 43). Bart Ehrman concurs: “... the papyri provided us with a set of blinders -- blinders, which, regrettably, many among us continue to wear. ... all we can know is that they were discovered here and there throughout the dry climes of Egypt. The corollary fact, however, is altogether significant: papyri have *not* been discovered in other provinces of the Empire, throughout which Christianity had also spread in the second and third centuries. Thus Christians in North Africa, and Judea, and Syria, and Asia Minor, and Italy, and Gaul, and indeed elsewhere also had texts of the New Testament available to them in this early period, also on papyrus. *These* papyri have been lost to us as a result of the accidents of history and climate; some from Egypt happen to survive. THE SURVIVORS, HOWEVER, ARE NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENTATIVE OF THE STATE OF THE TEXT THROUGHOUT ALL OF CHRISTENDOM IN THE EARLY PERIOD, however fortunate we are now to have discovered them in modern times. Rarely has this simple observation been given its full due” (Ehrman, “The Use and Significance of Patristic Evidence for New Testament Textual Criticism,” *New Testament Textual Criticism, Exegesis and Church History*, edited by B. Aland and F. Delobel, 1994, p. 119).

2. The papyri are extremely fragmentary. Eldon Epp observes: “Yet, most of the NT papyri are extremely fragmentary, and what net gain we have in actual quantity of text comes almost entirely from seven papyri (p45, p46, p47, p66, p72, p74, and p75)” (Epp. “The Twentieth Century Interlude in NT Textual Criticism,” *Studies in the Theory and Method of New Testament Textual Criticism*, p. 95). Further, p74 dates to the seventh century.

3. The papyri exhibit evident signs of corruption.



## P45

- a. This papyrus is part of the Chester Beatty papyri published in 1933-37 and contains portions of the four Gospels and Acts. It is dated c. 225 A.D.
- b. It contains at least 45 nonsense readings caused by the extreme carelessness and inaptitude of the scribe. The scribe of p45 “omits adverbs, adjectives, nouns, participles, verbs, and personal pronouns--without any compensating habit of addition. He frequently omits phrases and clauses. He shortens the text in at least fifty places in singular readings alone” (Ernest Colwell, quoted by Pickering, *The Identity of the New Testament Text*). “Since p45 contains many deliberate alterations it can only be called a ‘copy’ with certain reservations” (Pickering). In a collation of the mere 70 verses in the Gospel of John that overlap between p45 and p66, the Bodmer Papyrus (p66) disagrees with the Chester Beatty Papyrus (p45) in 73 places *apart from the many obvious scribal mistakes!*

## P46

- a. This papyrus is part of the Chester Beatty Papyri and contains portions of most of the Pauline Epistles. It is dated c. 225 A.D.
- b. It “abounds with scribal blunders, omissions, and also additions” (Zuntz, *The Text of the Epistles*, 1953, p. 212).
- c. It also contains evidence that it was produced by Gnostics. For example, it follows Aleph and B in repeatedly separating “Jesus” from “Christ” (i.e., Mat. 9:29; 12:25; 13:51; 14:14; 22:22, 25, 27; 15:30; 16:20; John 6:14; Acts 3:26; 9:29; 19:10; Rom. 16:18; 2 Cor. 5:18; Col. 1:28; 1 Peter 5:10, 14). “The separation of ‘Jesus’ from ‘Christ’ occurs far too often to look for any cause other than deliberate editing in certain N.T. manuscripts. That there was a strong movement in the early centuries which could result in such a systematic editing, there can be no doubt! The foremost error regarding the Person of Christ is, of course, to deny His true Deity and true Humanity. The chief means by which this was done, and which finds expression down to our own day, is technically known as ‘Adoptionism’ or ‘Spirit Christology.’ Here, Jesus of Nazareth, an ordinary man of unusual virtue, was ‘adopted’ by God into divine Sonship by the advent of the ‘Christ-Spirit’ at His baptism. Therefore, Jesus became Christ at His baptism, rather than, the fact that He was always the Christ from eternity. And though united for a time, Jesus and Christ were separate personages. ... it is the small group of Alexandrian manuscripts which consistently disassociate ‘Jesus’ from ‘Christ.’ And, along with Aleph and B, Papyri 46 follows the same trend” (Jack Moorman, *A Closer Look: Early Manuscripts and the Authorized Version*, pp. 5, 6). Even more damning is 1 Cor. 15:47, which reads in p46, “the second man is THE SPIRIT from heaven” instead of “the LORD from heaven,” thus exposing the “dark secret” that it is, without a doubt, a corrupt manuscript that was modified to fit heretical views that Christ was a spirit or entity separate from the man Jesus.

## P66

- a. This papyrus, belonging to the Bodmer collection, contains portions of the Gospels of Luke and John. It is dated c. 200 A.D.
- b. “It is one of the worst copies we have. It has an average of roughly two mistakes per verse--many being obvious mistakes, stupid mistakes, nonsensical mistakes. From the pattern of mistakes it is clear that the scribe copied syllable by syllable. I have no qualms in affirming that the person who produced p66 did not know Greek. Had he understood the text he would not have made the number and sort of mistakes that he did” (Wilbur Pickering, *The Identity of the New Testament Text*, chapter 5). P66 contains almost 900 false readings unique to itself, at least 215 of which are nonsensical, meaning they were created by the extreme carelessness and ignorance of the scribe. And that is in a fragment containing only portions of two books of the New Testament!
- c. It also gives evidence of heretical tampering. P66 has “only begotten God” in John 1:18, for example. John Burgon proved that this reading, which appears in only five Greek manuscripts, could be traced to the heretic named Valentinus, who denied the Godhead of Jesus Christ (Burgon and Miller, *Causes of Corruption*, pp. 215, 216). “The Gnostics said that Christ was ‘the Beginning,’ the first of God’s creation, and Valentinus referred to Him as ‘the Only-begotten God’ and said that He was the entire essence of all the subsequent worlds (Aeons)” (Jay Green, *The Gnostics, the New Versions, and the Deity of Christ*, 1994, p. 74). In the Received Text there is no question that the Word is also the Son and that both are God. The Word is God (Jn. 1:1); the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us (Jn. 1:14); the Word is the Son (Jn. 1:18). By changing John 1:18 to “the only begotten God,” Valentinus and his followers broke the clear association between the Word and the Son and God.
- d. P66 has “Christ, the Holy One of God” in John 6:69, thus destroying this powerful testimony that Jesus is the very Christ, the Son of God.
- e. P66 omits “who is in heaven” in John 3:13, thus removing this powerful witness to Christ’s omnipresence.

## P72

- a. This manuscript was acquired by Bodmer and dates to the third century. It contains the epistles of Jude and 1 and 2 Peter.
- b. It also contains various apocryphal writings including the Nativity of Mary, fictional correspondence of Paul to the Corinthians, and the eleventh Ode of Solomon.

## P75

- a. This papyrus, belonging to the Bodmer collection, contains portions of Luke and John. It is dated c. 200 A.D.
  - b. It was copied letter-by-letter rather than word-by-word or phrase-by-phrase, indicating that the scribe did not even know the Greek language and therefore had no understanding of what he was writing. P75 contains about 400 singular readings unique to itself, at least 65 of which are nonsensical, created by the extreme carelessness and ignorance of the scribe. (See Wilbur Pickering, *The Identity of the New Testament Text*, chapter 6).
  - c. P75 contains much evidence of heretical corruption. It has “only begotten God” in John 1:18; “the Holy One of God” in John 6:69; replaces “Lord” with “Jesus” in Luke 23:42; omits “who is in heaven” in John 3:13. In John 10:7, p75 reads, “I am the shepherd of the sheep,” instead of, “I am the door of the sheep.” In Luke 16:19, p75 is unique among manuscripts in saying the rich man’s name was Neves. In John 8:57, p75 reads, “Hath Abraham seen thee?” instead of “Hast thou seen Abraham?” (Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, p. 129).
4. The extensive study done by Harry Sturz demonstrates that the papyri, though more generally siding with the Alexandrian text, often support the Traditional Text. “Harry A. Sturz in his book *The Byzantine Text-Type and New Testament Textual Criticism* strikes a devastating blow at arguments which seek to minimize the fact that distinctive Byzantine readings do appear in the early papyri. He lists 150 Received Text readings which though not supported by the early Alexandrian and Western manuscripts are read by the mass of later manuscripts and by the early papyri. He lists a further 170 TR readings which again run counter to Vaticanus and Sinaiticus, but in this case find support from the Western manuscripts. These also are supported in the early papyri. In fact Sturz demonstrates papyri support for a total of 839 readings which in varying degrees would be classed as ‘distinctly Byzantine.’ As the papyri is available for only 30% of the New Testament, existing evidence allows us to reasonably project that the story would be the same for the rest of the New Testament. What is especially remarkable about this is, the papyri come from that area where the Alexandrian/shorter text was prevalent. Nearly all of the 267 uncial manuscripts move strongly to the side of the AV Text, with the same being true of the minuscules” (Jack Moorman, *Modern Bibles the Dark Secret*).
5. To allow newly discovered manuscripts to overthrow the testimony of the majority of manuscripts that God’s people have used through the centuries flies in the face of divine preservation. Only nine papyri were known in the year 1900 and it was not until the 1930s, with the publication of the Chester Beatty papyri, that the papyri came under serious consideration. Thus, for all practical purposes, the papyri were hidden away from the eyes of God’s people for most of the church age. “... it is evident that as Bible-believing Christians we cannot consistently maintain that there are true readings of the New Testament text which have been hiding in papyri

for ages, enclosed in pots, waiting for the light of day, and just now discovered. ... Thank God that He has not preserved the New Testament text in this secret way but publicly in the usage of His Church and in the Traditional Text..." (Edward Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, p. 130).

6. To allow the papyri to overthrow the testimony of the centuries would be to throw the text of Scripture into perpetual question. "If we thought this, our faith would be always wavering. We could never be sure that a dealer would not soon appear with something new from somewhere" (Hills, p. 130).

**ISN'T IT WRONG TO PAINT THE ENTIRE FIELD OF MODERN TEXTUAL  
CRITICISM WITH THE BRUSH OF SKEPTICISM, SEEING THAT THERE ARE  
ALSO BIBLE-BELIEVING MEN SUCH AS SAMUEL TREGELLES, A.T.  
ROBERTSON, AND B.B. WARFIELD IN THIS ARENA?**

**ANSWER:**

1. The Modernists, Unitarians, and heretics are the rule in this field, whereas the evangelicals are the exception. We have documented this extensively in the 295-page book *The Modern Bible Version Hall of Shame*, available from Way of Life Literature, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143.

2. Further, evangelicals did not invent modern textual criticism; they borrowed it from the skeptics. Presbyterian leader Robert Dabney warned that evangelicals who accepted textual criticism adopted it "from the mint of infidel rationalism" (Dabney, "The Doctrinal Various Readings of the New Testament Greek," *Discussions Evangelical and Theological*, pp. 361; this first appeared in the *Southern Presbyterian Review*, April 1871).

3. Though they are not the inventors of modern textual criticism, evangelicals such as Samuel Tregelles have acted as popularizers of textual criticism. In our book *For Love of the Bible* we have shown that Bible believers in general were very resistant to modern textual criticism from the time of its first appearance in the late 18th century throughout the 19th. Tregelles became a much-needed "evangelical face" for modern textual criticism in England, helping to popularize it among Bible believers who were leery of the theological modernists and Unitarians who dominated the field. Bruce Metzger observed: "In England the scholar who, at the middle of the nineteenth century, was most successful in drawing British preference away from the Textus Receptus was Samuel Prideaux Tregelles" (*The Text of the New Testament*, 1968, p. 127). In America it was Charles Hodge, B.B. Warfield, and A.T. Robertson who became the evangelical faces in popularizing modern textual criticism.

**DOES IT MATTER IF THE INFLUENTIAL NAMES IN MODERN TEXTUAL  
CRITICISM ARE SKEPTICS?**

The authors of the book *From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man*, who are fundamentalists

associated with Bob Jones University, claim that the skepticism that has dominated the field of modern textual criticism since its inception does not matter. "... a textual critic may be an unbeliever when it comes to the Bible's doctrinal truths. But when it comes to the Bible's text--to this question of the Bible's words--a textual critic is initially little more than a reporter" (*From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man*, p. 71)

**ANSWER:**

1. First, the Bible warns that unbelievers do not have spiritual discernment, and it is impossible to know the truth pertaining to the Scripture apart from such discernment (1 Cor. 2:14; 2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:2). The statement in *From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man* would be true if we were talking about a secular book, but the Bible is a spiritual Book and can only be handled properly by spiritual people.
2. Further, God demands that His people separate from heretics and apostasy (Rom. 16:17; 2 Cor. 6:14-17; 2 Tim. 3:5; 2 John 10-11). Why would the Lord give such instruction and then raise up heretics and apostates to lead His people in the most crucial and foundational matters pertaining to the Bible?
3. Any attempt to bring men such as Erasmus into this subject on the side of the Traditional Text is a smokescreen because, though Erasmus was admittedly weak in faith (though not as weak as some have made out), men such as this were in the minority in the transmission of the Traditional Greek text.

**WHAT ABOUT THE SEPTUAGINT?**

It is common to speak of a Greek translation of the Old Testament, called the Septuagint, as existing in Jesus' day and as accepted and used by Jews in Palestine, even as quoted by Jesus and the apostles. Is this true?

**ANSWER:**

1. The evidence as to the existence of a standardized, commonly used Greek translation of the entire Old Testament in Jesus' day is vague at best.
  - a. The story that a group of scholars translated the Old Testament into Greek in 250 to 150 B.C. is clearly legendary. The letter of Aristeas is dubious in the highest degree, containing, as it does, statements that are fictitious upon their very face. "A letter, purporting to be written by a certain Aristeas to his brother Philocrates during the reign of Ptolomy Philadelphus (285-246 BC), relates how Philadelphus, persuaded by his librarian to get a translation of the Hebrew Scriptures for his royal library, appealed to the high priest at Jerusalem, who sent seventy-two elders (six from each of the twelve tribes) to

Alexandria with an official copy of the Law. There in seventy-two days they made a translation which was read before the Jewish community amid great applause, and then presented it to the king. From the number of the translators it became known (somewhat inaccurately) as the Septuagint” (Moorman). “Its claims to authenticity were demolished by Dr. Hody two centuries ago (*De bibliorum textibus originalibus*, Oxon., 1705). Clearly the writer is not a Greek, but a Jew, whose aim is to glorify his race and to disseminate information about their sacred books” (*International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*). Thus even the name *Septuagint* is based on a fable.

- b. The extensive research of Paul Kahle has demonstrated that there was no Septuagint prior to the time of Christ. “Paul Kahle, a famous OT scholar who has done extensive work in the Septuagint, does not believe that there was one original old Greek version and that consequently the manuscripts of the Septuagint (so-called) cannot be traced back to one archetype. The theory, proposed and developed largely by him, is that the LXX had its origin in numerous oral, and subsequently written translations for use in the services after the reading of the Hebrew original. Later an official standardized version of the Law was made, but did not entirely replace the older versions, while for the rest of the books there never was a standard Jewish translation, but only a variety of versions” (Jack Moorman, *Forever Settled*). Frederic Kenyon, while not agreeing with Kahle, acknowledged that he made a strong case.
- c. There is no manuscript evidence of a Greek Old Testament that dates before Christ. At best there is a fragment of one small portion of the Law. The earliest of the extant manuscripts of a Greek translation of the Old Testament date to 200 years A.D. One possible exception is the Ryland Papyrus (No. 458), which has a few portions of Deut. 23-28. It is possible that this fragment dates to 150 B.C., though this is not certain. Thus the actual manuscript evidence is inconclusive at best. The best one can assume from the extant manuscript evidence is that it is possible that there was a translation of the Law into Greek prior to the time of Christ.

d. Conclusion in regard to the history of the “Septuagint” --

- (1) At best, the evidence hints at a formal translation only of the Pentateuch in Alexandria. The *New Bible Dictionary* says that it is probable that a translation of the Pentateuch was made at one time and place and that the other books of the O.T. were then translated into Greek piecemeal by various individuals at a later date. The name *Septuagint* was subsequently extended to cover this hodge-podge of translations.
- (2) Though there might have been a complete translation of the Old Testament in Greek by the time of Christ, there is no evidence showing that it was one that was produced with any authority acceptable to most Jews or that it was commonly received among the Jews.

2. For the following reasons we do not believe that Jesus or the apostles quoted a Greek translation, even if one was then available:

- a. To think that the Jews in Israel, with their pride of language and tradition, would stoop to use a hodge-podge Greek translation from Egypt, which was a hotbed of Greek philosophy-tinged Jewish cults, is unreasonable.
- b. There is clear evidence from the Gospels that the Lord Jesus put His stamp of authority upon the Hebrew Old Testament and not upon a Greek translation:

(1) Christ spoke of the jots and tittles of the Old Testament (Mat. 5:18), and this refers specifically to the Hebrew language. The *jot* or *jod* is the tenth and smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet. It can be observed in many editions of the King James Bible in the heading to Psalm 119:73-80. The tittle is a tiny part of a Hebrew letter; in particular it is that part that distinguishes the *daleth* (see the heading to Psalm 119:25-32) from the *resh* (see the heading to Psalm 119:153-160). A Greek translation has no jots or tittles.

(2) Christ referred to the Old Testament by its Hebrew division rather than by its Greek division.

(a) See Luke 24:44 -- Christ referred to the things “which were written in THE LAW of Moses, and in THE PROPHETS, and in THE PSALMS, concerning me.” This is precisely the order of the Old Testament in Hebrew, but it is not the order of the Greek Old Testament. In Greek the order is the Law, the Psalms, and the Prophets, as in the English Bible. “The phrase ‘in the Psalms’ makes it the complete threefold division of the Hebrew canon: the law of Moses (Torah); the prophets (Naviim); and the Psalms or Writings (Kethuvim). It is called the ‘TANACH’ today by the Jews, taking the ‘TA’ for ‘TORAH,’ the ‘NA’ from ‘NAVIIM,’ and the ‘CH’ for ‘KETHUVIM.’ This is the one abbreviation for the entire Masoretic Hebrew Old Testament. He put His hand on the entire Masoretic Hebrew Old Testament text that existed then and AUTHORIZED it” (D.A. Waite, *Defending the King James Bible*, p. 34).

(b) See Matthew 23:35 -- When the Lord Jesus referred to the first and last prophets that were martyred in the Old Testament, He referred to them by the order of the Hebrew Text rather than by the order of the Greek. “That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar” (Mat. 23:35). By this statement, Christ charged the Jewish leaders with the deaths of the prophets throughout the Old Testament age, and He used the Hebrew canon. Abel’s death is recorded in Genesis (chapter 4) and Zacharias’ death was recorded in 2 Chronicles (24:20-22). This follows the

order of the Hebrew Old Testament, which begins with Genesis and ends with 2 Chronicles. The Greek Septuagint, on the other hand, ends with the prophets (concluding with Malachi) and with some apocryphal books. The Septuagint translated by Lancelot Brenton and first published in 1851, for example, ends with the following apocryphal books: I Esdras, Tobit, Judith, Wisdom of Solomon, Wisdom of the Son of Sirach, Baruch, Epistle of Jeremiah, Song of the Three Children, Susanna, Bel and the Dragon, I-IV Maccabees, and the Prayer of Manasseh.

3. What about those places in the New Testament which appear to be quotations from the Septuagint?

- a. Since the earliest extant copies of the Septuagint are of late date, it is just as possible that the Septuagint is quoting the New Testament as it is that the apostles are quoting the Septuagint. “How do we know that the present text of the Septuagint was not that found in those Greek OT translations of the second century AD by Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotian, or even that of Origen and his *Hexapla*. If this were the case, this text would follow that of the NT and you might have these translators quoting the OT quotes found in the NT rather than vice versa!” (D.A. Waite).
- b. In fact, what we often have in the New Testament is the Spirit of God quoting from His own Old Testament Scriptures in an expansive, interpretive manner. “Does a mere similarity in wording of the NT to that of the Greek OT necessarily mean that those were direct quotations? Is not God the Holy Spirit, who inspired the very words of the OT and the NT, able to pick and choose what set of words He wishes to employ to reveal His truth in the NT? Is He bound to His own words exactly on every occasion in the OT Hebrew text, or does He not have liberty to alter, reinterpret, add to, or subtract from that text as He presents truth in the Now Testament?” (D.A. Waite).
- c. From my own examination of the Old Testament quotations in the New, I see no reason to believe that the apostles were quoting from a Greek translation. Consider the following study from 1 Corinthians. (The quotations from the Septuagint are from “The Septuagint with Apocrypha: Greek and English,” translated by Lancelot Brenton and first published in London in 1851. It is based on the Vaticanus Old Testament Greek text, “with some reliance on other texts, particularly Alexandrinus.”)

### **1 CORINTHIANS 1:19**

“For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.”

This is not an actual quote from any one Old Testament passage but is a general reference to statements such as those found in Job 5:12-13 and Jer. 8:9. There is no reason to believe Paul is citing the LXX rather than the Hebrew.



### **1 CORINTHIANS 1:31**

“That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.”

Jeremiah 9:24

MASORETIC “But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD.”

LXX “but let him that boasts boast in this, the understanding and knowing that I am the Lord that exercise mercy, and judgment, and righteousness upon the earth; for in these things is my pleasure, saith the Lord.”

This is more of a general reference and summary than an actual quotation. There is no reason to believe it is based on the LXX rather than the Hebrew.

### **1 CORINTHIANS 2:9**

“But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.”

Isaiah 64:4

MASORETIC “For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him.”

LXX “From of old we have not heard, neither have our eyes seen a God beside thee, and they works which thou wilt perform to them that wait for mercy.”

This is a vague reference rather than an actual quotation. There is no reason to believe it is based on the LXX rather than the Hebrew.

### **1 CORINTHIANS 3:19**

“For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness.”

Job 5:13

MASORETIC “He taketh the wise in their own craftiness: and the counsel of the froward is carried headlong.”

LXX “who takes the wise in their wisdom, and subverts the counsel of the crafty.”

This is an exact quotation of the Masoretic Hebrew and is definitely not based on the LXX.

### **1 CORINTHIANS 3:20**

“And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain.”

Psalms 94:11

MASORETIC “The LORD knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity.”

LXX “The Lord knows the thoughts of men, that they are vain.”

This is a slightly altered quotation of the Masoretic Hebrew, changing “thoughts of man” to “thoughts of the wise.” There is no reason to believe it is based on the LXX rather than the Hebrew.

### **1 CORINTHIANS 9:9**

“For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn.”

Deut. 25:4

MASORETIC “Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn.”

LXX “Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treads out the corn.”

This is a slightly altered quotation of the Masoretic Hebrew, adding “the mouth.” The LXX reads the same. There is no reason to believe it is based on the LXX rather than the Hebrew.

### **1 CORINTHIANS 10:7**

“...as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.”

Exodus 32:6

MASORETIC “And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.”

LXX “And having risen early on the morrow, he offered whole burnt-offerings, and offered a peace-offering; and the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.”

This is an exact quotation of the Hebrew Masoretic. The LXX reads the same. There is no reason to believe it is based on the LXX rather than the Hebrew.

### **1 CORINTHIANS 14:21**

“In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord.”

Isaiah 28:11

MASORETIC “For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people.”

LXX “by reason of the contemptuous words of the lips, by means of another language: for they shall speak to this people, saying to them.”

This is a modified quotation of the Masoretic Hebrew and is definitely not based on the LXX. The LXX is an inaccurate paraphrase here, as it is in many other places.

### **1 CORINTHIANS 15:54**

“... the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.”

Isaiah 25:8

MASORETIC “He will swallow up death in victory...”

LXX “Death has prevailed and swallowed men...”

This is not an exact quote but is more of a general reference. There is no reason to believe it is based on the LXX rather than the Hebrew.

### **1 CORINTHIANS 15:55**

“O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?”

Hosea 13:14

MASORETIC “...O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction.”

LXX “...where is thy penalty, O death? O Hades, where is thy sting?”

Paul is not actually quoting from Hosea but is expressing a similar thought. There is no reason to believe it is based on the LXX rather than the Hebrew.

e. Dr. D.A. Waite offers a final important comment on this issue: “But suppose you reject this thought. Does it necessarily mean, just because there appears to be a similarity in wording, and in some instances perhaps following the Greek OT more closely than the Hebrew that this is some sort of proof that the Greek OT is somehow superior to the Masoretic Text? Most assuredly not! This does not hold true for the particular passage quoted, nor does it hold true for the entire Greek OT. God did not inspire the Greek words of the OT, only the Hebrew words! This is a very important distinction and caution which must be borne in mind in this matter of OT translation.”

4. Should the Septuagint be used to correct and modify the Hebrew Masoretic text?

a. It should not be so used because it is not the inspired and preserved Text of Scripture and its history and character are deeply suspect.

b. It should not be so used because it is inadequate as a translation. Jack Moorman observes: “... the Pentateuch is generally well done, though it occasionally paraphrases anthropomorphism’s offensive to Alexandrian Jews, disregards consistency in religious technical terms, and shows its impatience with the repetitive technical descriptions in Exodus by mistakes, abbreviations, and wholesale omissions. Comparatively few books attain to the standard of the Pentateuch; most are of medium quality, some are very poor. Isaiah as a translation is bad; Esther, Job, Proverbs are free paraphrases. The original LXX version of Job was much shorter than the Hebrew; it was subsequently filled in with interpretations from Theodotion. Proverbs contains things not in the Hebrew text at all, and Hebrew sentiments are freely altered to suit the Greek outlook. The rendering of Daniel was so much of a paraphrase that it was replaced, perhaps in the first century AD, by a later translation (generally attributed to Theodotion, but differing from his principles and

antedating him), and the original LXX rendering is nowadays to be found in only two MSS and the Syriac. One of the translators of Jeremiah sometimes rendered Hebrew words by Greek words that conveyed similar sound but utterly dissimilar meaning” (Moorman, *Forever Settled*). Dr. Donald Waite summarizes: “It can be clearly seen ... that the Septuagint is inaccurate and inadequate and deficient as a translation. To try to reconstruct the Hebrew Text (as many connected with the modern versions are attempting to do) from such a loose and unacceptable translation would be like trying to reconstruct the Greek New Testament Text from the Living Bible of Ken Taylor!!” (Waite, *The Defense of the King James Bible*).

For more about the Masoretic Hebrew Old Testament and its authority see *Faith vs. the Modern Bible Versions*, available from Way of Life Literature.

### WHO WAS ORIGEN AND WHAT WAS HIS THEOLOGY?

#### ANSWER:

1. Origen was associated with Alexandria, Egypt (185-254 A.D.). He laid the foundation for modern versions with his commentaries and textual changes. Origen is considered the first textual critic. “To Origen is attributed the earliest substantial work in the field of textual criticism” (Kenneth I. Brown, *The Church Fathers and the Text of the New Testament*, p. 21). The introduction to the online edition of the *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, volume X, says Origen “is the first great textual critic of the Church.” Frederic Kenyon testifies that the Alexandrian family of manuscripts “makes its first appearance in the writings of Origen” and that it “is now generally regarded as a text produced in Egypt and probably at Alexandria under editorial care...” (*The Text of the Greek Bible*, pp. 151, 208).

2. Origen was a theological heretic:

- a. Origen denied the infallible inspiration of Scripture; he accepted infant baptism; he taught baptismal regeneration; he believed the Holy Spirit was created; he believed in a form of purgatory and that the wicked would eventually be saved; he believed that even Satan would be saved; he believed that men’s souls are preexistent and that stars and planets have souls
- b. Origen believed that Jesus was a created being and not eternal. “He held an aberrant view on the nature of Christ, which gave rise to the later Arian heresy” (*Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*, “Origen”).
- c. Origen denied the bodily resurrection, claiming that the resurrection body is spherical, non-material, and does not have members. “He denied the tangible, physical nature of the resurrection body in clear contrast to the teaching of Scripture” (*Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*, “Origen”). He was condemned by the Council of Constantinople on this

count.

- d. He allegorized the Bible saying, “The Scriptures have little use to those who understand them literally.” In this he was one of the fathers of the heretical amillennial method of prophetic interpretation, which was given further development by Augustine and later adopted by the Roman Catholic Church.
- e. He taught that the believer must lean on the church rather than his own judgment and that Christ and the church are the only authorities, thus laying the groundwork for Roman Catholicism. The *Catholic Encyclopedia* says: “[Origen] warns the interpreter of the Holy Scriptures, not to rely on his own judgment, but ‘on the rule of the Church instituted by Christ’. For, he adds, we have only two lights to guide us here below, Christ and the Church; the Church reflects faithfully the light received from Christ, as the moon reflects the rays of the sun. The distinctive mark of the Catholic is to belong to the Church, to depend on the Church outside of which there is no salvation; on the contrary, he who leaves the Church walks in darkness, he is a heretic” (*Catholic Encyclopedia*, Robert Appleton Company online edition, “Origenism”).

3. Origen accepted the textual corruptions of heretics and himself tampered with the Scripture. “Origen exercised a powerful influence over the transmission of the Greek text in the period before some of the most ancient copies now in existence were written. Mosheim describes him as ‘a compound of contraries, wise and unwise, acute and stupid, judicious and injudicious; the enemy of superstition, and its patron; a strenuous defender of Christianity, and its corrupter; energetic and irresolute; one to whom the Bible owes much, and from who it has suffered much.’ HE WAS THE GREAT CORRUPTER, AND THE SOURCE, OR AT LEAST THE CHANNEL, OF NEARLY ALL THE SPECULATIVE ERRORS WHICH PLAGUED THE CHURCH IN AFTER AGES. Nolan asserts that the most characteristic discrepancies between the common Greek text and the texts current in Palestine and Egypt in Origen’s day are distinctly traceable to a Marcionite or Valentinian source, and that ORIGEN’S WAS THE MEDIATING HAND FOR INTRODUCING THESE CORRUPTIONS INTO THE LATTER TEXTS. IT IS HIGHLY SIGNIFICANT THAT IMPORTANT TEXTS BEARING ON THE TRINITARIAN DOCTRINE, WHICH APPEAR IN THE GREEK AND LATIN, ARE LACKING IN THE OLD MSS OF THE PALESTINIAN AND EGYPTIAN. The disputed texts were designed to condemn and refute the errors of the Ebionites and Gnostics, Corinthians and Nicolaitans. It is not surprising that the influence of Origen should result in the suppression of some of these authentic testimonies in the Greek copies, while the old Latin which circulated in areas not much affected by Origen’s influence, should preserve such a reading as that found in 1 John 5:7” (Robert Dabney, “The Doctrinal Various Readings of the New Testament Greek,” *Southern Presbyterian Review*, April 1871).

4. Like Hort 1600 years later, Origen used his own faulty reason to determine the text of Scripture. The following example is from *The Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text of the Holy Scriptures* by John Burgon and Edward Miller (1896): “In this Commentary Origen,

the leading Christian critic of antiquity, gives us an insight into the arbitrary and highly subjective manner in which New Testament textual criticism was carried on at Alexandria about 230 AD. In his comment on Matthew 19:17-21 (Jesus' reply to the rich young man) Origen reasons that Jesus could not have concluded his list of God's commandments with the comprehensive requirement, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. For the reply of the young man was, All these things have I kept from my youth up, and Jesus evidently accepted this statement as true. But if the young man had loved his neighbor as himself, he would have been perfect, for Paul says that the whole law is summed up in this saying, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. But Jesus answered, If thou wilt be perfect etc., implying, that the young man was not yet perfect. Therefore, Origen argued, the commandment, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, could not have been spoken by Jesus on this occasion and was not part of the original text of Matthew. The clause had been added, Origen concluded, by some tasteless scribe." Thus, Origen made crucial textual decisions based on his own faulty reasoning, for it is very obvious that the Lord Jesus *did not* accept the rich young ruler's profession that he had kept the law from his young up, for the simple reason that no man has done such a thing (Rom. 3:19-23; Gal. 3:10; Jam. 2:10-11). In His reply to the rich young ruler, the Lord Jesus Christ was exposing the sinful condition of the young man's heart and his deceit in thinking that he was righteous, which is the God-intended purpose of the Law.

### **IS THERE AN ISSUE TODAY WITH THE OLD TESTAMENT HEBREW TEXT AS THERE IS WITH THE NEW TESTAMENT GREEK?**

#### **ANSWER:**

The Hebrew Old Testament is also being modified by the theories of modern textual criticism, though not to the same extent as the New Testament.

The Masoretic Hebrew has undergone continual revision on the basis of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Greek Septuagint, the Samaritan Pentateuch, the Latin Vulgate, the Syriac Peshitta, the Targums, the Symmachus and Theodotion Greek translation of the Old Testament, and other sources. These are the sources listed in the Preface to the 1978 New International Version as the basis for the O.T. translation (pp. viii, xi). Dr. Donald Waite observes: "The NIV editors have very honestly and very boldly altered the foundations of our Old Testament text in the above fifteen different ways, whenever it suited their fancy! You don't know at what point they've used one document to contradict the Masoretic Hebrew text, and at what point they used another document" (Waite, *Defending the King James Bible*). According to Dr. Waite's calculations, the 1937 Hebrew text by Rudolph Kittel (*Biblia Hebraica*) and the 1977 Stuttgart edition of the Hebrew Old Testament (*Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*) contain footnotes listing some 20,000 to 30,000 textual changes. Even the New King James Bible, which professes to follow the same textual foundation as the King James Bible, follows instead an eclectic Old Testament, modifying the Hebrew Masoretic with the Septuagint, the Latin Vulgate, "a variety of ancient versions," and the Dead Sea Scrolls (*New King James Bible*, Preface).

As with the New Testament, those who are doing the revision of the Old Testament do not agree in their principles or their conclusions. Consider one area of O.T. textual evidence, that of the Dead Sea Scrolls. The first of these was discovered in a cave near the Dead Sea in 1947, with subsequent finds in nearby caves. The first finds supported the Masoretic text but subsequent finds have unearthed some O.T. text types that differ from the Masoretic. Textual scholars do not agree on many important points touching these manuscripts, not even about their date. G.R. Driver (1965) disagreed with Burrows, Albright, and Cross, claiming that the Dead Sea Scrolls were written in the first two centuries A.D., rather than B.C. This is brought out in the book *Second Thoughts on the Dead Sea Scrolls* (1956) by F.F. Bruce. The very title of the book reminds us that textual scholars disagree with one another and that their conclusions are in flux. There are more than a dozen theories about where the Dead Sea Scrolls came from and who owned them, and apart from confirmed knowledge of such things, knowledge which is probably not possible to obtain at this point in history, it is impossible to know how much weight to give them.

# QUESTIONS PERTAINING TO THE MODERN ENGLISH VERSIONS

## WHAT ABOUT THE NEW KING JAMES BIBLE?

We get many requests for information about the New King James Bible, and the following is our reply to this important question. The NKJV is by far the best of the modern versions, since it is not based on the critical Greek text. I wish we could recommend it, because I have great sympathy with the plight of those who read English as a second language and have trouble with the antiquation of the King James. As missionaries in South Asia we have worked closely with such people for many years and many personal friends fall into this category, and the difficulty they have with the King James is very real. Yet I cannot recommend the NKJV for the following reasons:

### **ANSWER:**

**1. The New King James Version (NKJV) is a deception.** The editors and translators of the NKJV claim that they are standing in the tradition of the men who originally produced the Authorized Version and who slightly revised it in the 18th century, that they are only making minor updates and that they remain firmly committed to the same Greek and Hebrew texts as that underlying the original King James Bible. The advertisements for the NKJV would have its readers believe that there are no textual changes and that the men who produced it truly love the old King James Bible. The Statement of Purpose issued by Thomas Nelson, publishers of the New King James Bible New Testament (1979), makes the following claim:

“Not to add to, take from, nor alter the communication intended by the original translators, but to convey that communication in 20th century vocabulary and usage.”

This says to me that the translators and producers of the NKJV are committed to **PRECISELY** the same text as that underlying the King James Bible, but this is not the case, for the translators of the New King James Version were *not* committed to the Received Text and the KJV.

We have corresponded with the executive editor of the Old Testament portion of the NKJV, Dr. James Price. In April of 1996 he admitted to me that he is not committed to the Received Text and that he supports the modern critical text in general:

“I am not a TR advocate. I happen to believe that God has preserved the autographic text in the whole body of evidence that He has preserved, not merely through the textual decisions of a committee of fallible men based on a handful of late manuscripts. The modern critical texts like NA26/27 [Nestles] and UBS [United Bible Societies] provide a list of the variations that have entered the manuscript traditions, and they provide the evidence that supports the different variants. In the apparatus they have left nothing out, the evidence is there. The apparatus indicates where possible additions, omissions, and alterations have occurred. ... I am not at war



with the conservative modern versions [such as the New International Version and the New American Standard Version]" (James Price, e-mail to David Cloud, April 30, 1996).

It is obvious that Dr. Price holds the standard eclectic text position that was popularized by Westcott and Hort in the late 1800s and that he is committed to modern textual criticism. By his own testimony, he has no love for or commitment to the Received Text. He flippantly casts aside this historic, revival-producing text in favor of one that is based on a mere handful of manuscripts of dubious authority (i.e., Sinaiticus and Vaticanus and a few others of similar quality) that were disused by Bible-believing churches for at least 1,500 years. Further, Dr. Price has accepted the myths that are promoted by textual criticism, such as the idea that the Received Text is based upon a few late manuscripts. In fact, it is based upon the witness of the vast majority of extant manuscripts. (For refutation of that myth, see "Is the Received Text Based Merely on a Few Late Manuscripts.")

With men like this involved; yea in charge; it is not possible that the New King James Bible could be merely a simple revision of the KJV. I do not know of one man involved with the translation of the NKJV who has a conviction about the absolute authority of the Old and New Testament texts underlying the KJV.

Dr. Price told me that the NKJV translators did not solely follow the Masoretic Hebrew text in the Old Testament of the NKJV but that they introduced textual changes. This is born out in the Preface to the NKJV, which says the New King James Bible modifies the Masoretic Hebrew with the Septuagint, the Latin Vulgate, "a variety of ancient versions," and the Dead Sea Scrolls (*New King James Bible*, Preface).

At least some of the editors of the NKJV are committed to the so-called "Majority Text," which makes significant departures from the Greek Received Text of the Reformation Bibles. In 1982, Thomas Nelson published "The Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text." The editors, Zane Hodges and Arthur Farstad, were also key players in the New King James Version project. There are almost 1,900 differences between the Received Text and the Hodges-Farstad Majority Text. The deletion of 1 John 5:7 is an example. The translators of the Authorized Version accepted this passage as inspired Scripture and they placed it in the English Bible. The editors of the NKJV, on the other hand, do not believe 1 John 5:7 is Scripture, and they have omitted the passage from the Hodges-Farstad Majority Text, together with dozens of other portions of Scripture and hundreds of words. They have also cast great doubt upon this verse in the NKJV with an inaccurate marginal note. These men are definitely not committed to the Received Text or the King James Bible. Their goal is to modify it to bring it into line with their particular theories of textual criticism, which err by taking into consideration only the Greek manuscript evidence and ignoring the three other important sources of evidence, ancient translations, writings of ancient church leaders (the "church fathers"), and ancient lectionaries.

The Hodges-Farstad textual modifications were not actually introduced into the text of the New King James Bible, but the fact that such men are its authors is a loud warning to those who

believe the KJV Received Text is the preserved Word of God.

(A list of the omissions and changes proposed by the “majority text” view can be found in the back of the *Interlinear Bible* by Jay Green. A good refutation of the majority text position is available in Jack Moorman’s book *The Majority Text*, which is published by Bible for Today, 900 Park Ave., Collingswood, NJ 08108. 800-564-6109, BFT@BibleForToday.org.) See also our article “Examining the Hodges-Farstad Majority Greek Text,” available in the Bible Version section of the Apostasy Database at the Way of Life web site, <http://www.wayoflife.org>.

**2. The NKJV makes thousands of unnecessary changes.** There are an estimated 100,000 changes, averaging 80 per page. This was probably done for copyright purposes.

**3. The NKJV makes many erroneous departures from the King James Bible.** Following are some examples:

MATTHEW 7:14

KJV “Because STRAIT is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.”

NKJV “Because narrow is the gate and DIFFICULT is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.”

The word “difficult” in the NKJV (and “narrow” in the KJV) is a translation of the Greek word “thilbo.” Strong’s Concordance defines it as “to crowd (literally or figuratively).” In the KJV, this Greek word is translated “afflict,” “narrow,” “throng,” “suffer tribulation,” “trouble.” When referring to a path, it means that one’s way is restricted. Regardless of how it could be translated in other passages, it is the context of a word that always defines its meaning, and the context of Matthew 7:14 is salvation. We know from other passages that salvation is not difficult. Jesus said that to be saved one must come as a child (Lk. 18:17); but if salvation were difficult, as the NKJV says, it would not be possible for a little child to be saved. The Bible describes salvation in terms of coming (Mat. 11:28), drinking (Jn. 4:10), eating, (Jn. 6:35), and taking a gift (14 times in the N.T., e.g., Eph. 2:8-9). These are not difficult things.

As the KJV rightly says, the gate to salvation is strait and narrow. The terms are basically synonyms, referring to the truth that the sinner must humble himself and put his trust in Jesus Christ alone, that there is only one narrow way to God. The world at large despises this One Way and follows the broad road to destruction.

The NKJV translation creates doctrinal error by making the reader think that salvation is a difficult thing. That fits in with the false gospels that are preached by so many groups today. They teach that the sinner must trust Christ PLUS do many other things. Contrary to the warning in Romans 11:6, they intermingle works with grace, law with faith. That does indeed create a difficult salvation, because the sinner must do many things or he will not ultimately be saved, but it is a false gospel. The door that Jesus opened for us with His own death and blood is strait

and narrow, but praise God, not difficult. All the sinner must do is enter in by faith; he must simply reach out his hand and receive the Gift (Eph. 2:8-9) that the Savior has purchased for him. The erroneous NKJV translation also fits in with a “Lordship Salvation” doctrine that confuses justification with practical sanctification, salvation with discipleship.

#### MATTHEW 20:20

KJV “Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, **WORSHIPPING HIM**, and desiring a certain thing of him.”

NKJV “Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Him with her sons, **KNEELING DOWN** and asking something from Him.”

In this connection, the translators of the NKJV commit the same strange error as the translators of the NIV. The Greek word translated worship in this verse is “proskuneo,” which is the same word translated “worship” in other passages referring to the worship of Jesus Christ. In the KJV, it is never translated anything other than worship. Eleven times in the KJV, the Gospels tell us that Christ was worshipped (Mt. 2:11; 8:2; 9:18; 14:33; 15:25; 20:20; 28:9,17; Mk. 5:6; Lk. 24:52; Jn. 9:38). This, of course, is indisputable evidence that Jesus Christ is God, because only God can be worshipped (Ex. 34:14; Is. 42:8; Mt. 4:10; Acts 14:11-15; Rev. 19:10). (There are two verses in the KJV that say that someone “kneled before” Christ--Mt. 17:14; Mk. 1:40)--but in those verses a different Greek word is used, the word “gonupeteo.”)

The modern versions weaken this testimony to Christ's deity by translating only some of the “proskuneo” passages with the term “worship.” The NIV, for example, removes almost half of this witness to Christ's deity, changing “worship” to “kneel before” in Mt. 8:2; 9:18; 15:25; 20:20; Mk. 5:6. The NKJV does not go as far, only removing one of these witnesses to Christ's deity. But **WHY, WHY, WHY** remove any of them? It is the same Greek word. It means to worship! This change in the NKJV is unnecessary and wrong and is a move toward the undependable and weaker direction of the modern versions.

#### JOHN 1:3

KJV: “All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”

NKJV: “All things were made **THROUGH** Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.”

“In the New Testament where creation is linked to Jesus Christ, in every instance, the New King James Version translates the Greek preposition ‘dia’ as ‘through’ instead of ‘by.’ See John 1:3, 10; 1 Cor. 8:6; Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:16; and Heb. 1:2. There is a fine line between the two, but there certainly is a nuance of distinction. Implied is that Jesus Christ was involved in creation but was not the Creator. This is again an area of subjective choice of words in translation, but it has profound implications” (David Sorenson, *Touch Not the Unclean Thing*, p. 243).

### 1 CORINTHIANS 1:18

KJV: "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God."

NKJV: "... but to us who are BEING saved it is the power of God."

This change wrongly implies that salvation is a process.

### HEBREWS 2:16

KJV - "For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham" (Hebrews 2:16).

NKJV - "For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham" (Hebrews 2:16).

This change weakens the doctrine of Christ. The Greek says nothing about giving aid to. The Greek word is *epilambanomai*, which means to lay hold of, to seize, to catch, to take.

### HEBREWS 3:16

KJV "For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses."

NKJV "For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses?"

This change in the NKJV creates an error in the Bible, because the Old Testament plainly teaches that not all of the Israelites rebelled and provoked God. The KJV is right in its teaching here and the NKJV is wrong.

### REVELATION 1:18

KJV "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of HELL and of death."

NKJV "I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of HADES and of Death."

This is one of the strangest changes that have been made in the NKJV. In 11 different verses, the NKJV replaces the word "hell" with the word "hades," as follows:

Mat. 5:22 -- hell fire (gehenna)

Mat. 5:29 -- hell (gehenna)

Mat. 5:30 -- hell (gehenna)

Mat. 10:28 -- hell (gehenna)

Mat. 11:23 -- Hades

Mat. 16:18 -- Hades

Mat. 18:9 -- hell fire (gehenna)

Mat. 23:15 -- hell (gehenna)

Mat. 23:33 -- hell (gehenna)  
Mk. 9:43, 45, 47 -- hell (gehenna)  
Lk. 10:15 -- Hades  
Lk. 12:5 -- hell (gehenna)  
Lk. 16:23 -- Hades  
Acts 2:27 -- Hades  
Acts 2:31 -- Hades  
1 Cor. 15:55 -- Hades  
James 3:6 -- hell (gehenna)  
2 Pet. 2:4 -- hell (tartaroo)  
Rev. 1:18 -- Hades  
Rev. 6:8 -- Hades  
Rev. 20:13 -- Hades  
Rev. 20:14 -- Hades

The latter is simply a transliteration of the Greek word, of course. It can be argued that it is not an error to use the actual Greek word instead of translating it, but that is not the point. The point is that there is no reason to change the word from *hell* to *hades*. English speaking people know very well what hell is, but far fewer of them know what *hades* is. The word “hades” has been translated “hell” in the standard Received Text English Bibles since the days of John Wycliffe in the late 1300s. The change to “hades” does not make the Bible clearer. In this connection, the NKJV is certainly not easier to understand or read than the KJV. The New Testament uses three terms for hell, *gehenna*, *tartaroo*, and *hades*. *Gehenna* is a figurative reference to the burning of garbage in the valley of Hinnom, a valley of Jerusalem. *Tartaroo*, which is used only in 2 Pet. 2:4, refers to a chamber of hell in which rebellious angels are incarcerated, “the deepest abyss of Hades” (Strong). *Hades*, the most common New Testament word for hell, can refer to the grave (Acts 2:27, 31; 1 Cor. 15:55) but also refers to the burning hell, as is evident in Luke 16:23, when the rich man died and “in hell [*hades*] he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.”

Why did the NKJV translators change every reference to *hades*? It appears to be a change merely for change sake. Perhaps it falls into the category of changes that must be made in order to obtain a copyright for a new work. But it certainly plays into the hands of those who are watering down the doctrine of eternal, fiery hell. The Jehovah’s Witnesses, for example, who deny that hell is a place of eternal fiery punishment, prefer the term *hades*. So do the Seventh-day Adventists. In fact, many “evangelicals” are also denying or questioning the doctrine of hell. In 1993 Billy Graham said: “When it comes to a literal fire, I don’t preach it because I’m not sure about it. When the Scripture uses fire concerning hell, that is possibly an illustration of how terrible it’s going to be--not fire but something worse, a thirst for God that cannot be quenched” (Graham, interview with Richard Ostling, *Time* magazine, Nov. 15, 1993). Robert Schuller says: “And what is ‘hell’? It is the loss of pride that naturally follows separation from God--the ultimate and unfailing source of our soul’s sense of self-respect” (Schuller, *Self-Esteem: The New Reformation*, 1982, pp. 14-15). Others who deny the biblical doctrine of hell are Clark Pinnock, Herbert Vander Lugt of the Radio Bible Class (*What Does the Bible Say*

about Hell, 1990), F.F. Bruce, Richard Quebedeaux, Kenneth Kantzer, former editor of *Christianity Today*, John R.W. Stott, George Ladd of Fuller Seminary, and J.I. Packer.

REVELATION 19:8

KJV: “And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.”

NKJV: “... for the fine linen is the righteous ACTS of the saints.”

This change would give support for the erroneous “Baptist bride” doctrine, that the bride of Christ is composed only of believers who are obedient and faithful (this is applied particularly to the realm of New Testament church polity, so that only believers who are members of a Baptist church qualify), that the righteousness spoken of here is the believer’s own righteousness. In fact, though, the believer has no true righteousness that will stand before God except that which is given to him in Christ (1 Cor. 1:30). In the King James Bible the Greek word “dikaoima,” which is used in Rev. 19:8, is never translated “righteous acts.” When applied to the believer, it refers to his “justification” by which he is declared righteous because of Christ. It describes the righteousness which is given in Christ. *Dikaoima* is the word translated “righteous” in Romans 5:16-18.

These are only a few examples of the significant changes that have been made throughout the New King James Version.

**4. The NKJV deletes the important distinction between the second person pronoun singular and plural (thee, thou, thy, thine vs. ye, you, your).** Therefore, the NKJV gives up accuracy for modernity.

The Hebrew and Greek languages make a distinction between the singular and plural of the second person pronouns. The King James Bible maintains this distinction by the consistent use of thee, thou, thine, ye and you. The pronouns beginning with “T” are always singular (i.e., thee, thou, thine), and the pronouns beginning with “Y” are always plural (i.e., ye, you, your).

Consider the following testimony about this:

“It is often asserted or assumed that the usage of the AV represents the speech of 300 years ago, and that now, three centuries later, it should be changed to accord with contemporary usage. But this is not at all a correct statement of the problem. The important fact is this. THE USAGE OF THE AV IS NOT THE ORDINARY USAGE OF THE EARLY SEVENTEENTH CENTURY: IT IS THE BIBLICAL USAGE BASED ON THE STYLE OF THE HEBREW AND THE GREEK SCRIPTURES. The second part of this statement needs no proof and will be challenged by no one. It is undeniable that where the Hebrew and Greek use the singular of the pronoun the AV regularly uses the singular, and where they use the plural it uses the plural. Even in Deuteronomy where in his addresses, and apparently for rhetorical and pedagogical effect, Moses often changes suddenly, and seemingly arbitrarily, from singular to plural or from plural to singular, the AV reproduces the style of the text with fidelity. THAT IS TO SAY, THE USAGE OF THE AV IS STRICTLY

BIBLICAL” (Oswald T. Allis, “Is a Pronominal Revision of the Authorized Version Desirable?” See the Bible Version section of the End Times Apostasy Database at the Way of Life Literature web site -- <http://www.wayoflife.org>).

We can see the importance of this with the following example from the New Testament:

JOHN 3:7

KJV “Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.”

NKJV “Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’”

In the KJV, the English reader can discern that both a singular and a plural Greek pronoun are used in this verse. Jesus was saying, “Marvel not that I said unto thee [singular, referring to Nicodemus], Ye [plural, referring to all of the nation Israel and all people in general] must be born again.”

Because of the changes that were made in the NKJV toward the end of sounding contemporary, this meaning is lost to the English reader in both the Old and New Testaments.

See the question, “Shouldn’t we remove the old language such as thee, thou, and thine?”

### **5. The most significant problem that we have with the New King James Version is that it is a bridge to the modern versions.**

In reality, the New King James Version is simply a bridge to the modern versions. Those who move away from the standard King James Bible to the New King James are lulled into a sense of security that they have moved merely to an updated and improved King James, but actually they are being brainwashed to be weaned away from the King James altogether and to accept the modern versions.

Kirk DiVietro, Pastor of Grace Baptist Church in Franklin, Massachusetts, attended one of the Thomas Nelson planning meetings that prepared the way for the publication of the New King James. He testified to me that the Thomas Nelson representative plainly stated that their goal with the NKJV was to create a bridge to the modern versions, to break down the resistance of those who still revere the KJV. Following is Bro. DiVietro’s testimony as he gave it to me by e-mail on January 9, 2005: “Over 20 years ago I attended a pre-publication meeting of the NKJV held by the Thomas Nelson people and hosted by the Hackman’s Bible Bookstore in Allentown, PA. I am personal friends with the owners who took great delight in seating me next to the brother of the main translator of the NIV. The meeting was attended by over 300 college professors and pastors. At the meeting we were treated to a slide presentation of the history of the English Bible and in particular the King James Bible and its several revisions. During the presentation of the NKJV the Thomas Nelson representative made a statement which to the best of my memory was, ‘We are all educated people here. We would never say this to our people, but we all know that the King James Version is a poor translation based on poor texts. But every attempt to give your people a better Bible has failed. They just won’t accept them. So we have gone back and done a revision of the King James Version, a fifth revision. Hopefully it will

serve as a transitional bridge to eventually get your people to accept a more accurate Bible.’ Because of the years, and because I did not write it down, I cannot give you the speaker’s name and I cannot promise you that this is word for word correct, but the meeting so seared my spirit that I have never picked up and opened a NKJV. I can tell you that this is absolutely the substance and nearly the exact words of what was said.”

The footnotes in the NKJV are based on the Nestle-United Bible Society critical Greek text and thus create exactly the same kind of doubt you find in the modern versions. It tempts the readers to discount the authority of the passages questioned in footnotes. It also accustoms Bible students to the philosophy of textual neutrality, of picking and choosing between the readings of competing texts and versions.

The Nestle-Aland United Bible Societies critical Greek text (NU) follows the Westcott-Hort text of 1881 in removing or questioning dozens of entire verses and thousands of words that are in the Received Text. It is shorter than the Received Text by the equivalent of the entire books of 1 and 2 Peter. Those who believe the Received Text underlying the Authorized Version and other revered Protestant versions is the preserved Word of God reject the NU text as corrupted.

Though the editors of the NKJV claim they are honoring the Received Text with their New King James Bible, they have given credibility to the corrupted UBS text by placing its doubt-producing readings in the margin of their version.

(The following study is based on the margin of the New King James Version, Thomas Nelson, copyright 1984.)

#### 44 ENTIRE VERSES ARE QUESTIONED IN THE MARGIN OF THE NKJV ON THE BASIS OF THE UNRELIABLE UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES TEXT

Matthew 17:21; 18:11; 21:4; 23:14; 24:6  
Mark 7:16; 9:44; 9:46; 11:26; 15:28; 19:9-20  
Luke 17:36; 22:43; 22:44; 23:17  
John 5:4; 7:53--8:11  
Acts 8:37; 15:34; 24:7; 28:29  
Romans 16:24  
1 John 5:7, 8

#### PORTIONS OF 95 OTHER VERSES ARE QUESTIONED IN THE MARGIN OF THE NKJV ON THE BASIS OF THE UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES TEXT

##### MATTHEW

5:22 NU omits “without a cause”  
5:27 NU omits “to those of old”  
6:13 NU omits “For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.”  
9:13 NU omits “to repentance”



9:35 NU omits “among the people”  
10:3 NU omits “Lebbaeus, whose surname was”  
10:8 NU omits “raise the dead”  
12:35 NU omits “of his heart”  
13:51 NU omits “Jesus said to them”  
15:8 NU omits “draw near to Me with their mouth, And”  
18:29 NU omits “at his feet”  
19:20 NU omits “from my youth”  
20:7 NU omits “and whatever is right you will receive”  
20:16 NU omits “For many are called, but few chosen”  
20:22 NU omits “and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with”  
20:23 NU omits “and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with”  
22:13 NU omits “take him away, and”  
23:3 NU omits “to observe”  
25:13 NU omits “in which the Son of Man is coming”  
26:60 NU omits “false witnesses”  
27:35 NU omits “that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet: They divided My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots.”

## MARK

1:2 NU omits “Isaiah the prophet”  
1:14 NU omits “of the kingdom”  
2:17 NU omits “to repentance”  
3:5 NU omits “as whole as the other”  
3:15 NU omits “to heal sicknesses and”  
4:4 NU omits “of the air”  
6:11 NU omits “Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city”  
6:36 NU omits “bread; for they have nothing to eat”  
7:2 NU omits “they found fault”  
9:29 NU omits “and fasting”  
9:45 NU omits “into the fire that shall never be quenched”  
9:49 NU omits “and every sacrifice will be seasoned with salt”  
10:24 NU omits “for those who trust in riches”  
11:10 NU omits “in the name of the Lord”  
12:4 NU omits “and at him they threw stones”  
12:30 NU omits “This is the first commandment”  
12:33 NU omits “with all the soul”  
13:14 NU omits “spoken of by Daniel the prophet”  
14:19 NU omits “And another said, ‘Is it I?’”  
14:27 NU omits “because of Me this night”  
14:70 NU omits “and your speech shows it”

## LUKE

- 1:28 NU omits “blessed are you among women”
- 1:29 NU omits “when she saw him”
- 1:78 NU omits “shall visit”
- 4:4 NU omits “but by every word of God”
- 4:8 NU omits “Get behind Me, Satan”
- 4:18 NU omits “to heal the brokenhearted”
- 4:41 NU omits “the Christ”
- 5:38 NU omits “and both are preserved”
- 6:10 NU omits “as whole as the other”
- 6:45 NU omits “treasure of his heart”
- 7:10 NU omits “who had been sick”
- 7:31 NU omits “And the Lord said”
- 8:45 NU omits “and those with him”
- 8:45 NU omits “and You say, ‘Who touched Me?’”
- 8:54 NU omits “put them all out”
- 9:54 NU omits “just as Elijah did”
- 9:55 NU omits “and said, ‘You do not know what manner of spirit you are of’”
- 9:56 NU omits “For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men’s lives but to save them”
- 10:35 NU omits “when he departed”
- 11:2 NU omits “Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven”
- 11:4 NU omits “But deliver us from the evil one”
- 11:11 NU omits “bread from any father among you, will he give you a stone? Or if he asks for”
- 11:29 NU omits “the prophet”
- 11:44 NU omits “scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites”
- 11:54 NU omits “that they might accuse Him”
- 17:3 NU omits “against you”
- 17:9 NU omits “him? I think not”
- 19:5 NU omits “and saw him”
- 20:23 NU omits “Why do you test Me?”
- 20:30 NU omits “took her as wife, and he died childless”
- 22:30 NU omits “in My kingdom”
- 22:31 NU omits “And the Lord said”
- 22:64 NU omits “struck Him on the face and”
- 22:68 NU omits “Me or let Me go”
- 22:23 NU omits “and of the chief priests”
- 23:34 NU omits “Then Jesus said, Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do”
- 23:38 NU omits “written and in letters of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew”
- 24:1 NU omits “and certain other women with them”
- 24:42 NU omits “and some honeycomb”

## JOHN

3:13 NU omits “who is in heaven”  
3:15 NU omits “not perish but”  
4:42 NU omits “the Christ”  
5:3 NU omits “waiting for the moving of the water”  
5:16 NU omits “and sought to kill Him”  
6:11 NU omits “to the disciples, and the disciples”  
6:22 NU omits “which His disciples had entered”  
6:47 NU omits “in Me” 8:6 NU omits “as though He did not hear”  
8:9 NU omits “being convicted by their conscience”  
8:10 NU omits “and saw no one but the woman”  
8:59 NU omits “through the midst of them, and so passed by”  
9:11 NU omits “the pool of”  
10:26 NU omits “as I said to you”  
11:41 NU omits “from the place where the dead man was lying”  
12:1 NU omits “who had been dead”  
17:12 NU omits “in the world”  
19:16 NU omits “and led Him away”

## ACTS

2:23 NU omits “have taken”  
2:37 NU omits “to the church”  
7:30 NU omits “of the Lord”  
7:37 NU omits “Him you shall hear”  
9:5 NU omits “It is hard for you to kick against the goads”  
10:6 NU omits “will tell you what you must do”  
10:21 NU omits “who had been sent to him from Cornelius”  
10:32 NU omits “When he comes, he will speak to you”  
15:24 NU omits “saying, ‘You must be circumcised and keep the law’”  
17:5 NU omits “who were not persuaded”  
18:21 NU omits “I must by all means keep this coming feast in Jerusalem”  
21:8 NU omits “who were Paul’s companions”  
21:25 NU omits “that they should observe no such thing, except”  
22:9 NU omits “and were afraid”  
22:20 NU omits “to his death”  
24:6 NU omits “and wanted to judge him according to our law”  
24:8 NU omits “commanding his accusers to come to you”  
24:15 NU omits “of the dead”  
24:26 NU omits “that he might release him”  
25:16 NU omits “to destruction”

## ROMANS

1:16 NU omits “of Christ”

3:22 NU omits “and on all”

8:1 NU omits “do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit”

8:26 NU omits “for us”

9:31 NU omits “of righteousness”

9:32 NU omits “of the law”

10:15 NU omits “preach the gospel of peace”

11:6 NU omits “But if it is of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work”

14:6 NU omits “and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it. He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks; and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks”

14:21 NU omits “or is offended or is made weak”

15:24 NU omits “I shall come to you”

15:29 NU omits “of the gospel”

## 1 CORINTHIANS

5:7 NU omits “for us”

6:20 NU omits “and in your spirit, which are God’s”

9:18 NU omits “of Christ”

10:23 NU omits “for me”

10:28 NU omits “for ‘The earth is the Lord’s, and all its fullness’”

11:24 NU omits “Take, eat”

11:29 NU omits “in an unworthy manner”

15:47 NU omits “the Lord”

## 2 CORINTHIANS

8:4 NU omits “that we would receive”

12:11 NU omits “in boasting”

13:2 NU omits “I write”

## GALATIANS

3:1 NU omits “that you should not obey the truth”

3:17 NU omits “in Christ”

4:7 NU omits “through Christ”

## EPHESIANS

3:9 NU omits “through Jesus Christ”

3:14 NU omits “of our Lord Jesus Christ”

4:17 NU omits “rest of the”

5:30 NU omits “of His flesh and of His bones”

## PHILIPPIANS

3:16 NU omits “rule, let us be of the same mind”

## COLOSSIANS

1:2 NU omits “and the Lord Jesus Christ”

1:14 NU omits “through His blood”

2:2 NU omits “both of the Father and”

2:11 NU omits “of the sins”

## 1 THESSALONIANS

1:1 NU omits “from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ”

## 2 THESSALONIANS

2:4 NU omits “as God”

## 1 TIMOTHY

2:7 NU omits “in Christ”

3:3 NU omits “not greedy for money”

3:16 NU replaces “God” with “Who”

4:12 NU omits “in spirit”

5:4 NU omits “good and”

5:16 NU omits “man or”

6:5 NU omits “from such withdraw yourself”

6:7 NU omits “and it is certain”

## 2 TIMOTHY

1:11 NU omits “of the Gentiles”

## HEBREWS

1:3 NU omits “by Himself”

2:7 NU omits “And set him over the works of Your hands”

3:6 NU omits “firm to the end”

8:12 NU omits “and their lawless deeds”

10:9 NU omits “O God”

10:30 NU omits “says the Lord”

11:11 NU omits “she bore a child”  
11:13 NU omits “were assured of them”  
12:20 NU omits “or thrust through with an arrow”

## JAMES

4:4 NU omits “adulterers and”

## 1 PETER

1:22 NU omits “through the Spirit”  
4:1 NU omits “for us”  
4:14 NU omits “On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified”

## 1 JOHN

2:7 NU omits “from the beginning”  
4:3 NU omits “Christ has come in the flesh”  
5:13 NU omits “and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God”  
5:7 NU, M “omit the words from in heaven (v. 7) through on earth (v. 8). Only 4 or 5 very late mss. contain these words in Greek.” This footnote does not present the truth about this text. The Trinitarian statement is found in roughly 20 Greek manuscripts. Further, it is found in the vast majority of the Latin manuscripts. It has also been in the Waldensian Bibles (the Italic, the Romaunt, and the Tepl, for example) throughout the church age, and it has been in the English Bible for 620 years. This is a crucial point, for it is through the Bible believing churches and through the process of the Great Commission that God has preserved the Scriptures in this age (Mat. 28:19-20; 2 Tim. 2:2).

## REVELATION

1:8 NU omits “the Beginning and the End”  
1:11 NU omits “I am the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last, and”  
1:11 NU omits “which are in Asia”  
1:20 NU omits “which you saw”  
4:3 NU omits “And He who sat there was”  
5:14 NU omits “Him who lives forever and ever”  
11:1 NU omits “And the angel stood”  
11:17 NU omits “and who is to come”  
14:8 NU omits “is fallen, that great city, because”  
14:12 NU omits “here are those”  
15:2 NU omits “over his mark”  
16:5 NU omits “O Lord”

16:7 NU omits “another from”  
16:14 NU omits “of the earth and”  
19:1 NU omits “the Lord”  
21:6 NU omits “It is done”  
21:24 NU omits “of those who are saved”

Those who use the New King James Bible are therefore subjected to the same onslaught of potential doubt as those who use the New International Version or some other modern edition of the Bible. Many claim that the critical notes that question the authenticity of the Bible text are not harmful to readers. We believe this is nonsense. I saw the fruit of this questioning in my own life before I was grounded in the issue of God’s Preserved Scripture and before I understood the unbelieving foundation of modern textual criticism. Before I went to Bible School I read my Bible carefully, word by word, and I did not doubt or question even one tittle. After I completed a course in New Testament Greek and was taught by a professor that the Received Text and the KJV “are not based on the most dependable scholarship,” I found myself questioning large portions of the Bible.

I would like someone to explain to me how such confusion builds strong Christian lives and churches.

*WHAT ABOUT THE MARGIN IN THE KING JAMES BIBLE?* Some modern version defenders point to the marginal notes in the 1611 KJV and claim that it is inconsistent for King James Bible defenders to make something of the critical textual notes in the modern versions while ignoring the ones in the original KJV. James White does this in his popular but misguided book *The King James Only Controversy* (p. 77). This is a comparison of monkeys and trees, though. Both the 1611 KJV and the modern versions have marginal notes, but the nature of those notes is very different. The textual notes in the 1611 KJV were not critical after the fashion of the ones in the modern versions. The marginal notes in the 1611 KJV did not cast continual doubt upon the text, as those in the modern versions do. In testifying of the marginal notes in the modern versions, Jay Green, a biblical scholar and Bible translator, says:

“Deceitful footnotes often throw doubt on the words of the text, such as may be found at Mark 1:1; Romans 9:5, etc. Worse, yet, in other places when words that witness to the Godhead of Christ are removed from the text, seldom is there a footnote to call attention to it. And when there is a footnote purporting to give evidence for the change, a false impression is often given by an incomplete presentation of the facts” (Jay Green, Sr., *The Gnostics, The New Versions, and the Deity of Christ*, Lafayette, Indiana: Sovereign Grace Publishers, 1994, p. 5).

To pretend that the marginal notes in the 1611 KJV are the same in nature as those of the modern versions is to confuse the issue.

Thus, therefore, the New King James Version is simply a bridge to the modern versions.

The New King James Version is not an improvement over the King James and is not merely another slight revision after the fashion of earlier revisions. Be wise and beware and stand by the old KJV. It's hard to read, you say? It's really not that hard. Most of the words are one or two syllables, and it has a very small vocabulary. The reading level of the King James Bible, in fact, is not that much different from the New International Version. If you will devote to the KJV the serious study that it deserves, you will soon find that it is not that difficult. Many tools are available to assist you in this task, including the *Way of Life Encyclopedia of the Bible & Christianity*, available from Way of Life Literature.

As the late Evangelist Lester Roloff said, "We don't need to re-translate the Bible; we need to re-read and re-study the excellent one we have." Amen.

### **ISN'T THE NEW AMERICAN STANDARD VERSION BASICALLY THE SAME AS THE KING JAMES EXCEPT FOR UPDATED LANGUAGE?**

The New American Standard Bible (NASB or NASV) is a revision of the 1901 American Standard Version and was produced by a team of translators working with the Lockman Foundation, the publisher of the Amplified Bible. The NASB was produced as a more conservative counterpart to the Revised Standard Version., which was published in 1946 (NT) and 1952 (whole Bible). Work began on the NASB in 1959 and the New Testament was issued in 1963 and the complete Bible in 1971. The original foreword to the New Testament stated, "It has been the purpose of the Editorial Board to present to the modern reader a revision of the American Standard Version in clear and contemporary language." A similar statement appears in the preface to the 2002 *NASB Thinline Bible* that is in my library.

#### **ANSWER:**

**1. The New American Standard Version is basically a literal translation like the King James Bible, and as such it is superior to the modern dynamic equivalencies such as the New International Version.**

**2. In spite of its largely conservative approach to translation technique and the evangelicalism of its translators (as opposed to the rank theological liberalism of the translators who produced the Revised Standard Version), the NASB cannot be trusted because it is built upon the unsound scholarship of liberals and Unitarians.**

The NASB is built upon the English Revised Version of 1885 and the American Standard Version of 1901 (which was the American edition of the English Revised). At least three Christ-denying Unitarians were on these translation committees (George Vance Smith, Ezra Abbot, and Joseph Henry Thayer). The committees also included many men of modernistic views, such as Philip Schaff (twice brought to trial for heresy), William Robertson Smith (who was evicted from the Free Church Theological College for his modernism), B.F. Westcott and F.J.A. Hort (both of whom denied the infallible inspiration of Scripture and Christ's substitutionary



atonement and believed in evolution), and Anglican Broad Church members William Moulton, George Milligan, R.C. Trench, Edward Bickersteth, Benjamin Kennedy, A.P. Stanley, Robert Payne Smith, William Humphrey, and John Vaughan.

**3. In spite of its basically conservative, literal approach to translation methodology, the NASV cannot be trusted because it is based on the corrupt Greek New Testament that was produced through the skeptical pseudo-science of modern textual criticism.**

The NASV is based on the corrupt critical Greek New Testament as opposed to the Greek Received Text underlying the Reformation Bibles. The critical Greek New Testament is built upon a handful of strange manuscripts from Alexandria, Egypt, which was a hotbed of theological heresy in the centuries following the apostles. Frederick Scrivener, a prominent textual scholar of the 19th century, testified, "It is no less true to fact than paradoxical in sound, that THE WORST CORRUPTIONS TO WHICH THE NEW TESTAMENT HAS EVER BEEN SUBJECTED, ORIGINATED WITHIN A HUNDRED YEARS AFTER IT WAS COMPOSED; and that Irenaeus and the African Fathers, and the whole Western, with a portion of the Syrian Church, used far inferior MSS. to those employed by Stunica, or Erasmus, or Stephens, thirteen centuries later, when moulding the Received Text" (Scrivener, *A Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament*, II, 4th edition, 1894, pp. 264, 265).

Not only do the manuscripts preferred by modern textual critics (chiefly the Vaticanus and the Sinaiticus) disagree in thousands of places from the vast majority of other extant manuscripts, they also disagree among themselves in thousands of places.

The modern critical Greek New Testament is built upon the strange and unbelieving principle that the alleged purest text of apostolic Scripture (the Alexandrian or Egyptian as represented by the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus manuscripts) was set aside in the fourth century and was replaced with an artificially created recension (the Traditional or Byzantine text) that was formed by conflating various extant texts, and that it was the impure recension that became the Bible of the churches for 1,500 years of church history until the alleged best text was recovered in the 19th century through the principles of modern textual criticism. This was a foundational principle of Westcott and Hort (the Lucian Recension) and it has remained foundational to modern textual criticism into the 21st century, even though it flies in the face of any scriptural and reasonable doctrine of divine preservation.

The omissions alone in the critical Greek text equate the deletion of the entire books of 1 and 2 Peter from the modern version New Testaments.

The NASV omits outright or casts serious doubt upon 43 entire verses in the New Testament. It omits outright the following sixteen: Matthew 17:21; Mark 7:16; 9:44, 46; 11:26; 15:28; Luke 17:36; 23:17; 24:40; John 5:4; Acts 8:37; 15:34; 24:7; 28:29; Romans 16:24; 1 John 5:7. It further casts serious doubt upon another twenty-seven verses (Matthew 18:11; 23:14; Mark 16:9-20; Luke 24:12; John 7:53-8:11) by putting them in brackets or by separating them from the

previous passages and adding footnotes that discredit their authority.

The NASV also omits a significant portion of another 174 verses, not including those it casts doubt upon with marginal notes.

The NASV, following the critical Greek text, weakens key doctrines of the Bible. An example is the doctrine of Christ's deity. The omissions and changes in the NASV do not result in the complete removal of this doctrine, but they do result in an overall weakening of it.

Consider the following examples:

Mark 9:24 -- The father's testimony that Jesus is "Lord" is omitted.

Mark 16:9-20 -- This glorious passage is bracketed, signifying that it is not considered apostolic Scripture. A footnote says, "Later mss add vv 9-20," clearly implying that it is not authentic. With this omission, the Gospel of Jesus Christ according to Mark ends with no resurrection or glorious ascension and with the disciples fearful and confused.

Luke 23:42 -- The thief's testimony that Jesus is "Lord" is omitted.

John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18 -- "only begotten Son" changed to "one and only"

John 1:27 -- "is preferred before me" is omitted

John 3:13 -- "which is in heaven" is omitted, thus removing this powerful witness to Christ's omnipresence

John 6:69 -- "thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God" is changed to "you are the Holy One of God," thus destroying this powerful witness that Jesus is the very Christ, the Son of God, a doctrine that was under fierce assault in the early centuries.

John 8:59 -- "but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by" is replaced with "but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple," thus destroying the miracle of this scene. Whereas the Greek Received Text teaches here that Jesus supernaturally went out through the midst of the angry crowd that was trying to kill Him, the modern versions have Jesus merely hiding Himself.

Acts 8:37 -- The eunuch's glorious testimony that Jesus Christ is the Son of God is bracketed and a footnote says, "Early mss do not contain this verse," signifying that it is not apostolic Scripture.

Romans 14:10 -- "Christ" changed to "God"; the "judgment seat of Christ" identifies Jesus Christ directly with Jehovah God (Isaiah 45:23), whereas the "judgment seat of God" does not.

1 Cor. 15:47 -- “the Lord” is omitted

Eph. 3:9 -- “by Jesus Christ” is omitted

1 Tim. 3:16 -- “God” is omitted, thus removing one of clearest references to Jesus Christ as God in the New Testament

1 John 5:7 -- The glorious Trinitarian confession is omitted, even though it has more manuscript and versional evidence than most of the Alexandrian readings preferred by modern textual critics, including many of those listed above. For example, the omission of Mark 16:9-20 is supported by only three Greek manuscripts of the hundreds that are extant and that contain this passage.

The same can be demonstrated for the doctrine of the virgin birth, the blood atonement, the ascension, and ecclesiastical separation. All of these are weakened in the modern versions.

The NASV further attacks the doctrine of fasting. Though the word “fasting” is not removed entirely from the modern versions, the doctrine that fasting is a crucial element of spiritual warfare is removed. In this context the NASV omits the entire verse of Mat. 17:21, plus the word “fasting” in Mk. 9:29; Acts 10:30; 1 Cor. 7:5; 2 Cor. 6:5; and 2 Cor. 11:27.

For a more thorough study of the doctrinal issue in the NASV and other modern versions based on the critical Greek text see the question “Is it true that there are no significant doctrinal differences between the modern versions and the KJV?”

### **WHAT ABOUT THE NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION?**

*Question:* “The New International Version is becoming popular even among some fundamentalist churches. It was produced by evangelicals rather than modernists. Why do you not support this version?”

**ANSWER:**

1. The New International Version was first envisioned by the National Association of Evangelicals and the Christian Reformed Church in the early 1960s and was eventually produced by a team of 100 “evangelical scholars” who began work in about 1966. The translators represented a wide variety of denominations, including Anglican, Assemblies of God, Baptist, Brethren, Christian Reformed, Church of Christ, Evangelical Free, Lutheran, Mennonite, Methodist, Nazarene, Presbyterian, and Wesleyan. This should sound a large warning to those who understand what has happened within evangelicalism since the late 1950s. For one thing, evangelicalism has renounced separation and has thus become deeply infected by the liberalism that is in the schools that evangelicals often attend and the books that they use.

a. In 1976, Carl Henry warned: “A GROWING VANGUARD OF YOUNG GRADUATES

OF EVANGELICAL COLLEGES WHO HOLD DOCTORATES FROM NON-EVANGELICAL DIVINITY CENTERS NOW QUESTION OR DISOWN INERRANCY and the doctrine is held less consistently by evangelical faculties. ... Some retain the term and reassure supportive constituencies but nonetheless stretch the term's meaning" (Carl F.H. Henry, past senior editor of *Christianity Today*, "Conflict over Biblical Inerrancy," *Christianity Today*, May 7, 1976).

- b. In the last book he wrote before he died, Francis Schaeffer warned in 1983: "WITHIN EVANGELICALISM THERE ARE A GROWING NUMBER WHO ARE MODIFYING THEIR VIEWS ON THE INERRANCY OF THE BIBLE SO THAT THE FULL AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE IS COMPLETELY UNDERCUT" (Schaeffer, *The Great Evangelical Disaster*, 1983, p. 44).
- c. In 1996, R. Albert Mohler, Jr., warned: "... evangelicalism in the 1990s is an amalgam of diverse and often theologically ill-defined groups, institutions, and traditions. ... THE THEOLOGICAL UNITY THAT ONCE MARKED THE MOVEMENT HAS GIVEN WAY TO A THEOLOGICAL PLURALISM THAT WAS PRECISELY WHAT MANY OF THE FOUNDERS OF MODERN EVANGELICALISM HAD REJECTED IN MAINLINE PROTESTANTISM. ... Evangelicalism is not healthy in conviction or spiritual discipline. Our theological defenses have been let down, and the infusion of revisionist theologies has affected large segments of evangelicalism. Much damage has already been done, but a greater crisis yet threatens" (Mohler, "Evangelical: What's in a Name?" *The Coming Evangelical Crisis*, 1996, pp. 32, 33, 36).
- d. Consider the example of Bruce Metzger, one of the foremost textual critics alive today. He has been upheld by *Christianity Today* as an evangelical scholar and his books are used by practically every evangelical Bible translator. Yet Metzger's modernism is evident in the notes to the *New Oxford Annotated Bible RSV* (1973), which he co-edited with Herbert May. It first appeared in 1962 as the *Oxford Annotated Bible* and was the first Protestant annotated edition of the Bible to be approved by a Roman Catholic authority. It was given an imprimatur in 1966 by Cardinal Cushing, Archbishop of Boston. Metzger wrote many of the rationalistic notes in this volume and put his editorial stamp of approval on the rest. Consider some excerpts from the notes:
  - (1) Introductory Notes to the Pentateuch: "The Old Testament may be described as the literary expression of the religious life of ancient Israel. ... The Israelites were more history-conscious than any other people in the ancient world. Probably as early as the time of David and Solomon, out of a matrix of myth, legend, and history, there had appeared the earliest written form of the story of the saving acts of God from Creation to the conquest of the Promised Land, an account which later in modified form became a part of Scripture." (Bruce Metzger and Herbert May, *New Oxford Annotated Bible*, Introduction to the Old Testament).

- (2) Note on the Flood: “Archaeological evidence suggests that traditions of a prehistoric flood covering the whole earth are heightened versions of local inundations, e.g. in the Tigris-Euphrates basin.” (Metzger and May, *New Oxford Annotated Bible*).
- (3) Note on Job: “The ancient folktale of a patient Job circulated orally among oriental sages in the second millennium B.C. and was probably written down in Hebrew at the time of David and Solomon or a century later (about 1000-800 B.C.)” (Metzger and May, *New Oxford Annotated Bible*).
- (4) Note on Psalm 22:12-13: “the meaning of the third line [they have pierced my hands and feet] is obscure.” (In fact, it is not obscure; it is a prophecy of Christ's crucifixion!)
- (5) Note on Isaiah: “Only chs. 1-39 can be assigned to Isaiah's time; it is generally accepted that chs. 40-66 come from the time of Cyrus of Persia (539 B.C.) and later, as shown by the differences in historical background, literary style, and theological emphases. ... The contents of this section [chs. 56-66] (sometimes called Third Isaiah) suggest a date between 530 and 510 B.C., perhaps contemporary with Haggai and Zechariah (520-518); chapters 60-62 may be later.”
- (6) Note on Jonah: “The book of Jonah is didactic narrative which has taken older material from the realm of popular legend and put it to a new, more consequential use” (Metzger and May, *New Oxford Annotated Bible*).
- (7) Notes on 2 Peter: “The tradition that this letter is the work of the apostle Peter was questioned in early times, and internal indications are almost decisive against it. ... Most scholars therefore regard the letter as the work of one who was deeply indebted to Peter and who published it under his master's name early in the second century.” [Note: Those who believe this nonsense must think the early Christians were liars and fools and the Holy Spirit was on vacation.]
- (8) Notes from “How To Read The Bible With Understanding”: “The opening chapters of the Old Testament deal with human origins. They are not to be read as history ... These chapters are followed by the stories of the patriarchs, which preserve ancient traditions now known to reflect the conditions of the times of which they tell, though they cannot be treated as strictly historical. ... it is not for history but for religion that they are preserved ... When we come to the books of Samuel and Kings ... Not all in these books is of the same historical value, and especially in the stories of Elijah and Elisha there are legendary elements. ... We should always remember the variety of literary forms found in the Bible, and should read a passage in the light of its own particular literary character. Legend should be read as legend, and poetry as poetry, and not with a dull prosaic and literalistic mind.”

e. Thus, the fact that the New International Version was produced by “evangelical scholars” does not mean that it is sound.

## **2. The New International Version is based on the corrupt critical United Bible Societies Greek New Testament as opposed to the Greek Received Text underlying the Reformation Bibles.**

The omissions alone in the critical Greek text equate the deletion of the entire books of 1 and 2 Peter from the modern version New Testaments.

The NIV omits or casts serious doubt upon 41 entire verses in the New Testament. It omits outright the following seventeen: Matthew 17:21; 18:11; 21:44; 23:14; Mark 7:16; 9:44, 46; 11:26; 15:28; Luke 17:36; 23:17; Jn. 5:4; Acts 8:37; 15:34; 24:7; 28:29; Romans 16:24; 1 John 5:7. It further casts serious doubt upon another 24 verses (Mk. 16:9-20; Jn. 7:53-8:11) by separating them from the previous text and by adding footnotes that discredit their textual authority.

The NIV omits a significant portion of another 174 verses, not including those it casts doubt upon with marginal notes.

The NIV, following the critical Greek text, weakens key doctrines of the Bible. An example is the doctrine of Christ’s deity. The omissions and changes in the NASV do not result in the complete removal of this doctrine, but they do result in an overall weakening of it. Consider the following examples:

Mark 9:24 -- the father’s testimony that Jesus is “Lord” omitted.

Mark 16:9-20 -- This glorious passage is set apart from the rest of the book and a footnote says, “The most reliable early manuscripts and other ancient witnesses do not have Mark 16:9-20,” implying that it is not authentic. With this omission, the Gospel of Jesus Christ according to Mark ends with no resurrection and ascension and with the disciples fearful and confused.

Luke 23:42 -- The thief’s testimony that Jesus is “Lord” omitted.

John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18 -- “only begotten Son” changed to “one and only”

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John 3:13 -- “which is in heaven” omitted, thus removing this powerful witness to Christ’s omnipresence

John 6:69 -- “thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God” is changed to “you are the Holy One of God,” thus destroying this powerful witness that Jesus is the very Christ, the Son of God, a doctrine that was under fierce assault in the early centuries.

John 8:59 -- “but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by” is replaced with “but Jesus hid Himself, slipping away from the temple grounds,” thus destroying the miracle of this scene. Whereas the Received Text and the King James Bible teaches here that Jesus supernaturally went out right through the midst of the angry crowd that was trying to kill Him, the modern versions have Jesus merely hiding Himself.

Acts 8:37 -- the eunuch’s glorious testimony that Jesus Christ is the Son of God is omitted

Romans 14:10 -- “Christ” changed to “God”; the “judgment seat of Christ” identifies Jesus Christ directly with Jehovah God (Isaiah 45:23), whereas the “judgment seat of God” does not.

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The same can be demonstrated for the doctrine of the virgin birth, the blood atonement, the ascension, and ecclesiastical separation. All of these are weakened in the modern versions.

The NIV further attacks the doctrine of fasting. Though the word “fasting” is not removed entirely from the modern versions, the crucial doctrine that fasting is a part of spiritual warfare is removed. In this context the NIV omits the entire verse of Mat. 17:21, plus the word “fasting” in Mk. 9:29; Acts 10:30; 1 Cor. 7:5; 2 Cor. 6:5; and 2 Cor. 11:27.

For a more through study of the doctrinal issue in the NIV see the question “Is it true that there are no significant doctrinal differences between the modern versions and the KJV?”

**3 Not only is the NIV based on a corrupt Greek text but also it is a loose dynamic equivalency translation.**

This is admitted in the Preface to the NIV: “The first concern of the translators has been the accuracy of the translation and its fidelity to the THOUGHT of the biblical writers. ... they have striven for MORE THAN A WORD-FOR-WORD TRANSLATION.” They go on to give an example of how they have given “dynamic” renderings. “Because for most readers today the phrase ‘the LORD of hosts’ and ‘God of hosts’ have little meaning, this version renders them ‘The LORD Almighty and God Almighty’” (NIV Preface, p. vi). They admit that “Lord of hosts” is the exact translation, but they change this for the sake of “the readers.” This is dynamic equivalency. Instead of translating literally and then educating the readers to understand the literal rendering, the dynamic equivalency translator believes he has the authority to change God’s words.

The following example of dynamic equivalency in the NIV is from Dr. D.A. Waite’s book *Defending the King James Version*: “[The NIV is so inferior] when it comes to the Words of God. [For example 2 Sam. 19:12 has ‘ye are my bones and my flesh.’] The word ‘bone’ in Hebrew is *etsem* and ‘flesh’ is *basar*. The NIV renders that expression ‘flesh and blood.’ Now, the word ‘blood’ is *dam*, not *etsem*. Blood is blood and bones are bones, but the NIV translators don’t care. They’re giving the THOUGHT. They say, ‘Those stupid Hebrews, they say “flesh and bones.” Don’t they know any better? Don’t they know it should be “flesh and blood”?’ So we’re going to translate it “flesh and blood.” ... Now, here’s the thing: Whenever someone says, ‘The King James Bible says this, but the NIV makes it a little plainer,’ you don’t know whether it really is plainer or just a fairy tale, because the NIV translators don’t stick to the WORDS of God. What the NIV says is not necessarily what the Hebrew or Greek says.”

Consider Matthew 5:18, which is a New Testament example of dynamic equivalency in the NIV:

KJV “For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.”

NIV “I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.”

The Greek word translated “jot” in the KJV is *iota*, which is the eighth letter of the Hebrew alphabet, and “tittle” is from the Greek *keriaia*, referring to a tiny part of a Hebrew letter. The term “jots and tittles” has become a part of the common English language because it has been in the English Bible for more than six centuries. At least “tittle” has. The first English Bible, the Wycliffe, had “one letter or one tittle.” William Tyndale changed this to “one jot or one tittle” in 1525. The translators of the KJV in 1611 left this intact. Many people whose mother tongue is English who have never opened a Bible are familiar with the term “every jot and tittle.” Thus, there was no reason for the NIV translators to change this into their less literal and clumsier rendering.

Further, because of this change the reader of the NIV cannot see that the Lord Jesus was talking specifically about the Hebrew language. This is an important matter; because this verse shows that Christ gave His blessing to the Hebrew text, exalting its authority in every detail. It also



shows that Christ was not using a Greek translation (i.e., the Septuagint). Yet none of this is evident in the NIV because they have chosen to interpret rather than translate.

The NIV is so filled with this type of thing that the English reader can never know if he is reading a true rendering of the Hebrew and Greek or merely a translator's interpretation.

#### **4. The NIV has a heretical translation of Micah 5:2.**

KJV "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."

NIV "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times."

This, of course, is a messianic prophecy. When the wise men from the east inquired about the birth of the Messiah, it was because of this verse that the Jewish leaders knew that He would be born in Bethlehem (Matt. 2:1-6).

First of all we see that the NIV has changed "thousands of Judah" to "clans of Judah." The Hebrew word here, "eleph," is used in 391 verses and ALWAYS means "thousands."

The most serious error in the NIV translation of Micah 5:2, though, is in the last part of the verse which says "whose origins are from of old, from ancient times." Whereas the KJV tells us in Micah 5:2 that Jesus Christ is from everlasting, the NIV says he had an origin in ancient times. An origin means a beginning. That is the ancient heresy of Arianism, which is held today by the Jehovah's Witnesses and many other cults.

Does the Hebrew allow for the New International Version rendering of Micah 5:2? The verse could POSSIBLY be translated that way except for one thing, and that is its Messianic nature.

The word translated "everlasting" is "owlam," which is the common Hebrew word for everlasting in the Old Testament. It is translated "for ever" (Gen. 3:22), "always" (Gen. 6:3), "everlasting" (Gen. 9:16), "perpetual" (Gen. 9:12), "never" (Jud.2:1), "ever more" (2 Sam. 22:51), "without end" (Is. 45:17), "eternal" (Is. 60:15), "continuance" (Is. 64:5).

"Owlam" is translated "ancient times" once in the KJV (Ps. 77:5). Why, then, did the KJV translators not translate it "ancient times" in Micah 5:2? It is the context that defines words in the Bible, and the context of Micah 5:2 requires "everlasting." In fact, of the 414 verses that contain "owlam," only a handful has a sense of anything other than everlasting. More than 90% of the time, the word is unequivocal in its reference to everlasting.

Even more significantly, “owlam” is the Hebrew word that describes the eternity of God. For example,

God himself is *owlam* (Ps. 102:12)  
God’s rule is *owlam* (Ps. 66:7)  
God’s throne is *owlam* (Ps. 93:2)  
God’s mercy is *owlam* (Ps. 100:5)  
God’s truth is *owlam* (Ps. 117:2)  
God’s righteousness is *owlam* (Ps. 119:142)  
God’s judgments are *owlam* (Ps. 119:150)  
God’s name is *owlam* (Ps. 72:17; 135:13)  
God’s kingdom is *owlam* (Ps. 145:13)

With this in mind, we see how false the NIV rendering of Micah 5:2 is. Knowing that the verse refers to the Son of God, it naturally requires the translation of everlasting or eternal or for ever.

Then there is the word “origins” in the New International Version edition of Micah 5:2. Is that an acceptable translation? This is the Hebrew word “mowtsaah,” meaning to descend or proceed from, and it could mean *origin* -- IF it referred to someone other than the Messiah. Knowing, though, that it is a direct reference to Jesus Christ, it is false to translate it as “origins.”

All of this is similar to the situation with Isaiah 7:14. In the 1950s, Bible believers charged the translators of the Revised Standard Version with heresy when they translated “almah” as “young woman” in Isaiah 7:14, and they were right in so doing. Though the Hebrew word “almah” itself could possibly be translated “young woman” in some instances, it cannot be translated “young woman” in Isaiah 7:14 for the simple fact that the verse clearly describes the virgin birth of Jesus Christ, as we see in Matt. 1:23. The King James Bible translators and their predecessors rendered “almah” as “maid” or “damsel” three times of the seven it is used, but in Isaiah 7:14 they had no doubt that it should be “virgin.” The context determines the translation.

The New International Version is not a dependable and godly translation. That it is so deemed by so many evangelicals merely demonstrates the lack of discernment that predominates within evangelicalism today.

## **5. The NIV removes “hell” entirely from the Old Testament, replacing it with “grave” or “death.”**

The Old Testament word translated “hell” in the King James Bible is “sheol.” It has more than one meaning. Most frequently it refers to the dwelling place of the spirits of the dead. It is translated “hell” 56 times in the King James Bible. The same word also refers to the grave at times and is translated “grave” in 29 verses in the KJV (Gen. 37:35; 42:38; 44:29, 31; 2 Ki. 2:6, 9; Job 7:9; 14:13; 17:13; 31:13; 24:19; Ps. 6:5; 30:3; 31:17; 49:14, 15; 88:3; 89:48; 141:7; Prov. 1:12; 30:16; Ecc. 9:10; Song 8:6; Is. 14:11; 38:10, 18; Ezek. 31:15; Hos. 13:14) and “pit” in three verses (Num. 16:30, 33; Job 17:16).

The New International Version makes no distinction between *sheol* as hell or *sheol* as the grave and always translates *sheol* as grave or death. This is a great error.

Consider some examples:

Deuteronomy 32:22

KJV "For a fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn into the lowest hell..."

NIV "For a fire has been kindled by my wrath, one that burns to the realm of death below."

Comment: Fire does not burn in the "realm of death" in any sense other than in hell, so why not translate it as hell?

Job 11:8

KJV "It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell: what canst thou know?"

NIV "They are higher than the heavens -- what can you do? They are deeper than the depths of the grave -- what can you know?"

Comment: The grave is not deep in comparison with heaven. Job is not referring to the grave but to the depths of hell.

Psalms 9:17

KJV "The wicked shall be turned into Hell, and all the nations that forget God."

NIV "The wicked return to the grave, all nations that forget God."

Comment: Psalm 9:17 describes God's judgment upon the wicked. The judgment is not merely death and the grave but eternal hell.

Psalms 55:15

KJV "Let death seize upon them, and let them go down quick into hell."

NIV "Let death take my enemies by surprise; let them go down alive to the grave."

Comment: There is nothing special about going down into the grave. That is the lot of all men, including the author of this Psalm. The judgment that the Psalmist is describing is not mere death and the grave but eternal hell.

Proverbs 5:5

KJV "Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on hell."

NIV "Her feet go down to death; her steps lead straight to the grave."

Comment: This is progressive parallelism. The Proverb describes God's judgment upon immorality, leading first to death and from there to eternal hell.

Proverbs 9:18

KJV "...her guests are in the depths of hell."

NIV "...her guests are in the depths of the grave."

Comment: The grave has no "depths." This describes the judgment of hell for those who pursue immorality.

Proverbs 15:24

KJV "The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath."

NIV "The path of life leads upward for the wise to keep him from going down to the grave."

Comment: To translate this as the grave results in nonsense. The way of life does not keep one out of the grave, for "it is appointed unto men once to die" (Heb. 9:27). The way of life refers to salvation, and it keeps the sinner out of hell, just as the KJV says.

Isaiah 5:14

KJV "Therefore hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure..."

NIV "Therefore the grave enlarges its appetite and opens its mouth without limit."

Comment: It is not the grave that is enlarged; how can the grave enlarge itself? It is hell beyond the grave that is enlarged because of man's stubborn hold to sin and rejection of God's salvation.

These are only a few examples of how the NIV removes hell entirely from the Old Testament. This plays into the hands of those who are watering down the doctrine of eternal, fiery hell. The Jehovah's Witnesses, for example, who deny that hell is a place of eternal fiery punishment, treat these Old Testament passages after the same fashion as the NIV. So do the Seventh-day Adventists. In fact, many "evangelicals" are also denying or questioning the biblical doctrine of hell. In 1993 Billy Graham said: "When it comes to a literal fire, I don't preach it because I'm not sure about it. When the Scripture uses fire concerning hell, that is possibly an illustration of how terrible it's going to be--not fire but something worse, a thirst for God that cannot be quenched" (Graham, interview with Richard Ostling, *Time* magazine, Nov. 15, 1993). Robert Schuller says: "And what is 'hell'? It is the loss of pride that naturally follows separation from God--the ultimate and unfailing source of our soul's sense of self-respect" (Schuller, *Self-Esteem: The New Reformation*, 1982, pp. 14-15). Others who deny the biblical doctrine of hell are Clark Pinnock, Herbert Vander Lugt of the Radio Bible Class (*What Does the Bible Say about Hell*, 1990), F.F. Bruce, Richard Quebedeaux, Kenneth Kantzer (former editor of *Christianity Today*), John R.W. Stott, George Ladd of Fuller Seminary, and J.I. Packer.

## **6. The NIV removes the term "sodomite" from the Bible.**

The Hebrew word "qadesh" is translated "shrine prostitute" in Deut. 23:17 and 1 Kings 14:24; 15:12; 22:46; and 2 Kings 23:7 in the New International Version; whereas this word is translated "sodomite" in the King James Bible.

The translation “male temple prostitutes” is an interpretation, as is “sodomite.” According to Strong’s, the Hebrew word “qadesh” means “a (quasi) sacred person, i.e. (techn.) a (male) devotee (by prostitution) to licentious idolatry.” In the Authorized Version this Hebrew word is translated “sodomite” and “unclean.” The term “sodomite” was brought over from the Geneva Bible, because the translators understood that the sin described in these passages is associated with the moral perversion of old Sodom. Many older Bible dictionaries connect sodomy with homosexuality in general. Eadie (1872) defines Sodomite as “not dwellers in Sodom, but practisers of unnatural lust--the sin of Sodom. This sin was consecrated in many Eastern kingdoms.” The *People’s Bible Encyclopedia* by Charles Randall Barnes (1903) says: “The sodomites were not inhabitants of Sodom, nor their descendants, but men consecrated to the unnatural vice of Sodom (Gen. 19:5; comp. Rom. 1:27) as a religious rite.” Note that Barnes associates the sin of sodomy with the homosexuality described in Romans 1:27. Hastings (1898) says: “The term ‘Sodomite’ is used in Scripture to describe offences against the laws of nature which were frequently connected with idolatrous practices.” Note that Hastings did not claim that the offences against the laws of nature were restricted solely to idolatrous temple worship.

The term “sodomy” in these passages doubtless did refer, at least in part, to homosexuality associated with immoral pagan religions, but **IT WAS NOT LIMITED TO THAT. The problem with the NIV translation is that it LIMITS this sin to that particular connection rather than allowing the larger meaning of homosexual activity in general.** It creates the illusion that the practice of sodomy in the Old Testament and the sin of Sodom itself were limited to male prostitution and plays right into the hands of those today who are trying to excuse their sin by claiming that the Bible only forbids homosexual prostitution rather than homosexuality in general.

## **7. The NIV confuses Satan with Jesus Christ in Isaiah 14:12.**

KJV “How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!”

NIV “How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations.”

The Hebrew word translated “Lucifer, son of the morning” in the KJV and “morning star, son of the dawn” in the NIV is “halal.” According to Strong’s Concordance, it means “to be clear (orig. of sound, but usually of color); to shine; hence, to make a show, to boast; and thus to be (clamorously) foolish; to rave; causatively, to celebrate; also to stultify.” In the KJV this Hebrew word is translated boast, celebrate, commend, glory, give (light), be (make, feign self) mad (against), give in marriage, (sing, be worthy of) praise, rage, renowned, shine.” This Hebrew word is never translated “morning star” or “star” in the King James Bible, because that is not what it means.

Satan is not the morning star, but Jesus Christ is. Twice in Scripture Jesus Christ is referred to as

a star. The prophecy in Numbers 24:17 describes the Messiah as “a Star out of Jacob.” The Hebrew word for *star* here is “kowlkab,” which is always translated *star* or *stargazer*. In Revelation 22:16 the Lord Jesus describes Himself as “the bright and morning star.” The Greek word here is “aster,” which is the standard word for star.

Thus the KJV, by accurately translating the Hebrew and Greek, maintains a clear distinction between Satan who is Lucifer, the boastful shining one, and Jesus Christ, the bright and morning star.

To mistranslate Isaiah 14:12 as “morning star,” as the NIV does, creates great confusion.

For a more extensive study of the New International Version see Jack Moorman’s *Modern Bibles: The Dark Secret*, which is available from Plain Paths Publishers (P.O. Box 830, Columbus, NC 28722, <http://www.plainpath.org>, 828-863-2736, [plain@juno.com](mailto:plain@juno.com)).

### **IS IT TRUE THAT THE NIV IS OWNED BY A PUBLISHER OF PORNOGRAPHY?**

#### **ANSWER:**

The following is adapted from an article by Jay Klopfenstein in *The Christian News*, Dec. 20, 1993, p. 20. I have included some additional material.

1. Zondervan Corp., once a respected Christian publishing firm, Grand Rapids, Michigan, became a public company via a big initial public stock offering some 15 years ago. This was about the same time the NIV Bible was published by an outfit in New York called the International Bible Society, which financed the project. They then gave Zondervan Corp. the exclusive rights to the publication of the NIV version of the Bible.
2. After the initial offering, the stock’s price rose moderately but later the price fell sharply and many investors lost money. In 1985, a New Jersey investor filed a lawsuit which said he was induced to buy Zondervan stock because of false statements the company made to the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). In 1989 it was widely reported in the press: “Zondervan Corp. of Grand Rapids, Michigan, reached a \$3.57 million out-of-court settlement with investors who contend they lost money when irregularities were found in the religious publisher’s financial records.”
3. By 1988, Zondervan, suffering from declining sales, was in financial trouble as a result of expanding too fast in the early 1980’s. In July 1985, the *Wall Street Journal* reported: “In 1978, the company introduced the New International Version of the Bible, which is the market leader in Bible sales--in the past two years several investors have bought and sold stakes in Zondervan, sparking speculation that the company had found a buyer. In May an investor group had made a \$10.50 a share offer, but the two sides couldn’t reach an agreement.”

4. In 1988 aggressive media magnate Rupert Murdoch bought Zondervan for \$56.7 million or \$13.50 per share.

5. In 1990 Zondervan's parent company, Rupert Murdoch's Harper and Row, merged with William Collins and became HarperCollins, the publisher of many exceedingly modernistic titles that tear down the infallibility of Scripture and the deity of Jesus Christ. These include the works of Karl Barth, John Crossan, C.H. Dodd, Nels Ferre, Harry Emerson Fosdick, Reginald Fuller, and Frederick Grant, to name a few.

6. Zondervan operates a large chain of Christian bookstores. Since they are actually owned by a secular corporation, it is no wonder that so many Christian bookstores today are worldly and are filled with psychology, self-esteemism, ecumenism, novels, corrupt Bible translations, and rock music!

7. Murdoch, an international world citizen who started in Australia, was building a media empire via his company, News Corp. The following month, the tycoon Murdoch gobbled up the nation's largest circulation magazine, *TV Guide*, also *Seventeen* and *Good Food* magazines plus the *Daily Racing Form* on a \$3 billion cash binge which was the second largest media deal ever. In recent years Murdoch has built a media empire worldwide with revenues over \$10 billion (64 percent in U.S.A., 19 percent in United Kingdom and 17 percent in Australia and the Pacific Basin). Holdings include Twentieth Century Fox Film Corp., Fox Broadcasting Co., Fox Television Stations, Inc., Harper-Collins, TV Guide, and FSI (multi-page free standing inserts each week in 390 local Sunday newspapers). Also owned in the United Kingdom are *The Times*, *The Sunday Times*, *Today*, *Sun*, and *News of the World*. These account for one-third of all national newspapers sold in the U.K. market with the latter two having the largest daily and Sunday circulations respectively in the English-speaking world. Also 50 percent owned is British Sky Broadcasting Ltd., the leading U.K. direct-to-home satellite television broadcasting service. News Corp. is also the largest newspaper publisher in Australia. This year [1993] expansion into Asia commenced with purchase of 66 percent interest in Star Television, the Hong Kong satellite TV company that broadcasts to 38 nations, mostly in the Middle and Far East. Also purchased were Chinese newspapers. Recently News Corp. signed six cable channels that will carry News Corp's programming beginning around mid-1994, enabling the company to reach 25 percent of all U.S. households.

8. In the U.K., Harper-Collins' religious division publishes the Good News Bible (Today's English Version), which was translated by a theological modernist who denied that Jesus Christ is God. The Good News Bible removes the "blood" from most passages in the New Testament, replacing it with "death," thus corrupting the essential doctrine of the vicarious blood atonement of Jesus Christ.

9. In the 1990s Zondervan was granted permission to use the official Roman Catholic New American Bible text with notes by Lyman Coleman for its "Catholic Serendipity Bible." The New American Bible was published in 1970 by the Catholic Association of America with the

Imprimatur of the Archbishop of Washington, Cardinal O'Boyle. The New American Bible contains unbelieving, modernistic notes that claim that many of the events in Genesis, including the worldwide flood, are not historical, that the book of Isaiah was written by at least two men, the book of Daniel was not written until after the death of Daniel, and that Paul did not write the book of Ephesians or the Pastoral Epistles.

10. News Corp's owner and sales promoter of the NIV Bible, is one of the major producers of modern movies, television programs, and magazines. News Corp and other major studios circulate movies full of profanity. TV screens are filled with disgusting trash and violence. According to *Morality in Media*, "By the time the average child graduates from elementary school, he will have seen at least 8,000 murders and more than 100,000 other acts of violence on TV. A typical teenager watching TV sees nearly 14,000 sexual encounters in one year."

11. *Seventeen* magazine is described as "flashy, racy, titillating, hip, jazzy, flirty, glamorous and sexy." It is probably the most widely read magazine by teenagers and pre-teens in the U.S.A. with a circulation of 1.9 million. If pastors and church leaders, who contribute to Murdoch and his News Corp. by promoting and selling the NIV Bible, would pick up the current December 1993 issue at their local magazine store, they would see 138 pages from cover to back of articles and ads, slick and sexually suggestive. These pages exude weird hair-do's, witchcraft-type attire and punk-rock sub-cultural sexually suggestive abnormalities.

12. Occasionally a church bulletin contains an insert from American Family Association, which lists the horrible immoralities on TV with advice to boycott the advertisers. On this same Sunday, the pastor urges his parishioners to buy the NIV Bible. What folly! How absurd!

### **WHAT ABOUT THE TODAY'S ENGLISH VERSION?**

1. The Today's English Version (TEV), otherwise known as the *Good News for Modern Man* and the *Good News Bible*, was published in 1966 (N.T.) and 1973 (entire Bible).

- a. "The copyright of the whole production, with the exception of the twelve maps, is owned by the American Bible Society. ... The volume bears the imprint of 'The Bible Societies,' and includes a list of 99 societies" (*Trinitarian Bible Society Quarterly Record*, Jan.-Mar. 1978, p. 16). The American Bible Society is a founding member of the United Bible Societies. A large percentage of the money for the annual operating budget of the United Bible Societies comes from the American Bible Society.
- b. In 1961, M. Wendell Belew of the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention wrote to Eugene Nida suggesting that the American Bible Society (ABS) produce a translation geared to the 4th grade reading level. Two weeks later Nida approached ABS General Secretary Laton Holmgren with the plan and was given the go ahead (Peter J. Wosh, *Today's English Version and the Good News Bible: A Historical Sketch*, American Bible Society, nd).



c. “In September 1966, the American Bible Society published *The New Testament in Today’s English Version*, a translation intended for people everywhere for whom English is either their mother tongue or an acquire language. Shortly thereafter the United Bible Societies requested the American Bible Society to undertake on its behalf a translation of the Old Testament following the same principles. ... Final approval of the text on behalf of the United Bible Societies was given by the American Bible Society’s Board of Managers upon recommendation of its Translations Department Committee” (Preface, *Good News Bible*, edition published by Thomas Nelson Inc., publishers under license from the American Bible Society).

2. The TEV is based on the United Bible Societies Greek N.T. (3rd edition, 1975) (Preface, *Good News Bible*, Thomas Nelson). It therefore contains all of the errors that are inherent in the critical Greek text from Alexandria, Egypt, such as the omission of “Lord in Mk 9:24 and Luke 23:42, “is preferred before me” in Jn. 1:27, “which is in heaven” in Jn. 3:13, “the Lord” in 1 Cor. 15:47, “by Jesus Christ” in Eph. 3:9, and “God” in 1 Timothy 3:16.

3. The popularity of the Today’s English Version has been phenomenal from its inception.

a. In the first three years it sold 17.5 million copies (*Parade Magazine*, Nov. 2, 1969).

b. By 1971, more than 30 million copies of the TEV New Testament had been sold (Jakob Van Bruggen, *Future of the Bible*, 1972, p. 19).

c. By 1987, the TEV New Testament had sold more than 75 million copies (*Focus*, Oct. 1986, p. 5).

c. The TEV won a place in the 1989 edition of the *Guinness Book of Records* by selling in excess of 104 million copies worldwide between 1976 and 1988.

e. By the late 1980s, the Today’s English Version had become the most popular Bible text in Australia as well as in England. This was reported in an undated brochure distributed by the Bible House, Australian Bible Society, Perth, West Australia, June 1988; *Word in Action*, Spring 1986, British & Foreign Bible Society, p. 5). It was also reported to me in a letter from Brian Lincoln of the BFBS, May 16, 1995: “In 1993 our estimates for the total Bible market in England and Wales show the Good News Bible (TEV in America) was the best-selling Bible with a 26-27% share of the market, followed by the NIV at around 21-22%. The KJB follows these with a market share of around 12-13%” (Letter from Brian Lincoln, BFBS, May 16, 1995). A Gallup Poll in February 1991 showed that the Good News Bible is the most popular version of the Bible among British churchgoers (*American Bible Society Record*, August-September 1991, p. 25).

4. An Ecumenical Bible

- a. A big push was given the TEV when, soon after its publication, Evangelist Billy Graham “called it an excellent translation over nationwide television from his campaign in Anaheim, California.” It was subsequently distributed by the Grason Company of Minneapolis, the distributors of Billy Graham materials (M.L. Moser, Jr., *Good News for Modern Man: The Devil’s Masterpiece*, Little Rock: Challenge Press, 1970, p. 80).
  - b. The Southern Baptist Convention, America’s largest non-Catholic denomination, has also promoted the TEV widely. The SBC commissioned the American Bible Society to publish an edition under the “Broadman Press” label and sold it through their bookstores and distributed it widely through Southern Baptist churches. I recall that when I was saved in 1973 the Southern Baptist Churches in my home state of Florida were heavily involved with this.
  - c. The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, one of the most conservative Lutheran denominations in the United States, has also commended the Good News Bible. “A free copy of the entire *Good News for Modern Man* was among the material given to all delegates to this month’s LCMS convention in St. Louis. The same Bible has been distributed free at conventions of the Lutheran Layman’s League” (*Christian News*, July 20, 1981).
  - d. The Roman Catholic Church gave official approval to the TEV as early as 1969. In a news release on March 18, 1969, the American Bible Society reported: “Richard Cardinal Cushing, Archbishop of Boston, had granted this new ‘Bible’ his official approval and that subsequent printing would bear his imprimatur. It was Cardinal Cushing who earlier gave an imprimatur to the Protestant-sponsored Revised Standard Version. Protestant and Catholic scholars in recent years have reached substantial agreement on the translation of the Bible into English, and Cardinal Cushing’s expert consultants did not seek a single change in the text of the TEV before approving it for Catholic use” (M.L. Moser, Jr., *Good News for Modern Man*, pp. 74, 75).
5. The translator of the New Testament portion of the TEV was **ROBERT GALVESTON BRATCHER** (1920- ), who was also the chairman of the translation team.
- a. Bratcher was selected by Eugene Nida from the Translations Office of the American Bible Society for work on the TEV. Bratcher was born in Campos, Brazil, to missionary parents. He pastored Rising Sun Baptist Church in Rising Sun, Indiana, from 1943-44, then served as a chaplain in the U.S. Navy. After earning a Th.D. in 1949 from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, he became a missionary to Brazil, where he taught New Testament Language and Literature at the Baptist Theological Seminary in Rio de Janeiro. In 1957 he became a research consultant in the American Bible Society’s Translations Department. In this capacity he served on the committee to revise the Portuguese d’Almeida version. (This biographical information is from *Today’s English Version and the Good News Bible: A Historical Sketch* by Peter J. Wosh for the American Bible Society, nd.)

b. As early as 1953, Bratcher denied the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. This would explain why the Today's English Version perverts the most important passages on this doctrine.

- (1) While serving as professor of Greek and New Testament theology in a Southern Baptist Seminary in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Dr. Bratcher edited the "Questions and Answers" section of their paper, *O Jornal Batista*. In this paper, July 9, 1953, Bratcher was asked how to reconcile Matthew 24:36 with John 14:9. His answer (in part): "This cannot mean however, that Christ retained in his incarnation all the attributes of Deity; rather he freely gave up those qualities he enjoyed in his eternal existence with the Father." In a letter to Julius C. Taylor, July 16, 1970, Bratcher said, "Of course I believe what I wrote in the *Journal Batista* of July 9, 1953" (Donald T. Clarke, *Bible Version Manual*, Sunbury, Pennsylvania: Bible Truth Institute, 1975, p. 95).
- (2) Dr. Bratcher held a question and answer session on October 13, 1970, at the First Baptist Church, Spartanburg, South Carolina. Following is one of the questions and his answer:  
Question: "Is Jesus Christ God, or the same as God?"  
Answer: "Jesus is not the same personality as God" (Clarke, op. cit., p. 98).
- (3) Bratcher made the following statement in 1968: "The New Testament scriptures were written to specific situations, at specific times, to specific groups or individuals and in response to some felt need. The New Testament writers probably never intended their work to be the gospel record of the future--so there is not a sterile order to the scriptures" (Robert Bratcher, *The Baptist Courier*, Feb. 22, 1968).
- (4) On November 5, 1970, after a lecture at Furman University, Dr. Bratcher talked with students. "You admit that the Bible has fallacies; then how is it valuable?" a student questioned. Bratcher answered, "IF WE BUILD OUR FAITH WHOLLY ON THE BIBLE, THEN WE ARE BUILDING OUR FAITH ON SHIFTING SAND. We must follow the facts or there is nothing to believe. We cannot literally follow Jesus, only go in his direction" (*The Greenville News*, Greenville, South Carolina, Nov. 8, 1970).
- (5) Though Bratcher's apostasy was evident before he translated the Today's English Version, little was known publicly about the man until 1981. In that year, Bratcher made some statements at a Southern Baptist Life Commission seminar in Dallas, Texas, which received close media attention. Following are quotes from Bratcher's speech: "ONLY WILLFUL IGNORANCE OR INTELLECTUAL DISHONESTY CAN ACCOUNT FOR THE CLAIM THAT THE BIBLE IS INERRANT AND INFALLIBLE ... To invest the Bible with the qualities of inerrancy and infallibility is to idolatize it, to transform it into a false god. ... Often in the past and still too

often in the present to affirm that the Bible is the word of God implies that the words of the Bible are the words of God. Such simplistic and absolute terms divest the Bible altogether of its humanity and remove it from the relativism of the historical process. NO ONE SERIOUSLY CLAIMS ALL THE WORDS OF THE BIBLE ARE THE VERY WORDS OF GOD. If someone does so it is only because that person is not willing thoroughly to explore its implications. ... THE WORD OF GOD IS NOT WORDS; it is a human being, a human life ... Quoting what the Bible says in the context of its history and culture is not necessarily relevant or helpful-- and may be a hindrance in trying to meet and solve the problems we face. ... WE ARE NOT BOUND BY THE LETTER OF SCRIPTURE, but by the spirit. EVEN WORDS SPOKEN BY JESUS IN ARAMAIC IN THE THIRTIES OF THE FIRST CENTURY AND PRESERVED IN WRITING IN GREEK, 35 TO 50 YEARS LATER, DO NOT NECESSARILY WIELD COMPELLING AUTHORITY OVER US TODAY. THE FOCUS OF SCRIPTURAL AUTHORITY IS NOT THE WORDS THEMSELVES. It is Jesus Christ as the Word of God who is the authority for us to be and to do. As a biblical scholar, I VIEW WITH DISMAY THE MISUSE OF SCRIPTURES BY FUNDAMENTALISTS; as ... Christians we listen with alarm to the simple-minded diagnoses and the simplistic panaceas proposed with smug self-assurance by Moral Majority people intent on curing the evils of this age” (Bratcher, cited by Dan Martin, *Baptist Courier*, a publication of the South Carolina Baptist Convention, April 2, 1981). Here, then, we have the strange affair of a Bible translator who believes faith in the Bible is “shifting sand” and who utterly despises the doctrine that the Bible is the infallibly inspired Word of God. He attempts to replace the infallible authority of the Bible with that of Jesus Christ, as if the two are in conflict and as if we knew anything about Christ and His will that we do not learn from the words of the Bible.

- c. Didn't the Bible Society Fire Bratcher? The American Bible Society (ABS) was embarrassed by Bratcher's remarks in Dallas and the ensuing outcry on the part of evangelicals cost them significant financial support. Bratcher issued an apology of sorts, saying, “I deeply regret the language I used and I apologize to those who were offended by it.” Note that he did not repent of his heresies. Soon thereafter, the ABS issued a public statement “completely disassociating” itself from Bratcher's remarks, and within days Bratcher resigned from his position in the American Bible Society. This was only a duplicitous political move, though. Bratcher's apostate translation is still distributed by the ABS and the United Bible Societies, and many other modernists whose views are as heretical as Bratcher's continue to work for the Bible societies. In fact, Bratcher himself continued to work with the United Bible Societies as a chief translation's consultant! (*Bulletin of the United Bible Societies*, No. 138-139, 1985). Thus, part of Bratcher's salary was still paid indirectly by the American Bible Society through the massive support it gives to the UBS.

d. The root problem is unbelief and unregeneracy.

Robert Bratcher held a question and answer session on October 13, 1970, at the First Baptist Church, Spartanburg, South Carolina. Following are four of the questions and answers:

Question: “Do you know Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour?”

Answer: Dr. Bratcher would not answer this question.

Question: “Is the human heart by nature Man-centered or God-centered?”

Answer: “Let us stick with questions about translation” (Donald T. Clarke, *Bible Version Manual*, pp. 98-99).

On October 15, 1970, Bratcher held a question and answer session at the First Baptist Church, North Augusta, South Carolina. Before anyone could ask a question, the group was advised they could not ask Bratcher questions relating to his theology. Following is one question asked him:

Question: “If you should die, do you know you would go to heaven?”

Answer: Dr. Bratcher would not answer this question (Clarke, *Bible Version Manual*, p. 99).

The Bible says, “Let the redeemed of the Lord say so...” It is a VERY strange matter for a Bible translator, a former Baptist missionary, to refuse to testify to his salvation. The problem with many Christian leaders today, though, is that they have no salvation of which to testify.

Consider another example of unregeneracy in the United Bible Societies. On a visit to Calcutta in 1984, I sat before the desk of a leader of the Bible Society of India. His name was Mr. S. Biswas, and we were visiting the offices of the Bible Society. An evangelist friend, Maken Sanglir, was sitting beside me as we talked for several minutes with Mr. Biswas. During the course of our conversation, I described briefly how I was saved at age 23 after many years of rebellion. I then asked Mr. Biswas when he was saved. He chuckled and replied, “No, no. Not like that. In fact, I am a third generation Christian, as my grandfather as well as my own father were Christians.” He had no personal testimony of the saving power of Jesus Christ in his own life. “Biswas” in the Hindi language means “faith.” How sad that a man with such a name, a man who is a leader in a society that promotes the production and distribution of the Bible, had no scriptural testimony of salvation! Yet, as others could testify, this is the sad condition of many Bible Society leaders and workers. They have “churchianity”; they have been baptized and confirmed; but they do not know Christ in His personal saving power.

6. In light of what we have seen about Bratcher's life and beliefs, it is not surprising to learn that his translation is perverted.

- a. The doctrine of Christ's deity is weakened significantly in the Today's English Version. Consider some examples:

John 1:1

KJV "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

TEV "Before the world was created, the Word already existed; he was with God, and he was the same as God."

Comment: This corrupt translation leaves the possibility that the Son of God was created, as heretics have been teaching since the second century. It also changes "the Word was God" to the weaker "the same as God." A proper translation emphasizes in no uncertain terms the full equality of Jesus Christ with God the Father. Jesus Christ is not only "the same as God"; He IS God!

Philippians 2:6

KJV "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God."

TEV "He always had the nature of God, but he did not think that by force he should try to become equal with God."

Comment: The proper translation says clearly that Jesus Christ was equal with God and was in the form of God prior to His incarnation. The Good News translators take the liberty to change this, and their rendering is heretical. Many Hindus, as well as Jehovah's Witnesses, Unitarians, and theological modernists will admit that Jesus had the nature of God [as defined by them], but not that He was and is indeed very God, equal with the Father.

1 Timothy 3:16

KJV "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."

TEV "No one can deny how great is the secret of our religion: He appeared in human form, was shown to be right by the Spirit, and was seen by angels. He was preached among the nations, was believed in throughout the world, and was taken up to heaven."

Comment: The true mystery of our godliness is that God Himself appeared in human flesh! Compare Matthew 1:23: "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us." God WAS manifest in the flesh! The TEV rendering removes the greatness of the mystery by deleting God from the text. 1 Timothy 3:16 is one of the New Testament's clearest witnesses to the deity of

Jesus Christ, and the word “God” is supported by the vast majority of Greek manuscripts. Yet the TEV, following the corrupt critical Greek text, ignores this wonderful testimony and makes it into something about how to live a godly life. The verse is not speaking of a godly life, but of the God Life, Jesus Christ, the Eternal Son of God, the Triune Godhead.

#### 1 Timothy 6:14-16

KJV “That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see; to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.”

TEV “To obey your orders and keep them faithfully until the Day when our Lord Jesus Christ will appear. His appearing will be brought about at the right time by God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and the Lord of lords. He alone is immortal; he lives in the light that no one can approach. No one has ever seen him; no one can ever see him. To him be honor and eternal power! Amen.”

Comment: In the honorable King James translation it is obvious that Jesus Christ Himself is the object of this passage. It is a powerful testimony of His eternal godhead. The Today’s English Version changes the subject in verse 15 from Christ to God, thus again robbing Christ of His full deity and leaving room for doubt about this crucial doctrine.

#### Acts 20:28

KJV “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.”

TEV “So keep watch over yourselves and over all the flock which the Holy Spirit has placed in your care. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he made his own through the sacrificial death of his Son.”

Comment: The proper translation says God purchased the Church with His own blood. What a marvelous testimony to the deity of Jesus Christ; when Christ bled on the cross of Calvary, God was bleeding! It was God who took upon Himself the form of a man and bled and died on the cross for sin. The Today’s English Version rendering perverts this by following the corrupt critical Greek text and by paraphrasing. It also removes the important word “blood” entirely from the verse.

#### Colossians 2:3

KJV “In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”

TEV “He is the key that opens all the hidden treasures of God's wisdom and knowledge.”

Comment: The KJV witnesses to the fact that Jesus Christ is the very embodiment of wisdom. This is a clear testimony that Jesus is God. The TEV weakens this, saying Jesus is merely the key to wisdom. The word “key” is an addition to the text. There is nothing in the Greek to answer to this.

Colossians 2:9

KJV “For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.”

TEV “For the full content of divine nature lives in Christ, in his humanity.”

Comment: Note that in the TEV the word “bodily” is changed to “humanity” without any textual authority. This also modifies the possible interpretation of the verse and weakens the doctrine of Jesus’ deity. Since God’s Word says that in Jesus Christ dwells the fullness of the Godhead bodily, why change this to humanity? Is “bodily” more difficult to understand than “humanity”?

b. The doctrine of the Virgin Birth is weakened in the Today’s English Version.

Matthew 1:18

KJV “Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.”

TEV “This was how the birth of Jesus Christ took place. His mother Mary was engaged to Joseph, but before they were married, she found out that she was going to have a baby by the Holy Spirit.”

Luke 1:27

KJV “To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph.”

TEV “He had a message for a girl promised in marriage to a man named Joseph, who was a descendant of King David. The girl’s name was Mary.”

Comment: These two verses, properly translated, testify plainly to Christ’s virgin birth. But the TEV removes the certainty of this blessed truth. My friends, if Jesus Christ was not born of a virgin, He was not sinless and He could not have paid the price for our sins. This is no light matter. The sin nature is passed through the man (Rom. 5:12).

c. The doctrine of the blood atonement is attacked in the Today’s English Version. In at least 12 passages, the TEV deletes the word “blood,” referring to the precious blood of Christ which was shed for our sins and without which “there is no remission of sin.” See the TEV translation of Acts 20:28; Romans 3:25; Romans 5:9; Ephesians 1:7; Ephesians 2:13; Colossians 1:14; Colossians 1:20; Hebrews 12:4; Hebrews 13:20; 1 Peter 1:19; Revelation 1:5; and Revelation 5:9. The Bible societies accept Bratcher’s argument that to replace the word “blood” with the word “death” in these passages makes no difference in meaning or



doctrine. Hebrews 9:22 answers that lie by reminding us that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin. Christ's death alone was not sufficient to atone for our sins; He had to shed His blood as well. Therefore, when speaking of Jesus Christ's atonement, it is wrong to replace the word "blood" with the word "death." Romans 5:9-10 explains the matter. Verse nine says we are justified through Christ's blood, while verse ten says we are reconciled through His death. In other words, we are saved through Jesus' bloody death. Both were required for the Atonement. Only an unholy mind and unholy hands would make such changes in God's holy Word.

- d. Beyond the textual and doctrinal corruptions, the Today's English Version is a loose paraphrase that approaches the Bible translation task in a very careless manner. The translation methodology is called "dynamic equivalency," and though it might be "dynamic," it is neither equivalent nor accurate. The original goal of the TEV project as envisioned by Eugene Nida was to translate the Bible at the fourth grade reading level. It is impossible to make that Bible that easy to read without corrupting it, for the simple reason that the Spirit of God did not give a 4th grade level Book. For more about dynamic equivalency see *Faith vs. the Modern Bible Versions*, Part VIII, "We Hold to the KJV Because We Reject Dynamic Equivalency." Also see our report on that subject at the Way of Life web site (look in the Bible Version section of the Apostasy Database, <http://www.wayoflife.org/fbns/dyn-equiv-influence-error.html>). We have already seen evidence of the looseness of the translation in the examples previously given. The changes made to the text by the TEV are reprehensible. There is no excuse for changing the Word of God in this manner and robbing people of God's very words. Consider another example:

#### Proverbs 30:5-6

KJV "Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar."

TEV "God keeps every promise he makes. He is like a shield for all who seek his protection. If you claim that he said something that he never said, he will reprimand you and show that you are a liar."

Comment: The TEV changes "word" to "promise"; "pure" to "keeps"; "is a shield" to "is like a shield"; "put their trust" to "seek his protection"; "add thou not unto his words" to "claim that he said something that he never said"; etc. The proponents of dynamic equivalency tell us that their method results in a translation that is even more accurate than a literal or "formal equivalency" version. I don't buy it!

### **WHAT ABOUT THE LIVING BIBLE?**

1. The Living Bible was authored by Kenneth Taylor (1917-2005).
  - a. Taylor first produced the Living Bible in the form of portions of the New Testament called *The Living Letters*. In 1962, Taylor printed 2,000 copies of his paraphrase of Paul's epistles and attempted to sell them on his own, but he got nowhere. It was not until Billy Graham

took an interest in Taylor's paraphrase that the Living Bible caught on like wildfire. Someone sent a copy of *The Living Letters* to Graham as he was recuperating from an operation in Hawaii, and he was so impressed by it that he printed 50,000 copies to use on his telecasts (*Time* magazine, July 24, 1972). There was an avalanche of orders and the Graham organization alone distributed more than a million copies of *The Living Letters*. Graham has continued his love affair with the Living Bible. In 1987, Graham appeared in television ads for *The Book*, a condensed version of the Living Bible. He said it "reads like a novel," and in fact it is much more a novel than a real Bible.

- b. The Living Bible has become one of the most popular versions. More than 36 million copies had been sold by 1990.
- c. In 1985 it was published under the title of "The Book," backed by a \$10 million advertising campaign. This was the single largest promotion in the history of book publishing, at least to that date.
- d. The sale of English editions of the Living Bible funded the production of Living Bibles in major languages throughout the world. In 1968 Kenneth Taylor formed Living Bibles International, and by 1987 the Living Bible was being translated into 100 languages.
- e. The Living Bible has become even more acceptable with the publication of THE NEW LIVING TRANSLATION in 1996. Though the New Living Translation is a new translation by a team of scholars and though it is perhaps less paraphrastic than the original Living Bible, it still bears the Living Bible name and none of those who participated in the New Living Bible project have renounced the original Living Bible. The New Living Bible is a "thought for thought" translation, which upon its very face is a blatant denial of verbal inspiration. Further, the New Living Translation was a radically ecumenical project that brought together Roman Catholics (Douglas Gropp of the Catholic University of America), liberal New Evangelicals (such as David Hubbard of Fuller Theological Seminary who denied the verbal inspiration of Scripture and Hugh Williamson of Oxford University and Robert Sloan of Baylor University where evolution has been taught for more than 75 years), Reformed, Pentecostal (Assemblies of God and Oral Roberts University), Mennonite, Nazarene, Conservative Baptists, Southern Baptists, and others.

2. The Living Bible has been recommended by dozens of influential Christian leaders, such as the following:

Billy Graham: "I read The Living Bible because in this book I have read the age-abiding truths of the scriptures with renewed interest and inspiration. The Living Bible communicates the message of Christ to our generation" (*Charisma*, March 1991, p. 98).

Paul B. Smith, The Peoples Church, Toronto: "The Living Bible is the best paraphrase of the

Scriptures that I have ever read. I use it regularly in my own study of the Word of God and a very large percentage of the people in The People's Church use it" (Smith, cited by William Kerr, *The Living Bible--Not Just Another Version*).

Harold Lindsell, former editor of *Christianity Today*: "The Living Bible has already demonstrated its usefulness in the English-speaking world. The goal of producing Living Bibles in another hundred of the major languages of the world is a worthy objective and a tremendous challenge" (Lindsell, cited by Perry Rockwood, *God's Inspired Preserved Bible*, Halifax: The Peoples Gospel Hour).

Harold J. Ockenga: "The Living Bible has proved that modern man will read the Bible in a translation which he can understand. I rejoice to see the Living Bible is being printed in other languages. This will lead countless people to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ" (Ockenga, cited in *God's Inspired Preserved Bible*).

Bill Bright, Campus Crusade For Christ: "I would encourage Christians everywhere to support the printing and distribution of the Living Bible in every major language. It is truly the language of the people. The masses read it gladly and with great profit" (*Charisma*, May 1991).

F.F. Bruce: "The strength of The Living Bible lies particularly in its ability to communicate to young people. Of course, I know that it is by no means children and young people only that appreciate the (Living Bible), but they are a class for which I have a special concern and I am glad that you have met their needs so effectively" (*Charisma*, May 1991).

Vernon Grounds, President, Conservative Baptist Seminary: "Your translation (The Living Bible) helps people grasp the truth and perceive its relevance to their problems" (*Charisma*, May 1991).

Robert Schuller: "I truly believe The Living Bible is one of the instruments our God is using to bring His Word into the hearts and lives of the people of this generation" (Schuller, cited by William Kerr, *The Living Bible--Not Just Another Version*).

Youth For Christ: "*Reach Out* is an illustrated edition of The Living New Testament as developed by the editors of *Campus Life* magazine, Youth for Christ International" (cited by M.L. Moser, Jr., *The Case Against the Living Bible*, Little Rock: Challenge Press, p. 16).

World Home Bible League: The World Home Bible League has worked closely with Living Bibles International to distribute millions of copies of the Living Bible in English and other languages. For example, in 1987 World Home Bible League committed itself to publishing 25 million copies of the Living Bible New Testament to schools in Brazil, as well as more than half a million copies of the Living Bible N.T. in the Philippine language of Tagalog (LBINFO, May 1987).

Rochunga Pudaite, Bibles For The World: "The World Home Bible League is also working with the Living Bibles International to help sponsor the Living Bibles distributed by Rochunga Pudaite and his Bibles for the World" (Ruth A. Tucker, *From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya*, 1983, pp. 442-444).

John Beekman, Wycliffe Bible Translators: "The Living Bible is the most readable and the most natural English translation available. The fast-growing ministry of Living Bibles

International is worthy of the prayer support of all of us” (*The Living Bible--Not Just Another Translation*).

Ralph Winter, Fuller Theological Seminary: “A paraphrase is capable of far greater accuracy than a translation forced to be literal. Take the Living Bible for example, instead of quarrelling about this or that verse, let’s admit the method of translation is superior” (*The Living Bible--Not Just Another Version*).

Thomas Zimmerman, Retired General Superintendent of the Assemblies of God: “Living Bibles International performs a vital service to God’s kingdom by providing His Word in easy-to-understand language” (Living Bibles International brochure enclosed with advertising letter of Jan. 30, 1987).

John Jess, Chapel of the Air: “In a recently published booklet, he [John Jess] defends the Today’s English Version (*Good News for Modern Man*) and goes all out to promote the Living Bible” (*FEA News & Views*, Sept.-Oct. 1976).

Pat Robertson, 700 Club and Christian Broadcasting Network: “Through the cooperation of the Japanese branch of Living Bibles International, CBN was able to produce a beautiful series of animated Bible stories that are seen on television each week by 8 million Japanese people. We are profoundly grateful to Ken Taylor and his dedicated staff for their selfless work in world missions” (Living Bibles International brochure enclosed with advertising letter of Jan. 30, 1987).

Charles Swindoll, President of Dallas Theological Seminary: “The Living Bible is like a stream of sparkling water wandering across life’s arid landscape: intriguing, refreshing, nourishing, comforting. My thirsty soul is often satisfied by this invigorating wellspring” (*Charisma*, Dec. 1990, p. 5).

Luis Palau: “Throughout the world, there is a need for clear and understandable Scriptures. That is why I am sold on the work of Living Bibles International and the kind of Scriptures they are producing. ... The beauty of the Spanish and Portuguese Living Translations, produced by Living Bibles International, is that they are not only good translations, trustworthy in content, but also serve as mini-Bible commentaries” (Luis Palau, speech given in 1987 in Kenya at the 3rd Living Bibles International Council, *Front Line*, Living Bibles International, Vol. 3, No. 1, 1988, pp. 1, 8).

Joni Eareckson Tada: “The Living Bible is like enjoying a casual, upclose and personal letter from a friend. I use it often when I just want to lay back and relax in God’s Word” (*Charisma*, Nov. 1990).

Jerry Falwell: “The Living Bible has ministered to me personally every morning for many years. There is no way I can measure the spiritual contribution The Living Bible has made to my ministry” (*Charisma*, Dec. 1990, p. 5).

### 3. Billy Graham’s role in popularizing the Living Bible

- a. The Living Bible was first published as individual portions of the New Testament that Kenneth Taylor called *The Living Letters*. In 1962 Taylor printed 2,000 copies of his paraphrase of Paul’s epistles and attempted to sell them on his own, but he got nowhere. He

even rented a booth at a National Religious Broadcasters annual conference, but he sold only a few hundred copies.

- b. It was not until Billy Graham took a sudden interest in Taylor's paraphrase that The Living Bible caught on like wildfire. Someone sent a copy of The Living Letters to Graham as he was recuperating from an operation in Hawaii, and he was so impressed by them that he printed 50,000 copies to use on his telecasts. That was the beginning of an avalanche of orders. "The Living Bible might be called 'The Billy Graham Bible,' for it was he who made it the success that it is. According to *Time* magazine, July 24, 1972, Billy Graham ordered 50,000 copies of the Epistles, and a short time later ordered some 450,000 more, and still later ordered 600,000 special paperback versions for his autumn television crusade in 1972. From that time on, orders began to pour in" (M.L. Moser, Jr., *The Case Against the Living Bible*, p. 9).
- c. At Amsterdam '86, Graham invited Living Bibles International to distribute free copies of the Living Bible in 40 different languages to the 8,000 evangelists in attendance (*Light of Life*, India, Sept. 1986, p. 23). On the cover were stamped the words, "Amsterdam '86 - Living Bible Edition - The Holy Bible." The introduction to the Living Bibles distributed in Amsterdam was written by Graham, and he called the frightfully inaccurate paraphrase "this edition of the Scriptures."
- d. Graham distributed 10,000 copies of the Living Bible to those attending his Mission England Crusade (*Australian Beacon*, No. 241, Aug. 1986).
- e. In 1987, Graham appeared in television ads for *The Book*, a condensed version of the Living Bible. He said it "reads like a novel." He is right. It reads like a novel because it is not the eternal Word of God.

#### 4. A denial of verbal inspiration

- a. Taylor described his incredibly shallow method of translation as follows: "In an interview with Mr. J.L. Fear published in *Evangelism Today* in December 1972 the translator, Mr. K.N. Taylor, introduces his work as 'a paraphrase--a thought for thought translation,' in which 'we take the original thought and convert it into the language of today.' In this way, he said, 'we can be much more accurate than the verbal translation ... Once you get the real meaning of the Scriptures, they are life-transforming ... I felt such a thrill at my own privilege of stripping away some of the verbiage ... being a co-worker with God in that respect ... I flipped open my Bible and began to experiment with this new method of translation'" (*The Living Bible*, Trinitarian Bible Society, p. 1).
- b. Therefore, Taylor, practically speaking, did not believe in the verbal inspiration of Scripture, since he calls the details of Scripture "verbiage" that he feels at liberty to strip away. Where is his fear of God, his trembling at God's words (Isa. 66:5; Rev. 22:18-19)?

5. Taylor was a radical ecumenist who aggressively promoted his translation to Roman Catholics, Mormons, you name it. In fact, the Living Bible is one of the glues of the ecumenical movement.

- a. “Yes, a number of Catholic schools are using the REACH OUT edition of the New Testament in their religious courses. But we feel that most of the Roman Catholic market is unaware of The Living Bible, so this will be one of our main efforts this year, to make them aware of it. One of our men just got back from a West Coast conference with more than 10,000 priests and nuns in attendance. We had a booth and many were interested. The Mormons are also beginning to pick it up. In fact, I don’t think there are major denominations or groups that are opposing it” (Taylor, cited in *Eternity*, April 1973).
- b. “The Nepali LNT [Living New Testament was released by] the Living Bibles of India on the evening of 5th July 1984 at the Church of North India Local Church, St. Columba, Darjeeling. ... Besides the CNI and the Roman Catholic Church leaders, representatives from every denomination from the Nepali Christian world had gathered for this solemn occasion” (Reported by the S.K. Moral, Coordinator, Nepali department, Living Bibles International).
- c. “The Gujerati Living New Testament, released in January of 1985, marks the tenth major Indian language to have its own translation of the Living Bible. ... The release ceremony was attended by leaders of the Church of North India (a very liberal Anglican and Presbyterian merger), Catholic, Baptist and Pentecostal churches” (*EP News Service*, March 22, 1985, p. 10).
- d. “Most significant is the introduction--by a Roman Catholic priest--to *The Way*, the Roman Catholic edition of The Living Bible. Concerning The Living Bible, which he heartily recommends, the priest states: “This present volume departs radically from (the) history of Scriptural translations ... Perhaps more than other translations, this translation cannot be used as a basis for doctrinal or traditional disputes. More than other English versions of the Bible, this one freely departs from a literal translation from the original languages. ... We caution those who wish to engage in theological disputes not to use this volume” (David Engelsma, *Modern Bible Versions*, South Holland Protestant Reformed Church, p. 13). Thus, Catholic priests recognize that the looseness of the Living Bible discourages doctrinal strictness and encourages the ecumenical movement.
- e. “In response to questions about production and distribution of the new Bibles, Dr. [Victor] Oliver of Living Bibles International used the Italian version of the Living Bible as an example, boasting that it was printed on the Vatican Press and distributed in Italy by a Catholic lay group” (*The Flaming Torch*, May-June, 1983, p. 11).

6. Following are some examples of the frightful way Kenneth Taylor handled the words of God, and each man and organization that has recommended the Living Bible is a partaker in this evil.

1 Kings 18:27

KJV "Cry aloud: for He is a god: either he is talking, or he is pursuing."

TLB "Perhaps he is talking to someone or else is out sitting on the toilet."

Job 3:26

KJV "I was not in safety, neither had I rest, neither was I quiet: yet trouble came."

TLB "I was not fat and lazy yet trouble struck me down."

Psalms 34:20

KJV "He keepeth all His bones: not one of them is broken."

TLB "God even protects him from accidents."

Comment: This Messianic prophecy is destroyed through the Living Bible's amazing perversion. The fact that not one of Christ's bones were broken was a fulfillment both of direct prophecy (Ps. 34:20; Jn. 19:36) as well as of the typology of the Passover Lamb (Ex. 12:46).

Zechariah 13:6

KJV "And one shall say unto him, what are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends."

TLB "And if someone asks then, what are these scars on your chest and your back, you will say, I got into a brawl at the home of a friend."

Comment: In a footnote Taylor says: "That this is not a passage referring to Christ, is clear from the context. This is a false prophet who is lying about the reason for his scars." This is simply amazing. Zechariah 13:6 is considered a Messianic prophecy by most conservative commentators, and the context DOES support this. Zechariah 12-14 is one extended Messianic prophecy. Taylor claimed to be an "evangelical" but the influence that modernistic Bible scholarship had upon him is apparent.

Luke 11:1b

KJV "one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray"

TLB "one of his disciples came to him as he finished and said, 'Lord, teach us a prayer to recite.'"

Comment: This spurious "translation" gives support for the sacramentalism of the Roman Catholic Church, Greek Orthodoxy, and others, with their prayer books, prayer candles, prayer beads, and repetitious invocations. Christ did not teach his disciples a rote prayer; he taught them to pray!

John 2:4

KJV "Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come."

TLB "I can't help you now, He said. It isn't yet my time for miracles."

Comment: This is Kenneth Taylor's interpretation and not a translation in any real sense--and it is a wrong interpretation at that! The Lord Jesus would not have said His time for

miracles was not yet come and then immediately perform one! He was speaking more of His Crucifixion and His time to reveal Himself to Israel as the Messiah. This verse shows the problem with paraphrasing. If the Bible is not translated accurately and carefully, it is impossible to get the correct Holy Spirit-led interpretation. Notice that Taylor adds and omits words at will.

John 3:36b

KJV “and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.”

TLB “those who don’t believe and obey him shall never see heaven, but the wrath of God remains upon them.”

Comment: By adding “and obey him” the Living Bible teaches a false gospel of works plus faith.

John 13:26

KJV “Jesus answered, he it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it.”

TLB “He told me it is the one I honor by giving the bread dipped in the sauce.”

Comment: Was the Lord Jesus honoring Judas here? Of course not.

1 Corinthians 1:15

KJV “Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name.”

TLB “For now no one can think that I have been trying to start something new, beginning a ‘Church of Paul’.”

Comment: The translator who uses “dynamic equivalency” is confusing his role as a translator with that of a commentator and teacher. The translator’s job is to translate the Scriptures literally and accurately, so that teachers and commentators can then do their job. The Living Bible is not even a good commentary.

2 Corinthians 5:21

KJV “For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin: that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.”

TLB “For God took the sinless Christ and poured into Him our sins. Then in exchange He poured God’s goodness into us.”

Comment: This is more Living Bible heresy. Our sins were not poured into Christ; they were accounted unto Him. At no time was Christ an actual sinner. This destroys the blessed and crucial doctrine of substitution, of justification by imputation. The sinner is not saved by God’s goodness being poured into him but by Christ’s righteousness being imputed to his account because of the atonement.

7. Consider some examples of the inaccuracy and insufficiency of the New Living Bible (NLT). The NLT claims to be a “thought-for-thought” translation that “seeks to be both exegetically accurate and idiomatically powerful.” The translators claim that the “thought-for-thought” method “has the potential to represent the intended meaning of the original text even more



accurately than a word-for-word translation.” They even boast that when they remove the Hebrew idioms -- such as changing “David slept with his fathers” to “Then David died” (1 Kings 2:10) -- they are actually translating the “real meaning.” Obviously they think that they have the right to change God’s Words and that God’s idioms have no importance in themselves. We reject this type of thinking and would never handle God’s Words like these men do.

Micah 5:2

KJV “But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.”

NLT “But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, are only a small village in Judah. Yet a ruler of Israel will come from you, one whose origins are from the distant past.”

Comment: First, we see the carelessness and insufficiency of the translation in the way it fails to translate much of the original Hebrew text -- omitting, for example, “among the thousands ... unto me.” The Hebrew word “eleph” is used in 391 verses and it ALWAYS means “thousands.” Further, this important Messianic prophecy has been mutilated doctrinally in such a manner that Christ is given an origin. An origin means a beginning. That is the ancient heresy of Arianism, which is held today by the Jehovah’s Witnesses and other cults. The Hebrew word translated “everlasting” in the KJV is “owlam,” which is the common Hebrew word for everlasting in the Old Testament. Of the 414 verses that contain “owlam,” only a handful has a sense of anything other than everlasting. Even more significantly, “owlam” is the Hebrew word that describes the eternity of God. See, for example, Ps. 66:7; 72:17; 93:2; 102:12. Knowing, therefore, that Micah 5:2 refers to the Son of God, it naturally calls forth the translation of everlasting or eternal or forever. Then there is the word “origin” in the NLT. This is from the Hebrew word “mowtsaah,” meaning to descend or proceed from, and it *could* mean origin *IF* it referred to someone other than the Messiah. Knowing, though, that it is a direct reference to Jesus Christ, it is heretical to translate it “origin.” (The New International Version commits this same grievous error in Micah 5:2.)

John 1:1

KJV “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

NLT “In the beginning the Word already existed. He was with God, and he was God.”

Comment: This is a gross corruption of a very important doctrinal passage. To change “in the beginning WAS the Word” to “in the beginning the Word already existed,” which is not a translation but an interpretation, leaves room for the ancient and still popular heresy that the Son of God had a beginning. The Son of God did not merely “already exist,” which implies that there was a time when he did not exist. He WAS, meaning plainly that there never was a time when he was not; meaning that He is a member of the eternal Godhead. Further the New Living translators leave out “the Word” two of the three times that

“Logos” appears in the Greek text (both in the Received Text and the Critical Text). On what authority do they make this omission? Their authority is their methodology of “thought for thought” translation that allows them to ignore the actual words of the text and give only the vague idea. It is a blatant denial of verbal inspiration, a doctrine that many of the translators of the NLT, such as David Hubbard of Fuller Seminary, Robert Sloan of Baylor University, and Hugh Williamson of Oxford University, do not hold even in theory.

Colossians 1:15

KJV “Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:”

NLT “Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before God made anything at all and is supreme over all creation.”

Comment: Here again the NLT gives the idea that Christ had a beginning, for instead of translating “firstborn of every creature,” which is exactly what the Greek says [*prototokos* (firstborn) *pas* (every) *ktisis* (creature)], the NLT creates the following out of thin air, “He existed before God made anything.” This would mean that there could have been a time when Christ the Son of God did not exist, which is what many heretics teach. When this corrupt translation is combined with that of Micah 5:2 and John 1:1, the attack upon the eternity of Christ by the New Living Bible is extensive.

Colossians 1:17

KJV “And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.”

NLT “He existed before everything else began, and he holds all creation together.”

Comment: This is another important proof text for the eternity of Jesus Christ, and it, too, is perverted in the NLT. To say that Christ is before all things is not to say that He merely existed before everything else began; it is to say, rather, that He is the eternal God.

8. In 1992 Living Bibles International merged with the International Bible Society, copyright holder for the New International Version. This also brought Living Bibles International into direct association with Wycliffe Bible Translators. The International Bible Society’s *Light Magazine* reported: “The 1992 merger with Living Bibles International brought together the NIV efforts, the Wycliffe/SIL partnership, and IBS and LBI projects worldwide. Partnership with Wycliffe Bible Translators/SIL has helped meet the needs for the world’s smaller language groups, and has resulted in the publication of 166 New Testaments and 1283 Scripture publications in 506 languages” (*Light Magazine*, special edition, 1997).

## WHAT ABOUT THE MESSAGE?

1. Eugene Peterson, translator of *The Message*, was for many years James M. Houston Professor of Spiritual Theology at Regent College. He also served for 35 years as founding pastor of Christ Our King Presbyterian Church in Bel Air, Maryland. Today he is retired and lives in Montana.

2. The New Testament portion of The Message was published in 1993 and the complete Bible in 2002. It is called a “translational-paraphrase” and is said to “unfold like a gripping novel.” We accept that it is novel, because it certainly is not the Word of God! It was translated by Eugene Peterson and reviewed by 21 “consultants” from the following schools: Denver Seminary (Robert Alden), Dallas Theological Seminary (Darrell Bock and Donald Glenn), Fuller Theological Seminary (Donald Hagner), Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Trinity Episcopal School, North Park Theological Seminary, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (Richard Averbeck). Columbia Bible College, Criswell College (Lamar Cooper), Westminster Theological Seminary (Peter Enns), Bethel Seminary (Duane Garrett), Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (Paul R. House), Covenant Theological Seminary, Westmont College, Wesley Biblical Seminary, Reformed Theological Seminary, Moody Bible Institute (John H. Walton), Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, and Gordon College (Marvin Wilson).

3. The Message is widely recommended by well-known Christian leaders. The following information was gathered from the NAVPress web site.

- a. In keeping with his love for every new translation and paraphrase to appear since the Revised Standard Version, Billy Graham printed his own edition of “The Message: New Testament.”
- b. Warren Wiersbe says, “The Message is the boldest and most provocative rendering of the New Testament I’ve ever read.”
- c. Jack Hayford says, “The Message is certainly destined to become a devotional classic -- not to mention a powerful pastoral tool.”
- d. Rick Warren loves The Message and quotes it frequently, five times in the first chapter of *The Purpose-Driven Life*.
- e. J.I. Packer says, “In this crowded world of Bible versions Eugene Peterson’s blend of accurate scholarship and vivid idiom make this rendering both distinctive and distinguished. The Message catches the logical flow, personal energy, and imaginative overtones of the original very well indeed.”
- f. CCM artist Michael Card says, “Peterson’s translation transforms the eye into an ear, opening the door of the New Testament wider than perhaps it has ever been opened.”
- g. Leighton Ford says, “The Message will help many to transfer God’s eternal truths to their contemporary lives.”
- j. Joni Earckson Tada says, “WOW! What a treasure The Message is. I am going to carry it with me. This is a treasure that I will want to use wherever I am.”

- i. The Message is also recommended by Amy Grant, Benny Hinn, Bill Hybels, Bill and Gloria Gaither, Chuck Swindoll, Toby of DC Talk, Gary Smalley, Gordon Fee, Gordon MacDonald, Jerry Jenkins, John Maxwell, Joyce Meyer, Kenneth Copeland, Max Lucado, Michael W. Smith, Newsboys, Phil Driscoll, Rebecca St. James, Rod Parsley, Stuart and Jill Briscoe, Tony Campolo, Bono of U2, and Vernon Grounds, to name a few.
4. The Message sold 100,000 copies in the first four months following its summer 1993 release.
  5. Peterson's doctrine of inspiration, in practice at least, is weak in the extreme.
    - a. The first evidence of this is the way he treats God's Words. You will see what I mean by that. It is impossible to be serious about the doctrine of verbal inspiration when you handle the words of Scripture the way Peterson does.
    - b. Further, in his introduction to the book of Revelation he describes the apostle John as "a poet, fond of metaphor and symbol, image and allusion..." This implies that John is the actual author of Revelation, which he was not. It is "the Revelation of Jesus Christ" (Rev. 1:1). John's role was merely to "bare record of the word of God" (Rev. 1:2).
  6. Peterson told *Christianity Today* that a major turning point in his ministry was a lecture by Paul Tournier sponsored by the liberal *Christian Century* magazine and held at John Hopkins Hospital in Chicago ("Books & Culture Corner: The Contemplative Christian," by Nathan Bierma, *Christianity Today* web site, Sept. 29, 2003). In his 1973 Masters Thesis, "Paul Tournier's Universalism," Daniel Musick warned: "Paul Tournier was an unrestricted universalist. His writings, personal correspondence with him, and interviews with many who knew him support this conclusion. An analysis of his soteriology over 35 years of writing reveals a transition from reformed roots to an unbiblical, neo-orthodox perspective influenced by Emil Brunner and Karl Barth."
  7. Peterson's immersion into mystic spirituality
    - a. Peterson is on the Board of Reference for the international ecumenical organization Renovare (pronounced Ren-o-var-ay, which is Latin, meaning "to make new spiritually"), founded by Richard Foster.
      - (1) At the October 1991 Renovare meeting in Pasadena, California, Foster praised Pope John Paul II and called for unity in the Body of Christ through the "five streams of Christianity: the contemplative, holiness, charismatic, social justice and evangelical" (*CIB Bulletin*, December 1991).
      - (2) Foster advocates the practices of Catholic mystics and "the integration of psychology and theology." In his book entitled *Prayer*, Foster draws material from

Julian of Norwich, Thomas Merton, Bernard of Clairvaux, Madame Guyon, Teresa of Avila, even St. Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits. Renovare promotes guided imagery, visualization, centering prayer, astral projection, Zen meditation, and Jungian psychology (*Calvary Contender*, Feb. 15, 1998).

b. Along the same line, notice the heroes of the faith that Peterson quotes in the article “Spirit Quest” (which is a Native American Indian term for seeking intimacy with and revelation from pagan spirits): “Single-minded, persevering faithfulness confirms the authenticity of our spirituality. The ancestors we look to for encouragement in this business -- Augustine of Hippo and Julian of Norwich, ... Teresa of Avila -- didn’t flit. They stayed” (*Christianity Today*, Nov. 8, 1993). Augustine, Julian, and Teresa had authentic spirituality? Not when tested by Scripture.

(1) Julian of Norwich said, “God showed me that sin need be no shame to man but can even be worthwhile” (quoted by Kenneth Leech, *Soul Friend*, p. 146). Julian also said, “God is really our Mother as he is our Father”; she called Christ “Mother Jesus.”

(2) Augustine was the father of a-millennialism; taught that the sacraments are the means of saving grace; was one of the fathers of infant baptism, claiming that baptism took away the child’s sin; taught that Mary did not commit sin and promoted prayers to her; believed in purgatory and the veneration of relics; accepted the doctrine of celibacy for “priests”; and laid the foundation for the inquisition; to name a few of his heresies.

(3) Teresa of Avila was probably demon possessed; she levitated and made strange noises deep in her throat, experienced terrifying visions and voices, and held to Rome’s sacramental gospel that works are required for salvation.

c. Peterson was Professor of Spiritual Theology at Regent College, and it is obvious that he has been deeply influenced by the Catholic and modernistic “spirituality” in which has immersed himself for so many decades. Regent College’s bookstore features many works by Catholic mystics, such as those already named, and by theological modernists. I have visited this bookstore many times, and there is no warning whatsoever in regard to these books.

d. The mystical “spirituality” that is so popular in evangelical and charismatic circles today is a yearning for an experiential relationship with God that downplays the role of faith and Scripture and that exalts “transcendental” experiences that lift the individual from the earthly mundane into a higher “spiritual” plane.

(1) Biblical prayer is simply talking with God; mystical spirituality prayer is meditation and “centering” and other such things.

(2) Biblical Christianity is a patient walk of faith; mystical spirituality is more a flight of fancy.

(3) Biblical study is analyzing and meditating upon the literal truth of the Scripture; mystical spirituality focuses on a “deeper meaning”; it is more allegorical and “transcendental” than literal.

e. Peterson defines spirituality as “a fusion of intimacy and transcendence” (“Spirit Quest,” *Christianity Today*, Nov. 8, 1993). This confuses the sensual intimacy of earthly relationships with the spiritual intimacy the believer has in this life with God.

8. It is not surprising that Peterson’s translation has a New Agey flavor to it. He even uses the term “as above, so below,” which is a New Age expression for the unity of God and man, Heaven and earth. In the book *As Above, So Below*, Ronald Miller and the editors of the *New Age Journal* say: “This maxim implies that the transcendent God beyond the physical universe and the immanent God within ourselves are one. Heaven and Earth, spirit and matter, the invisible and the visible worlds form a unity to which we are intimately linked” (quoted from Warren Smith, *Deceived on Purpose: The New Age Implications of the Purpose-Driven Church*, Ravenna, Ohio: Conscience Press, 2004). In light of this, consider the following quotations from Peterson’s *The Message*:

Matthew 6:9-13 -- “Our Father in heaven, Reveal who you are. Set the world right; Do what’s best -- AS ABOVE, SO BELOW. Keep us alive with three square meals. Keep us forgiven with you and forgiving others. Keep us safe from ourselves and the Devil. You’re in charge!”

Colossians 1:16 -- “For everything, absolutely everything, ABOVE AND BELOW, visible and invisible ... everything got started in him and finds its purpose in him.”

9. Consider some other examples of the amazing liberties that Eugene Peterson takes with the Words of God:

Matthew 5:3

KJV “Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

MESSAGE “You’re blessed when you’re at the end of your rope. With less of you there is more of God and his rule.”

*Comment:* Being poor in spirit means to be at the end of your rope? If that were true, vast numbers of unsaved people are candidates for heaven!

Matthew 5:8

KJV “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.”

MESSAGE “You’re blessed when you get your inside world, your mind and heart, put right.

Then you can see God in the outside world.”

*Comment:* This must be transcendental, because it doesn’t make any non-transcendental sense.

Matthew 5:14

KJV “Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.”

MESSAGE “Here’s another way to put it: You’re here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world.”

*Comment:* “God-colors”? I didn’t even know about God-colors when I was a member of Paramahansa Yogananda’s Self-Realization Fellowship Society before I was saved!

Matthew 5:43

KJV “Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.”

MESSAGE “Jesus said, You’re familiar with the old written law, ‘Love your friend,’ and its unwritten companion, ‘Hate your enemy.’”

*Comment:* The Lord Jesus was not quoting the Mosaic Law; He was referring to the teaching of the Pharisees who had perverted the Law. The Law of God did not command, “Hate your enemy.”

Matthew 9:34

KJV “But the Pharisees said, He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils.”

MESSAGE “The Pharisees were left sputtering, ‘Hocus Pocus. It’s nothing but Hocus Pocus.’”

*Comment:* This is clearly a “translational-paraphrase.”

Matt. 11:28-30

KJV “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

MESSAGE “Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you’ll recover your life. I’ll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me -- watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won’t lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you.”

*Comment:* The Message sounds like an iron tonic television commercial here!

Matthew 28:19

KJV “...baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:”

Matt. 28:19 -- “...baptism in the three-fold name: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.”

*Comment:* The Message gives an Anti-Trinitarian, Jesus-only spin to this verse, which claims that God is not three Persons in one Godhead but that He simply manifests Himself in three ways.

John 1:18

KJV “No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.”

MESSAGE “No one has ever seen God, not so much of a glimpse. This one-of-a-kind God-expression, who exists at the very heart of the Father, has made him plain as day.”

*Comment:* To translate “the only begotten Son” as “this one-of-a-kind God-expression” is not only heretical; it is absurd.

John 3:5

KJV “Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”

MESSAGE “Jesus said, You’re not listening. Let me say it again. Unless a person submits to this original creation--the ‘wind hovering over the water’ creation, the invisible moving the visible, a baptism into a new life--it’s not possible to enter God’s kingdom.”

*Comment:* Peterson’s “translation” gives the baptismal regenerationists the best support they have ever had. Roman Catholics who write to debate me would love this version.

John 10:30

KJV “I and my Father are one.”

MESSAGE “I and the Father are one heart and mind.”

*Comment:* To add to the words of Christ in this strange manner, it truly appears that Peterson has no fear of God.

Acts 8:20

KJV “But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee...”

MESSAGE “Peter said, ‘To hell with your money!’”

*Comment:* Since Peter cursed some the night he denied his Lord, I suppose Peterson believes he was still cussing in the book of Acts.

Romans 8:11

KJV “...he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.”

MESSAGE “... he’ll do the same thing in you that he did in Jesus, bringing you alive to himself.”

*Comment:* Peterson spiritualizes Christ’s resurrection here.

Romans 8:35

KJV “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?”

MESSAGE “Do you think anyone is going to be able to drive a wedge between us and Christ’s love for us? There is no way! Not trouble, not hard times, not hatred, not hunger, not homelessness, not bullying threats, not backstabbing, not even the worst sins listed in Scripture.”



*Comment:* Revelation 22:18-19 should cause Peterson (and everyone who approved The Message) to lose a lot of sleep.

#### Philippians 2:12

KJV “Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.”

MESSAGE “Be energetic in your life of salvation, reverent and sensitive before God. That energy is God’s energy, an energy deep within you, God himself willing and working at what will give him the most pleasure.”

*Comment:* This is another New Agey, heretical spin to the Scriptures.

#### Colossians 2:10

KJV “And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:”

MESSAGE “You don’t need a telescope, a microscope, or a horoscope to realize the fullness of Christ, and the emptiness of the universe without him...”

*Comment:* What? And this mess was reviewed by 21 scholars and approved by the likes of J.I. Packer?

#### 1 Peter 3:1

KJV “Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives.”

MESSAGE “The same goes for you wives: Be good wives to your husbands, responsive to their needs...”

*Comment:* Peterson has done away with wifely subjection. Do we have the “feminist version” here?

### **WHAT ABOUT THE HOLMAN CHRISTIAN STANDARD BIBLE?**

The Holman Christian Standard Bible (CSB), which was published in April 2004, has soared to No. 5 in the General Versions & Translations category in Christian retail stores in the USA and Canada. (#1 New King James, #2 New International, #3 King James, #4 New Living) Roughly 1.5 million copies have been printed of the entire Bible.

It is published by Broadman & Holman, a division of LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention. The CSB was produced by a team of “100 scholars and English stylists representing more than 20 different denominations.”

Though it is a more literal version than the New International and therefore is more to be recommended in that regard, the CSB is based upon the Alexandrian Greek Text so it can never be purer than its polluted Egyptian exemplar. The Alexandrian Text is so-named because it is derived from a tiny minority of manuscripts (e.g., Sinaiticus, Vaticanus, and a few others of similar character) dating to the early post-apostolic centuries and originating in the region of Alexandria, Egypt. This was a hotbed of theological heresy, which teaches us the “oldest” is not

necessarily “best” in the field of New Testament manuscripts. After examining a number of heretical readings in the early Egyptian manuscripts favored by modern textual critics, Edward F. Hills, who had a doctorate in textual criticism from Harvard and began writing in defense of the King James Bible in the 1950s, concluded: “Thus we see that it is unwise in present-day translators to base the texts of their modern versions on recent papyrus discoveries or on *B* and *Aleph*. For all these documents come from Egypt, and Egypt during the early Christian centuries was a land in which heresies were rampant. So much was this so that, as Bauer (1934) and van Unnik (1958) have pointed out, later Egyptian Christians seem to have been ashamed of the heretical past of their country and to have drawn a veil of silence across it. This seems to be why so little is known of the history of early Egyptian Christianity. In view, therefore, of the heretical character of the early Egyptian Church, it is not surprising that the papyri, *B*, *Aleph*, and other manuscripts which hail from Egypt are liberally sprinkled with heretical readings” (Edward Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, p. 134).

The Egyptian manuscripts given such strange preference by modern textual critics, such as the Vaticanus and the Sinaiticus, bear evidence of being corrupt above all other Greek manuscripts. Consider this important testimony by John William Burgon, one of the greatest textual scholars of the last 200 years, who dedicated much of his life to the study of Greek manuscripts and who personally analyzed the Vaticanus in Rome: “When we study the New Testament by the light of such Codexes as B Aleph D L, we find ourselves in an entirely new region of experience; confronted by phenomena not only unique but even portentous. The text has undergone apparently AN HABITUAL, IF NOT SYSTEMATIC, DEPRAVATION; has been manipulated throughout in a wild way. Influences have been demonstrably at work which altogether perplex the judgment. The result is simply calamitous. There are evidences of persistent mutilation, not only of words and clauses, but of entire sentences. The substitution of one expression for another, and the arbitrary transposition of words, are phenomena of such perpetual occurrence, that it becomes evident at last that which lies before us is not so much an ancient copy, as an ancient recension of the Sacred Text. And yet not by any means a recension in the usual sense of the word as an authoritative revision; but only as the name may be applied to the product of individual inaccuracy or caprice, or tasteless assiduity on the part of one or many, at a particular time or in a long series of years. There are reasons for inferring, that we have alighted on five specimens of what the misguided piety of a primitive age is known to have been fruitful in producing. ... THESE CODEXES ABOUND WITH SO MUCH LICENTIOUSNESS OR CARELESSNESS AS TO SUGGEST THE INFERENCE, THAT THEY ARE IN FACT INDEBTED FOR THEIR PRESERVATION TO THEIR HOPELESS CHARACTER. Thus it would appear that an evil reputation ensured their neglect in ancient times; and has procured that they should survive to our own, long after multitudes which were much better had perished in the Master’s service” (John Burgon and Edward Miller, *The Traditional Text of the Holy Gospels Vindicated*, 1896, pp. 32, 33).

It is admitted by all sides of this debate that the Alexandrian text was rejected wholesale by the churches from the 5th to the 19th centuries and was only “recovered” by modern textual critics in these last days. Most influential textual critics of the past 200 years have been skeptics and the fact that their theories fly in the face of divine preservation is none of their concern. The few

evangelicals who have been authorities in this field have tried to shoehorn the theories of modern textual criticism into their biblical faith, but the result is confusion. If the purest apostolic text was “buried in the sands of Egypt,” so to speak, for 1500 years of church history, including the entire Protestant Reformation era and the great missionary era of the 16th to the 19th centuries, what does that tell us about biblical preservation? Scholarly fundamentalists who have adopted modern textual criticism try to solve this problem by saying that the Bible does not teach an explicit doctrine of preservation, that preservation is only hinted at in an implicit manner, and that since God has not told us (they allege) how He would preserve the Scriptures it is possible that He did it by burying them in Egypt. I am thankful that I have the Spirit of God as my Teacher (1 Jn. 2:27) and the Word of God as my sole authority (Acts 17:11) and that I don’t have to buy such a ridiculous theory!

In a few instances the CSB uses brackets to question verses that are omitting outright in the United Bible Societies critical Greek New Testament. For example, it brackets Matthew 17:21 and Acts 8:37 instead of omitting them entirely. Lest we think that the CSB is more textually conservative than the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament, the Introduction to the CSB explains the significance of the brackets: “In a few places in the N.T., large square brackets indicate texts that the HCSB translation team and most biblical scholars today believe WERE NOT PART OF THE ORIGINAL TEXT.” Why did they not remove the verses entirely, then? They tell us that they left them in with brackets because of their “value for tradition.” The verses are not inspired Scripture (according to the translators of the CSB) and yet they are left in the Bible because of tradition? What kind of nonsense is this?

**1. THE HOLMAN CHRISTIAN STANDARD BIBLE HAS AN ABBREVIATED NEW TESTAMENT.** The Introduction to the CSB says it is based on the 27th edition of the Nestle-Aland Greek New Testament (which is the same as the 4th edition of the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament). Jack Moorman also did a firsthand study of the differences between the Nestle-Aland Greek text and the Received Greek text underlying the Reformation Bibles. He published this in “Missing in Modern Bibles: Is the full Story Being Told” (Bible for Today, 1981), concluding that the Nestle-Aland is shorter than the Received Text by 2,886 words (934 MORE words than were omitted in the Westcott-Hort of 1881). This is equivalent to dropping the entire books of 1 Peter and 2 Peter out of the New Testament.

**2. THE HOLMAN CHRISTIAN STANDARD BIBLE OMITTS OR QUESTIONS ROUGHLY 45 ENTIRE VERSES AND 147 MAJOR PORTIONS OF VERSES THAT WERE INTACT IN THE REFORMATION BIBLES.**

Consider some examples:

Matthew

---- 5:22 -- “without a cause” omitted

---- 5:44 -- “... bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and ... which despitefully use you, and” omitted

---- 6:13 -- “For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen” bracketed  
---- 9:13 -- “to repentance” omitted  
---- 12:47 -- “Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee” omitted  
---- 18:11 -- “For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost” bracketed  
---- 19:9 -- “and whoso marieth her which is put away doth commit adultery” omitted  
---- 23:14 -- “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation” bracketed  
---- 25:13 -- “wherein the Son of Man cometh” omitted

#### Mark

---- 1:2 -- “the prophets” is changed to “Isaiah the prophet,” thus creating an error because the quotation is from both Malachi 3:1 and Isaiah 40:3-5  
---- 2:17 -- “to repentance” omitted  
---- 6:11 -- “Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city” omitted  
---- 9:44 “Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched” bracketed  
---- 9:45 -- “into the fire that never shall be quenched” omitted  
---- 9:46 “Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched” bracketed  
---- 10:21 -- “take up the cross” omitted  
---- 11:10 -- “in the name of the Lord” omitted  
---- 11:26 -- “But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses” bracketed  
---- 13:14 -- “spoken by Daniel the prophet” omitted  
---- 15:28 -- “And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors.” bracketed  
---- 16:9-20 -- entire last 12 verses of Mark’s Gospel bracketed

#### Luke

---- 1:28 -- “blessed art thou among women” omitted  
---- 2:14 -- “peace, good will toward men” is changed to “peace among men in whom he is well pleased”  
---- 4:4 -- “every word of God” omitted  
---- 4:8 -- “and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan” omitted  
---- 4:18 -- “to heal the brokenhearted” omitted  
---- 9:55, 56 -- “and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them” omitted  
---- 11:2 -- “Our ... which art in heaven” omitted  
---- 11:2 -- “Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth” omitted  
---- 11:4 -- “deliver us from evil” omitted  
---- 11:11 -- “bread of any of you ... will he give him a stone? or if he ask” omitted  
---- 22:43-44 -- “And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. And being in agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground” bracketed

- 23:17 -- "(For of necessity he must release one unto them at the feast.)" verse bracketed
- 23:34 -- "Then said Jesus, Father forgive them, for they know not what they do" bracketed
- 24:12 -- "laid by themselves" omitted

#### John

- 3:15 -- "should not perish, but" omitted
- 4:42 -- "the Christ" omitted
- 5:3-4 -- "waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had" bracketed
- 5:16 -- "and sought to slay him" omitted
- 6:47 -- "on me" omitted
- 7:8 -- "yet" questioned with a footnote, thus causing Jesus to tell a lie
- 7:53 - 8:11 -- These 12 verses bracketed
- 8:59 -- "going through the midst of them" omitted
- 16:16 -- "because I go to the Father" omitted

#### Acts

- 2:30 -- "according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ" omitted
- 8:37 -- entire verse bracketed
- 24:6-8 -- "...and would have judged according to our law. But the chief captain Lysias came upon us, and with great violence took him away out of our hands, Commanding his accusers to come unto thee..." bracketed
- 24:15 -- "of the dead" omitted
- 28:29 -- "And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves." verse bracketed

#### Romans

- 1:16 -- "of Christ" omitted
- 1:29 -- "fornication" omitted
- 8:1 -- "who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" omitted
- 9:28 -- "in righteousness: because a short work" omitted
- 9:32 -- "of the law" omitted
- 10:15 -- "preach the gospel of peace" omitted
- 11:6 -- "But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work" omitted
- 13:9 -- "Thou shalt not bear false witness" omitted
- 14:6 -- "and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it" omitted
- 14:21 -- "or is offended, or is made weak" omitted

#### 1 Corinthians

- 5:7 -- "for us" omitted
- 6:20 -- "and in your spirit, which are God's" omitted
- 7:39 -- "by the law" omitted
- 10:28 -- "for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof" omitted
- 11:24 -- "Take, eat ... broken" omitted
- 11:29 -- "unworthily" omitted

---- 11:29 -- “the Lord” omitted

Ephesians

---- 5:30 -- “of his flesh, and of his bones” omitted

Philippians

---- 3:16 -- “by the same rule, let us mind the same thing” omitted

Colossians

---- 1:14 -- “through his blood” omitted

Hebrews

---- 1:3 -- “by himself” omitted

---- 2:7 -- “and didst set him over the works of thy hands” omitted

---- 3:1 -- “Christ” omitted

---- 3:6 -- “firm unto the end” omitted

---- 7:21 -- “after the order of Melchisedec” omitted

---- 8:12 -- “and their iniquities” omitted

---- 10:9 -- “O God” omitted

---- 10:30 -- “saith the Lord” omitted

---- 10:34 -- “in heaven” omitted

James

---- 5:16 -- “faults” changed to “sins”

1 Peter

---- 1:22 -- “through the Spirit” omitted

---- 4:1 -- “for us” omitted

---- 4:3 -- “of our life” omitted

---- 4:14 -- “on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified” omitted

2 Peter

---- 2:17 -- “for ever” omitted

---- 3:10 -- “in the night” omitted

Jude

---- 1:4 -- “Lord God” changed to “Master and Lord”

---- 1:25 -- “wise” omitted

**3. THERE ARE NUMEROUS PLACES WHERE THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST’S DEITY IS WEAKENED IN THE HOLMAN CHRISTIAN STANDARD BIBLE BECAUSE IT IS BASED UPON THE CORRUPT EGYPTIAN TEXT.**

The following are examples:

Mark 9:24 -- the father’s testimony that Jesus is “Lord” omitted

Mark 16:9-20 -- this glorious passage is bracketed, signifying that it is not considered apostolic Scripture. This ends the Gospel of Jesus Christ according to Mark with no resurrection and ascension and with the disciples fearful and confused.

Luke 23:42 -- the thief's testimony that Jesus is "Lord" omitted

John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18 -- "only begotten Son" changed to "one and only"

John 1:27 -- "is preferred before me" omitted

John 3:13 -- "which is in heaven" omitted, thus removing this powerful witness to Christ's omnipresence

John 6:69 -- "thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God" is changed to "you are the Holy One of God," thus destroying this powerful witness that Jesus is the very Christ, the Son of God, a doctrine that was under fierce assault in the early centuries.

John 8:59 -- "but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by" is replaced with "But Jesus was hidden and went out of the temple complex," thus destroying the miracle of this scene. Whereas the Received Text and the King James Bible teaches here that Jesus supernaturally went out right through the midst of the angry crowd that was trying to kill Him, the modern versions have Jesus merely hiding Himself.

Acts 8:37 -- the eunuch's glorious testimony that Jesus Christ is the Son of God is bracketed, signifying that it is not apostolic Scripture

Romans 14:10 -- "Christ" changed to "God"; the "judgment seat of Christ" identifies Jesus Christ directly with Jehovah God (Isaiah 45:23), whereas the "judgment seat of God" does not

1 Cor. 15:47 -- "the Lord" omitted

Eph. 3:9 -- "by Jesus Christ" omitted

1 Tim. 3:16 -- "God" omitted, thus removing one of clearest references to Jesus Christ as God in the New Testament

1 John 5:7 -- the glorious Trinitarian confession is omitted, even though it has more manuscript and versional evidence than most of the Alexandrian readings preferred by modern textual critics

**4. NOT ONLY DO THE MODERN VERSIONS SUCH AS THE HOLMAN CHRISTIAN STANDARD BIBLE WEAKEN IMPORTANT DOCTRINES, THEY ALSO CONTAIN GROSS ERROR, THUS UNDERMINING THE BIBLE'S AUTHORITY.**

Psalm 12:6 says, "*The words of the Lord are PURE words,*" but the new versions are not pure. Consider the following examples of the errors in modern versions:

### Matthew 5:22

KJV: “But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.”

CSB: “But I tell you, everyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. And whoever says to his brother, ‘Fool!’ will be subject to the Sanhedrin. But whoever says, ‘You moron!’ will be subject to hellfire.”

The omission of “without a cause” creates a serious error, because the Lord Jesus Himself was angry at times. Mark 3:5 says, “And when he had looked round about on them WITH ANGER...” To be angry is not necessarily a sin, but to be angry “without a cause” is. The modern version omission in this verse makes Jesus Christ subject to judgment.

### Matthew 27:34

KJV: “They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink.”

CSB: “they gave Him wine to drink. But when He tasted it, He would not drink it.”

To replace the word “vinegar” with “wine” creates a contradiction with the prophecy in Ps. 69:21, which says Christ was given vinegar to drink. The Greek word translated “vinegar” in the KJV is “oxos,” which appears six times in the New Testament, always in the context of Christ’s crucifixion, and always translated *vinegar*. The Greek word for wine is a different word, “oinos.” In this case, the critical Greek text, following some corrupt Alexandrian manuscripts, replaces *oxos* with *oinos*.

### Mark 1:2-3

KJV: “As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.”

CSB: “As it is written in Isaiah the prophet...”

The KJV says Mark is quoting the “prophets” plural, but the modern versions say he is quoting “Isaiah the prophet.” This creates an error, because it is plain that Mark was not quoting Isaiah only but was quoting Malachi 1:3 as well as Isaiah 40:3.

## 5. THE DOCTRINE OF FASTING AS AN ESSENTIAL ELEMENT OF SPIRITUAL WARFARE COMES UNDER ATTACK IN THE HOLMAN CHRISTIAN STANDARD BIBLE.

The word fasting is not removed entirely from the modern versions but its significance as an element of spiritual warfare is weakened or removed entirely.



Matthew 17:21 - entire verse bracketed, signifying it is not apostolic Scripture

Mark 9:29 - "and fasting" bracketed, signifying it is not apostolic Scripture

Acts 10:30 - "fasting" omitted

1 Cor. 7:5 - "fasting" omitted

2 Cor. 6:5 - "fasting" changed to "hunger" (even though it is the Greek word "nesteia," which always means fasting and not the Greek word "limos," which means hunger or lack)

2 Cor. 11:27 - "fasting" changed to "hunger" (even though it is the Greek word "nesteia," which means fasting and not the Greek word "limos," which means hunger or lack)

### CONCLUSION

There is a serious doctrinal issue pertaining to Bible texts and versions, and we must be careful not to accept commonly held myths, first that the differences between the texts and versions are not large nor significant, second that the differences do not affect doctrine.

While we can thank the Lord that sound doctrine in general can be taught from Bible texts and versions in general, this does not mean that one version is as theologically sound as another. We must remember the principal of the sword. The Bible is likened to a sword (Heb. 4:12). This Sword is a part of our spiritual weaponry against the devil (Eph. 6:17). To be effective, a sword must be sharp. While Bible texts or translations in general, even Roman Catholic ones, contain the doctrine of the Christian faith in a broad sense, this does not mean that any one text or version is as effective and sharp as another. Who would think highly of a soldier who does not care if his sword is sharp so long as he has a sword? To say that a text that omits more than 200 verses and significant portions of verses and thousands of words in other places just in the New Testament alone is as effective as one that has all of these words is ridiculous. I am convinced that the Hebrew Masoretic and the Greek Received Text is the very sharpest Sword.

This is not a light matter. A battle is raging. There are spiritual enemies in high places. Truth is being cast to the ground. It is difficult enough to win the battle when we have the sharpest sword and the most complete armor. Woe unto that Christian whose sword is dull! And yet, I contend that we have come upon an entire generation of Christians who are slashing away at their spiritual enemies with dull swords, and if a bystander tries to warn them of the folly of this, they rail upon him as divisive and mean-spirited!

