



Why We
Hold to
the King,
James Bible

David Cloud

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ADVERTISEMENT FOR ADVANCED BIBLE STUDIES COURSE ON “THE BIBLE VERSION ISSUE”

The information in this book (*Why We Hold to the King James Bible*) is also contained in a course designed for use in forums such as Bible Colleges, Sunday Schools, and Home Schooling. The course is one of the *Way of Life Advanced Bible Studies Series* and is entitled “The Bible Version Issue.” The material is laid out in outline form to simplify teaching.

The Bible Version Issue course includes review questions after each section for the students, plus there is a separate book for teachers containing sectional and final tests with the answers. The review questions and tests are carefully designed to draw the student’s attention to the most important points and to help him remember these points long after the course is finished. The sectional review questions go over all of the important points in the section, while the sectional tests draw from the most important of the review questions and the final test draws from the most important points of the sectional tests.

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INTRODUCTION

There are many reasons why the Bible version issue must be faced.

1. The Bible version issue must be faced *BECAUSE IT IS FOUNDATIONAL* (Ps. 138:2). The Bible is the sole authority for faith and practice. Nothing is more important than the issue of *to what degree* we can have confidence in the Bible that has come down to us through the centuries. Many are saying that this is a side issue, a non-essential, but nothing could be farther from the truth.

2. The Bible version issue must be faced *BECAUSE THERE ARE THREE COMPETING GREEK NEW TESTAMENTS TODAY*.

There is the Received Text underlying the King James Bible and other Reformation versions. The Received Text is published today by the Trinitarian Bible Society, the Dean Burgon Society, and others.

There is the Critical Greek text based on the Westcott and Hort of 1881. This is published by the United Bible Societies and others. Consider some facts about this New Testament as compared with the Received Text:

It is shorter than the Reformation Greek text by 2,886 words, which is the equivalent of the omission of the entire books of 1 and 2 Peter.

It omits or questions 45 entire verses -- Mt. 12:47; 17:21; 18:11; 21:44; 23:14; Mk. 7:16; 9:44; 9:46; 11:26; 15:28; 16:9-20; Luke 17:36; 22:43-44; 23:17; Jn. 5:4; John 7:53--8:11; Acts 8:37; 15:34; 24:7; 28:29; Rom. 16:24; and 1 Jn. 5:7.

In addition it omits significant portions of 147 other verses.

It *weakens* the doctrine of Christ's deity (e.g., it omits "who is in heaven" from Jn. 3:13; it omits "God" from 1 Tim. 3:16) and other key doctrines.

In these studies we will show where and when the "shortened New Testament" of the Critical Greek Text originated.

There is also the “Majority Text” of Hodges and Farstad published in 1982 by Thomas Nelson.

It differs from the Received Text in more than 1,000 places. For example, it omits Mat. 27:35; Lk. 17:36; Acts 8:37; and 1 John 5:7.

We analyze the Majority Text in *Faith vs. the Modern Bible Versions*, Part IX, “We hold to the KJV because we reject the ‘Majority Text’ position.”

3. The Bible version issue must be faced *BECAUSE OF THE ONSLAUGHT OF MODERN VERSIONS IN THE LAST 50 YEARS.*

Some of the modern English versions since 1952:

- 1952 -- Revised Standard Version
- 1959 -- Berkeley Version in Modern English
- 1960 -- New American Standard Bible
- 1961 -- New English Bible
- 1962 -- Modern King James Version
- The Living Bible
- Clarified New Testament
- 1964 -- Anchor Bible
- 1965 -- Amplified Bible
- 1966 -- Jerusalem Bible.
- 1968 -- Barclay’s New Testament
- 1970 -- New American Bible
- 1971 -- King James II Version
- 1972 -- The Bible in Living English
- 1973 -- The Common Bible (RSV)
- New International Version
- 1976 -- Today’s English Version (Good News for Modern Man)
- The Holy Bible in the Language of Today, An American Translation
- 1978 -- Simple English Bible
- 1979 -- New King James Bible
- 1984 -- A New Accurate Translation
- 1988 -- Christian Community Bible Translation
- 1989 -- Revised English Bible
- 1990 -- Simplified Living Bible
- New Revised Standard Version
- 1993 -- The Message New Testament
- 1995 -- Contemporary English Version

----- New International Readers Version (NirV)
 ----- New International Version Inclusive Language
 Edition
 1996 -- The Bible for Today's Family
 ----- The New Living Translation
 2002 -- Today's New International Version (New
 Testament)
 ----- The Message (whole Bible)
 2004 -- Holman Christian Standard Bible

It is important to understand that the Bible version issue did not really “heat up” for fundamentalists until the 1970s. There were modern texts and versions prior to this, going back to the 1800s, but they were never widely used among fundamentalists or even among evangelicals. The English Revised Version of 1881 was never popular. The same was true for the American Standard Version of 1901. The Revised Standard Version of 1952 was popular only within liberal denominations. The New American Standard Bible of 1960 had a small following among scholarly evangelicals and even a few fundamentalists but it was never widely popular. It was not until the publication of the New International Version that a modern version began to be widely used outside of theologically liberal circles. Faced with the growing popularity of the NIV, many fundamentalists began to look more carefully at the Bible version issue and as a result many books began to appear in defense of the King James Bible. Any time one sees a body of apologetic literature in church history, it is because something has happened to challenge the traditional position in some realm. The number of books defending the KJV has been multiplied since the 1970s for the simple reason that it is being challenged at this time in a way that it was not challenged prior to this.

4. The Bible version issue must be faced *BECAUSE SOME FUNDAMENTAL BAPTISTS ARE SUPPORTING THE MODERN TEXTS AND VERSIONS*. In recent years several books have been published by fundamentalists in support of modern textual criticism.

These include *Facts on the King Only Debate* by Ankerberg and Weldon (1996); *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 and Randolph Shaylor (2003).

These books present the standard myths of modern textual criticism. They claim, for example, that the differences between the Received Text and the Critical Text are slight and insignificant and that no doctrine is affected by the textual changes.

These books also take a harsh position against those who defend the King James Bible. 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 a "mass of misinformation." Williams and the other fundamentalist writers who have jumped on the modern textual criticism bandwagon paint the entire field of King James defense with the broad brush of Ruckmanism.

5. The Bible version issue must be faced *BECAUSE, GENERALLY SPEAKING, ONLY ONE SIDE OF THIS DEBATE IS GIVEN TODAY.*

Consider some examples of this:

First we have the testimony by a man who trained under the famous Southern Baptist professor A.T. Robertson. This was given in a letter to David Otis Fuller in the 1970s. "Dear Dr. Fuller: On May 12, 1970, you wrote me a very kind letter and sent me some sample materials from your book *Which Bible?* You might as well have been shooting a popgun at a stone wall. My mind was so strongly fortified in the doctrine of Westcott and Hort that I could not for one moment consider the King James Bible. Had I not studied Textual Criticism under the great Dr. A.T. Robertson? I thought that you were just one of those die-hard Fundamentalists who were striving to keep the Christian world under the bondage of traditionalism. Such men are interested only in pleasing the people by catering to their ignorance, prejudice and sentimentality! But just a few weeks ago I happened to read your two books, *Which Bible?* and *True or False?* For the first time a little new light shone in. I saw that there is another side to the argument. DR. ROBERTSON HAD NOT GIVEN US ALL THE FACTS. As I perused your selections from Burgon and Hoskier, the idols of B and Aleph started to totter, and soon they fell off their pedestals. That was all I needed. I bought a copy of the Textus Receptus and am now

using it. Thanks to you” (William T. Bruner, Ph.D.).

Consider, next, the testimony of Alfred Martin, former Vice-President of Moody Bible Institute: “The present generation of Bible students, having been reared on Westcott and Hort, have for the most part accepted the theory without independent or critical examination. To the average student of the Greek New Testament today it is unthinkable to question the theory at least in its basic premises. Even to imply that one believes the Textus Receptus to be nearer the original text than the Westcott-Hort text is, lays one open to the suspicion of gross ignorance or unmitigated bigotry” (Martin, “A Critical Examination of the Westcott-Hort Textual Theory.” Th.D. Thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, May 1951).

Finally, we have the testimony of Dr. Donald Waite. “For about twenty years I was in darkness about this issue. I knew almost nothing of it from roughly 1951 to 1971. I was at Dallas Theological Seminary from 1948 to 1952. That was my Master of Theology. Then I stayed an extra year, 1953. Throughout those years we were simply told to use the Westcott and Hort Greek New Testament, which we did in the Greek classes. ... I didn’t know there was any other Greek text. I majored in classic Greek and Latin at the University of Michigan, 1945-48. I took three years to get my four years of work. ... Then I came to Dallas Seminary. I was learning New Testament Greek, and I didn’t pay much heed to the text. ... I just assumed that was the only one to use.”

This situation is typical. What the first testimony said about A.T. Robertson not giving all the facts can be said today about professors at BJU, Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary, Central Baptist Theological Seminary, and many other fundamentalist institutions. Students who graduate from these institutions generally have no firsthand knowledge of the writings of Frederick Nolan, John Burgon, Edward Miller, Herman Hoskier, and Edward F. Hills, to mention but a few of the scholarly men who have written in defense of the TR-KJV. What is given in these schools is a mere caricature of the “King James Only” position drawn from the writings of extremists who believe the King James Bible is “advanced revelation” and other such things.

It is my desire to give all the relevant facts in the Bible text-version debate. I am convinced that if a believer will approach this subject

with an open and prayerful heart, desiring to know the truth and willing to follow wherever it leads (Jn. 7:17), leaning not upon his or another man's understanding but leaning solely upon God (Prov. 3:5-6; Jer. 17:5), not fearing man (Prov. 29:25) nor honoring man above that which is written (1 Cor. 6:4), basing his position solely upon the Word of God (John 8:31-32), that he will come out on the side of the Masoretic Hebrew Old Testament and the Received Greek New Testament and of faithful translations thereof, such as the KJV in English.

Consider some basic misunderstandings pertaining to this issue:

1. The Bible version issue is largely a choice between the old language of the KJV and the updated language of the modern versions. *This is not true, as we will demonstrate in this course!*
2. The changes to the modern versions do not affect doctrine. *This is not true, as we will demonstrate in this course!*
3. The difference between the Greek Received Text and the Critical Text is slight, amounting to only one page of material. *This is not true, as we will demonstrate in this course!*
4. The King James Bible is too difficult for most people to understand. *This is not true, as we will demonstrate in this course!*
5. The scholarship of the Reformation era was inferior to that of today. *This is not true, as we will demonstrate in this course!*
6. Those who defend the King James Bible believe that the preserved Word of God is only in English and that God's people should not study Greek and Hebrew. *This is not true, as we will demonstrate in this course!*
7. There is no good defense of the Trinitarian statement in 1 John 5:7. *This is not true, as we will demonstrate in this course!*
8. The King James Version has been updated in thousands of places. *This is not true, as we will demonstrate in this course!*
9. Westcott and Hort were evangelical Bible believers. *This is not true, as we will demonstrate in this course!*
10. The modern Critical Text is based on older manuscripts than those upon which the Received Text is based. *This is not true, as we*

will demonstrate in this course!

11. Today's evangelical scholarship is dependable. *This is not true, as we will demonstrate in this course!*

12. The Erasmus Received Text is based on a mere handful of manuscripts. *This is not true, as we will demonstrate in this course!*

13. Erasmus promised to add 1 John 5:7 to his Greek New Testament if only one manuscript could be supplied that contained it. *This is not true, as we will demonstrate in this course!*

14. The Bible version issue should not result in divisions among God's people. *This is not true, as we will demonstrate in this course!*

15. It is the defenders of the King James Bible that are causing the trouble. *This is not true, as we will demonstrate in this course!*

16. The King James translators said that all of the versions are good and acceptable. *This is not true, as we will demonstrate in this course!*

17. The "thee's" and "thou's" of the King James Bible should be removed because that was merely Elizabethan English and to remove them has no doctrinal significance. *This is not true, as we will demonstrate in this course!*

As I approach this issue, I do so with the following biblical presuppositions.

The evolutionist would have me put aside my biblical presuppositions when I study the natural record and the textual critic would have me put them aside when I study the manuscript record, but I will not put biblical presuppositions aside for any reason. As David W. Norris wisely observes: "We have a clear choice between one of two diverging pathways, the road of faith or the road of human reason and unbelief. Do we begin with the Word of God or do we begin with the word of men? This is the question and it has in the first instance little to do with texts, but with the faithfulness of our God. ... For it to be of any use, textual study must be grounded upon what the Bible already says about itself. *If we do not begin with the Word of God, we shall never end with it!*" (Norris, *The Big Picture*).

Eight Biblical Presuppositions for Approaching the Bible Version Issue

1. I believe in the sufficiency of Scripture (2 Tim. 3:16-17). The Bible contains everything that we need for faith and practice. It is able to make the believer “perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” Obviously, then, nothing else is necessary. I do not have to rely on priests or scholars or tradition or extrabiblical sources.

2. I believe in the soul liberty of the believer, meaning that each believer can know the truth for himself and is responsible to test everything by God’s Word (Acts 17:11; 1 Cor. 2:15-16; 1 Thess. 5:21). Thus, it is evident that the child of God can make his own decision in the important matter of the Bible text-version issue. I do not ask my readers to depend on me and to follow my teaching; I ask them simply to prove all things and hold fast that which is good and to receive my teaching with all readiness of mind and to search the Scriptures daily whether these things are so.

3. I believe in the simplicity of sound doctrine (Mat. 11:25; 1 Cor. 1:26-29; 2 Cor. 11:3; 1 Jn. 2:20). If a doctrine is so complicated that the average child of God must lean upon a specialized priest or scholar, that doctrine is not Scriptural. The New Testament faith is not an elitist issue. It was committed to ordinary people.

One example of this is Calvinism. For instance, James White claims that Dave Hunt doesn’t understand Calvinism even though he is an intelligent man, a believer, and he has studied the issue diligently. I am convinced that if something is that complicated it can’t be the truth. (I also believe that Dave Hunt understands Calvinism very well, in spite of what James White claims.)

Another example is modern textual criticism. The child of God is required to depend upon the textual scholars, because it is impossible for an ordinary believer to make textual decisions. Textual criticism involves 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. Consider a sample of textual criticism from A.T. Robertson: “In actual practice appeal should first be made to the external evidence of the documents by first coming to understand the value of internal evidence of single readings. It will be seen that we have to consider the internal evidence of single

readings, the internal evidence of single documents, the internal evidence of groups of documents, the internal evidence of classes of documents. That way of putting it appears paradoxical, but it is literally true that the scientific use of the external evidence (documents) turns on the application of the principles of internal evidence as seen in single readings. But the two methods must agree in result if one is to have confidence in his conclusion. ... The two kinds of internal evidence are transcriptional and intrinsic. ... It is best to begin with transcriptional evidence and then to consider intrinsic evidence” (Robertson, *An Introduction to Textual Criticism*, pp. 149-150). It is impossible to reconcile this level of 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).

4. I believe that all things should be done unto edifying (Rom. 14:19; 1 Cor. 14:26; 2 Cor. 12:19; Eph. 4:12, 16, 29). Any biblical research that does not result in spiritual edification is wrongheaded and is disobedience to the plain commands of the Word of God. I can candidly say that none of the many books I have read on modern textual criticism has spiritually edified me. I have found them intellectually interesting, frustrating, and confusing, but never edifying.

5. I believe in the reality of the devil (1 Pet. 5:8).

One of the devil’s chief goals since the Garden of Eden has been to attack and corrupt the Word of God and to confuse people’s minds in regard to it. His first words to Eve were, “Yea, hath God said?” (Gen. 3:1). Consider the following important lessons from this first attack:

The devil questioned God’s Word (v. 1). This is the first step toward openly denying God’s Word. If the devil can cause a person to entertain doubts about the authenticity of the Scriptures *at any point*, it is likely that he can cripple him spiritually and open the way for increasing unbelief. The Bible is questioned on every hand today, even by those who claim to be “evangelicals.” They say, “Did God really create the world in six days?” or “Did God really destroy the entire earth with a flood?” or “Did Moses really write the Pentateuch?” or “Do the Gospels contain the very words of Jesus?” or “Is Revelation really a prophecy of the future?” or “Is Hell really a place of fire and eternal conscious torment?” I see the hand of

the old serpent in all such questionings.

The devil denied God's Word (v. 4). This is the skeptic's approach to the Bible. He mocks it and openly denies that it is true. We find this, too, on every hand, in Hollywood movies, in the pages of popular magazines and newspapers, in bestselling books. The blatant denial of God's Word is even made by those who profess to be Christians.

The devil substituted his own words for God's Word (v. 5). This is what false religions such as the Roman Catholic Church do with their extra-biblical traditions. They say, "We believe in the Bible but we also believe in our traditions and councils and popes." This was the sin of the Pharisees, who "made the commandment of God of none effect" by their tradition (Mk. 7:9). The dynamic equivalency method of Bible translation also substitutes man's words for God's. (See the Way of Life publication *Faith vs. the Modern Bible Versions*, Part VIII, "We Hold to the King James Bible Because We Reject Dynamic Equivalency.")

As these studies progress, we will see that the devil has continued to attack God's Word throughout the church age. The child of God must therefore be alert to his activities in this field. It is impossible to understand the Bible text-version issue if one does not understand the devil's hatred of God's Word and if one does not make this fact a prominent part of his "textual criticism."

6. I believe in the pre-eminence of faith (Heb. 11:6; Rom. 10:17; 14:23). The only way to understand the Word of God is by faith.

Faith is based only on God's Word (Rom. 10:17). The modern textual critic refuses to approach the Bible text-version issue by faith and mocks those who do, and fundamentalists who are supporting the modern texts are following in their footsteps. For example, Samuel Schnaiter of Bob Jones University critiques Wilbur Pickering's Majority Text position as follows: "Finally, although Pickering has avoided an excessive reliance on theological presuppositions in his presentation, it is nevertheless clear that a theological presupposition essentially undergirds his entire purpose" ("Focus on Revelation," *Biblical Viewpoint*, Vol. XVI, No. 1, April 1982, Bob Jones University, "Textual Criticism and the Modern English Version Controversy," p. 72). *How strange and frightful (and instructive) to see a professed fundamentalist criticizing a "theological" approach to the Bible text-version issue!*

We do not have to answer every question that can be asked (i.e., about the Trinity, the Virgin Birth, the Atonement, Inspiration, or Preservation); we only have to believe God's Word.

Our faith must therefore be in God, not in man (i.e., not in human scholarship, in the KJV translators, in Erasmus, or in John Burgon or some other defender of the traditional Reformation text).

7. I believe in trembling before God's Word (Psa. 138:2; Prov. 30:6; Isa. 66:2; Rev. 22:18-19). The Scripture is not an ordinary book; it is the Word of the Living God and as such one must exercise extreme caution in handling it. Even to tamper with the words of a human author is a serious matter and there are laws against it, but how much more serious is it to tamper with the words of Almighty God! I have read dozens of books by textual critics, and there simply is no fear of God in their approach to the words of Scripture. The textual critic approach is strictly a matter of human scholarship and the Bible is simply another book.

8. I believe in the necessity of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 2:12-16; 1 Jn. 2:20, 27). Apart from the Holy Spirit, nothing about the Bible can be properly understood. Unregenerate men who lack the Spirit are not qualified in this field. The book *From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man* claims that it doesn't matter if textual critics are skeptics. "... 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). In his mistitled book "The Truth of the King James Only Controversy," BJU professor Stewart Custer uncritically cites the following men in his "Select Bibliography" -- Bruce Metzger, Kurt Aland, Eberhard Nestle, Alexander Souter, B.F. Westcott, and F.J.A. Hort. He does not think it is important that his readers know that to a man these critics blatantly denied the infallible inspiration of Scripture. This approach is wrongheaded in the extreme! A wise position was that of Joseph Philpot, Fellow of Worcester College, Oxford, and editor of *The Gospel Standard*. In 1857 he gave six reasons against a revision of the KJV, the first being that the biblical scholars of that day were "notoriously either tainted with popery or infidelity" (Joseph Charles Philpot, "The Authorized Version of 1611," *The Gospel Standard*, April 1857). That was true then and it is even truer today. Philpot then asked an important rhetorical question, "And can erroneous men, dead in trespasses

and sins, carnal, worldly, ungodly persons, spiritually translate a book written by the blessed Spirit?" The biblical answer is NO!

Modern textual criticism, which gave us the modern Bible versions, is not founded upon dependency upon faith or the Holy Spirit or any of the aforementioned things. Textual critic George Ladd wrote: "One does not solve a problem of divergent textual readings by prayer or by the inner illumination of the Holy Spirit; but only by an extensive knowledge and skill in the science of textual criticism" (Ladd, *The New Testament and Criticism*, 1967, p. 81). This is an unbelieving position. The Bible is a supernatural and spiritual Book and nothing about it can be known apart from the application of spiritual tools.

Though some evangelicals and fundamentalists who use textual criticism might claim that they also are following the Holy Spirit, the principles of textual criticism are contrary to this. David Sorenson observes: "Some proponents of the critical text may claim that the Holy Spirit has led them as well. However, the working editors of the critical text are steeped in rationalistic philosophy and scientific reconstruction of the text. Their entire philosophical base is not inclined to such a Fundamentalist notion of seeking the leading of the Holy Spirit" (*Touch Not the Unclean Thing*, p. 58, f 30).

My personal testimony about the Bible version issue

I was not trained in the defense of the King James Bible in Bible College. My conviction on this issue came some years after I graduated. The man that led me to Jesus Christ in the summer of 1973 gave me a King James Bible and that was the Bible that I had as I started my new life in Christ. It was a large print, plain text Bible with no cross-references or marginal notes. A couple or three months later I went to the Southern Baptist bookstore in my hometown of Lakeland, Florida, and asked the sales lady if she could recommend a version that was easier to read. She told me that she did not recommend that I switch from the King James Bible (don't forget that this was more than 30 years ago!), but when I persisted she sold me a *Today's English Version* New Testament. I took it home and read it through and found that indeed, it was as easy to read as the morning newspaper; it was also as vapid and spiritually unsatisfying as the morning newspaper! So I put it aside and continued with the King James. I

also purchased a *Dickson Analytical Study Bible*. It is a good study Bible in many ways but scattered throughout the text are brackets containing alleged “better readings” from the American Standard Bible. I pretty much ignored them. At that point I understood nothing of the textual issue and I assumed that the modern versions merely updated the King James language.

I attended Tennessee Temple Bible School beginning in the fall of 1974. In Greek class we used the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament, but the textual issue was never explained. At that point I still did not know that there is an immense difference between the critical Greek text and the Reformation text. My Greek teacher, Mr. Dean, was educated at Dallas Theological Seminary and his position was that there is no real issue in the textual-versional debate, that the Word of God is in the Critical Text and the Received Text, in the NASV and in the KJV. He taught us that there is no doctrinal issue in this debate. Though only the King James was used in the chapel at Tennessee Temple, most of the teachers treated the version debate as a non-issue and one of my teachers, Roger Martin, used the NASV in the classroom. To my knowledge, there was only one teacher at Temple in those days who took a stand for the King James Bible on the basis of its Greek text, and that was Bruce Lackey, the Dean of the Bible School. He offered a course on Bible versions but I didn’t take it. I simply was not tuned into the Bible text-version issue at that time. There were some Ruckmanites in the student body who caused a ruckus from time to time and got themselves kicked out of school. They had a habit of speaking disrespectfully to some of the teachers and disrupting the classes, but they didn’t last long and I was glad to see them leave. In fact, a Ruckmanite taught at Temple for a short while. I had him for a course on prophecy, but he was forced to leave part way through the semester. He did not say anything about the Bible version issue in his classes but he was teaching hyperdispensationalism, and, again, I was glad to see him go.

Anyway, when I graduated from Bible School in 1977 I was unprepared to face the Bible version issue. I still held to the King James Bible, but I didn’t know why and I was beginning to have doubts about it. Because of my experiences with the Ruckmanites I was somewhat prejudiced against the defense of the KJV, knowing only their cantankerous approach to the issue.

I will describe an experience that occurred soon after my

graduation from Temple that further prejudiced me against a “King James Only” position as defined by Peter Ruckman. When we were on deputation in 1978 to raise support for our missionary work, I gave my testimony at a Camp Meeting at a church in Jacksonville, Florida, describing how the Lord saved me out of a rebellious “hippy” lifestyle. Two young men approached me afterwards and explained that they were the typesetters for a fundamentalist publication called *The Bible Believer’s Bulletin* and asked if they could have permission to print my testimony. I wasn’t familiar with the publication and readily gave them permission, not knowing that this was Peter Ruckman’s own paper. When my testimony was published (beginning on the front page) they sent me a copy and I was amazed and disheartened at the things that I read from Ruckman’s strange pen. As far as I can recall, this was the first time that I had actually seen his writings. He was calling men such as Lee Roberson and my teachers at Temple (and anyone else who disagrees with him) names such as “jackass,” “poor, dumb, stupid red legs,” “silly asses,” “apostolic succession of bloated egotists,” “two-bit junkie,” “two-faced, tin-horned punk,” “incredible idiot,” “bunch of egotistical jack legs,” “conservative asses whose brains have gone to seed,” “cheap, two-bit punks,” “stupid, little, Bible-rejecting apostates.” After we got to the mission field I wrote to Ruckman and told him that I rejected his ungracious, carnal attitude and his cultic approach to the Bible version issue. I told him that I was just a young preacher and that I did not know him personally, but that I suspected that his multiple failed marriages had embittered him. I told him that I was a writer and that I intended to warn others about him, which is exactly what I have done in the years since then.

When I got to the mission field in South Asia in early 1979, I was again confronted with the multiplicity of texts and versions. One of our objectives was to have Bible study materials translated into the indigenous language, but as there were competing translations in that language we had to make a choice.

It was at that point that I began to study the issue of texts and versions for myself and to build a library of materials on this subject. When I began reading the works edited by D.O. Fuller, the works of Edward Hills, etc., I did not automatically believe what they were saying. I jotted down many critical notes and questions in the margin of these books, and I PRAYED EARNESTLY FOR WISDOM.

When I was newly saved and faced with the multiplicity of churches, not knowing which doctrine was correct or what church to join, whether Pentecostal, Baptist, Presbyterian, etc., I took John 7:17 and 8:31-32 to heart and believed that if I would do what these Scriptures commanded I would be led in the truth as these Scriptures promised.

“If any man WILL DO HIS WILL, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself” (John 7:17).

“Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, IF YE CONTINUE IN MY WORD, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:31-32).

To know the truth, one must continue in God’s Word and one must be willing to obey what God says.

As I investigated churches and doctrine, I continually searched my heart before God, earnestly desiring to be willing to obey Him in all things and praying that if I was somehow secretly unwilling in some matter that He would reveal this to me and help me to be willing! I searched the Scriptures for hours every day, memorizing, meditating, and trying to apply them to every area of my life. I practically wore out a copy of *Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance* that first year, learning the meaning of Bible words.

I held on to these promises and I am confident that God led me through the maze of churches and the confusion of doctrine during the early years of my Christian life and that He grounded me in the truth.

When some years later I faced the maze of Bible texts and versions, I went back to these same promises and held on to them as I investigated this issue, and I am convinced that God has led me to the truth.

My research in this field

Knowing that the following will doubtless be misconstrued by those who oppose me on this subject and that I will be falsely charged with puffing myself up, I believe I should proceed anyway to describe my research in this field.

The course *Faith vs. the Modern Bible Versions* and its two companion volumes are the mature fruit of 25 years of labor in this field. I did not choose this subject; it chose me. I have never had

the goal of becoming a prominent defender of the King James Bible. I am not a textual critic; I am not a Greek and Hebrew scholar; but from the first time that I began studying this subject I have been fascinated with it and I have been utterly convinced that it is foundational and essential. It was this conviction that motivated me to begin writing on the subject, and it is a conviction that has grown ever deeper through the years. I am as convinced that modern textual criticism is false as I am of anything in life. When I began to learn that the commonly held views on Bible texts and versions are nothing but myths, I simply had to try to tell someone else! Like Jeremiah, the words of God were like a fire within me and I could not keep quiet.

When I first began studying the Bible text-version issue for myself in about 1979, I determined to verify quotes and to cross check every statement to the best of my ability. I wanted to base my research upon primary documents as much as possible. I have pursued that goal over the past quarter century.

Today I have a large private library of materials on this issue, including a large percentage of the books that have been published in this field in English in the past 200 years. To my knowledge, for example, I have practically every history of the Bible that has been published through 2004, including the rarest, such as John Foxe's *Martyrology* (1641), John Lewis' *A Complete History of Translations* (1818), John Strype's *Ecclesiastical Memorials* (1826), Thomas Fuller's *Church History of Britain* (1837), Christopher Anderson's *Annals of the English Bible* (1845), and the Parker Society's *Writings of Miles Coverdale* (1844) and *Writings of William Tyndale* (1848), to name a few.

My personal library contains roughly 1,000 books and pamphlets dealing directly with the history and text of the Bible and at least that many more volumes that bear on this subject in a more general way from church history and other realms, dating from the 17th century to the present.

I have read 600 books and pamphlets and 2,000 articles touching on this topic and I try to keep abreast of the new research on both sides of the issue.

I have done many weeks of research at libraries and museums such as Regent College in Vancouver, B.C.; Westminster Seminary, Philadelphia; the Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives

in Nashville; the British Library; Heritage Baptist University's collection of rare Bibles; the Mack Library at BJU; the Museum of Waldensian History at Torre Pellice, Italy; the Moravian Museums in Pennsylvania and North Carolina; the Scriptorium Center for Biblical Studies in Orlando, Florida; the Cambridge University Library; the Spurgeon Library at William Jewell College in Liberty, Missouri; Wake-Forest University Library; the Waldensian Museum in Valdese, North Carolina; the William Tyndale Museum in Vilvoorde, Belgium; the Gutenberg Museum in Germany; and the Erasmus House in Belgium.

I have walked in the footsteps of Bible editors and translators at places such as the Oxford University where Wycliffe and Tyndale and many of the KJV translators were educated and where two of the KJV committees did their work; Cambridge University where many of the other KJV translators were educated and where two of the KJV committees worked; St. Mary the Virgin Church where Wycliffe was condemned for his "heresy" of rejecting transubstantiation; the parish church of Lutterworth where Wycliffe preached; Blackfriars and St. Paul's where Wycliffe was tried; Bartholomew Church where Tyndale was ordained; Little Sodbury Manor where Tyndale lived; St. Adeline's Church where Tyndale preached; Fulham Palace where Tyndale unsuccessfully begged permission to translate the Bible; Vilvoorde, Belgium, where Tyndale was martyred; Hampton Court Palace where King James I agreed to authorize the translation of the King James Bible; Lambeth Palace where Bible readers were imprisoned in Lollard's Tower; Paul's Cross where Wycliffe and Tyndale Bibles were burned; the Jerusalem Room at Westminster Abbey where parts of the King James Bible were translated; the house in Brussels where Erasmus completed the 3rd edition of his Greek New Testament; the alps of northern Italy where the Waldenses copied their precious handwritten Scriptures during the Dark Ages; and Rome, the headquarters of the ecclesiastical system that for at least 800 years persecuted those who translated and read the Bible.

I have investigated the history of the Bible not only in Great Britain and Europe, but also in the Philippines, Korea, India, Nepal, Macau, Singapore, Burma, and other countries.

I have conducted correspondence with and had personal discussions with published defenders of the King James Bible, including men now deceased such as David Otis Fuller, Bruce

Lackey, Marion Reynolds, Bob Steward, and James J. Ray, Bruce Cummons, as well as D.A. Waite, Thomas Strouse, David Sorenson, Ian Paisley, Michael Bates, Clinton Branine, Terence Brown, Perry Rockwood, Jack Moorman, Don Jasmin, Ken Johnson, D.K. Madden, Michael Maynard, Peter van Kleeck, Cecil Carter, Denis Gibson, Chuck Nichols, Charles Turner, Bob Barnett, Kirk DiVietro, Timothy Tow, and Jeffrey Khoo, to name a few. I only regret that I did not begin my research a little earlier, so that I could have communicated personally with Dr. Edward F. Hills, probably my favorite author on this subject. By the time I learned about him and attempted to contact him in about 1980 his widow informed me that he was in Glory.

I am thankful for these men and have learned so much from them. I am continually amazed at how the Lord gives fresh insight to men who are committed to His Word. Many of these men have broken new ground in this field of research. Edward Hills broke new ground with his believing approach to the textual issue and with his understanding of the intimate association between theological modernism and modern textual criticism. Terence Brown broke new ground by writing insightful articles on this subject when few others understood its importance, articles that vastly increased the understanding of God's people in this field. D.O. Fuller broke new ground by reprinting some of the important 19th century works defending the Received Text and the King James Bible and for introducing John Burgon to a new generation. Everett Fowler broke new ground with his minute analysis of the differences between the texts and versions. D.A. Waite broke new ground with his effective four-fold defense of the KJV and with the massive number of studies he has published on this subject. Jack Moorman broke new ground with his excellent research into the history of the text, among other things. Thomas Strouse broke new ground with his believing approach to the reception and canonization of the Scripture. Michael Maynard broke new ground in the defense of 1 John 5:7-8. Many others could be mentioned.

I have published the following books on the Bible version issue, in addition to roughly 100 articles.

Unholy Hands on God's Holy Book: A Report on the United Bible Societies (1985)

Myths about Modern Bible Versions (first as a series of booklets in 1986 and then as a single volume beginning in 1999)

A Most Frightful Deception: The Good News Bible and Translator Robert Bratcher (1986)
Examining the Hodges-Farstad Majority Text (1989)
Dynamic Equivalency: Death Knell of Pure Scripture (1990)
Wycliffe Bible Translators: Whither Bound? (1991)
Living Bible: Blessing or Curse? (1991)
A Tribute to David Otis Fuller (1992)
Modern Bible Versions (1994)
What about Ruckman? (1994)
For Love of the Bible: The Battle for the Authorized Version and the Received Text from 1800 to Present (1995)
Modern Versions Founded upon Apostasy: The Theology of the Men who Developed the Modern Textual Theories (1995)
Rome and the Bible: The History of the Bible through the Centuries and Rome's Persecutions against It (1996)
Answering James White's "The King James Only Controversy" (1998)
Testimonies of King James Bible Defenders (2000)
Faith vs. the Modern Bible Versions (2005)
The Modern Bible Version Hall of Shame (2005)
The Bible Version Question-Answer Database (2005)
Answering the Myths on the Bible Version Debate (2006)
The Glorious History of the English Bible (2006)
Why We Hold to the King James Bible (2006)
In the Footsteps of Bible Translators (2006)

I don't say these things to puff myself up in the eyes of men, the Lord being my witness. I am listing my credentials for one reason only, and that is to encourage my readers that I have applied myself diligently to this subject and have made every effort to get my facts right. I understand all too well that the research of KJV defenders is widely belittled and ridiculed by those who think of themselves as the sole keepers of scholarship.

Please understand that you do not have to prove your position on this issue to the satisfaction of the defender of the modern versions; you only have to prove it to your own satisfaction before God in light of His Word. Further, you are not required to answer every question a critic of your position can ask. No one can answer all of the questions that can be asked on any side of this issue.

A LEXICON ON THE BIBLE TEXT-VERSION ISSUE

ALEPH CODEX. See Sinaiticus.

ALEXANDRIAN TEXT. See Westcott-Hort Text.

BYZANTINE TEXT. See Received Text.

CHURCH FATHERS. The term “church fathers” refers to church leaders of the first seven centuries after the apostles whose writings have been preserved. They 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. To apply the term “church fathers” to these post-apostolic men is an inaccurate Roman Catholic concept that was borrowed by Protestants and evangelicals. Most of the “church fathers” were laden down with heresies and were more the fathers of the false Roman Catholic Church than the fathers of the apostolic churches. The only genuine “church fathers” are the apostles who delivered by divine inspiration the “faith ONCE delivered to the saints” (Jude 3).

CODEX. A codex is a manuscript bound in the manner of a book rather than a scroll.

CODEX SINAITICUS. See Sinaiticus.

CODEX VATICANUS. See Vaticanus.

CRITICAL TEXT. See Westcott-Hort Text.

EGYPTIAN TEXT. See Westcott-Hort Text.

GNOSTICISM. Gnosticism refers to a doctrine of salvation through a secret knowledge of divine things. The Greek word “gnosis” means knowledge. Gnosticism is a general term that encompasses a wide variety of heresy, held both by non-Christians and by those who professed Christ. Gnosticism was developed by non-Christians who borrowed from Greek philosophy, Judaism, and Oriental

mysticism. Elements of Gnosticism were then borrowed by professing Christians, who inter-mingled Gnostic thought with New Testament teaching.

KOINE. See Received Text

LECTIONARY. A lectionary is a collection of Scriptures used in worship services, some weekly and some for special occasions such as Easter. There are about 2,143 pre-Reformation Greek lectionaries extant.

LATIN, OLD. Old Latin is so called because it predated the Jerome Latin Vulgate of the early 5th century. It was likely first translated from Greek in roughly 157 A.D. We only know 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. There is a significant difference between the Old Latin in the west and the Old Latin in Africa, with the western Old Latin being closer to the Traditional Reformation Text. The Old Latin continued to be used by Christians separated from Rome, particularly the Waldenses and Albigenses, until the 13th century.

LATIN, VULGATE. Vulgate means common and the Latin vulgate was the Bible commonly used by the Roman Catholic Church. It is supposed to have been made by Jerome in the early 5th century, but it was not standardized or officially adopted until the 16th century. With some textual variety, the Latin was translated into many languages by separatist Bible believers, such as Waldenses, Lollards, Hussites, and Anabaptists.

MAJORITY TEXT. See Received Text.

MAJUSCULE. See Uncial.

MINUSCULE. The minuscule Greek manuscripts (also called cursives) are those written in small letters (as opposed to all caps in the uncials). This method of the production of books began in the early 9th century. There are about 2,812 minuscules extant, dating from the 9th to the 16th century.

MODERN TEXTUAL CRITICISM. The modern “science” of attempting to recover the original text of an ancient document.

NESTLE'S TEXT. The Nestle's Greek New Testament was developed by Eberhard Nestle and first published in 1895. It was based on the Greek New Testaments published by Tischendorf (8th edition), Westcott and Hort, and D. Bernhard Weiss. Since Tischendorf preferred the Sinaiticus and Westcott and Hort preferred the Vaticanus, the Nestle Text is founded largely upon the witness of these two manuscripts. The Nestle's Text has gone through 27 editions and has been widely used in Bible College and seminary classrooms and translation work. Eberhard's son Erwin succeeded to the editorship of the Nestle Text after Eberhard's death in 1913, and in 1950 Kurt Aland became associated with the Nestle project and later editions of the Nestle's Text are called the *Nestle-Aland* Text.

OLD LATIN. See Latin, Old.

PAPYRUS. Papyrus manuscripts were made from the papyrus plant that grew alongside rivers in Egypt (and a few other places). Papyrus was used from the 1st to the 10th centuries. The earliest extant N.T. manuscripts were written on papyrus. 116 papyri are listed in the apparatus of the 4th UBS Greek New Testament.

PARCHMENT. Writing material made of animal skins. A good portion of the N.T. would require about 60 sheep or goats. (The entire Gutenberg Bible required the skins of 191 calves.)

PESHITTA. The Peshitta is a translation of the New Testament into Syriac. It was thus from Syria, the home of the famous missionary church at Antioch (Acts 13). In spite of the attempt by modern textual critics to give it a later date, we are convinced that it is very ancient, perhaps going back to the time of the apostles. 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. The Peshitta generally represents the Traditional Reformation Text.

RECEIVED GREEK TEXT. This is the Greek text that was printed during the Protestant Reformation era and used for all of the popular Protestant versions from the 16th to the late 19th centuries. It is also called the *MAJORITY TEXT*, because in most points it represents the vast majority of the more than 5,400 existing Greek manuscripts; the *TRADITIONAL TEXT*, because it represents the text traditionally used in the churches; the *COMMON TEXT*, because it represents the text commonly found in

the New Testament manuscripts; the *BYZANTINE TEXT*, because it was preserved in the Greek Byzantine Empire; the *CONSTANTINOPOLIANT TEXT*, because Constantinople was the capital of the Byzantine Empire; the *ANTIOCHIAN TEXT* or the *SYRIAN TEXT*, because it was that form of New Testament text preserved in Antioch, the capital of the Roman province of Syria, which, of course, is where the great missionary church was located (Acts 13:1-4); and the *KOINE TEXT*, because it was written in a more common style of Greek in contrast to the classical style.

SINAITICUS. The Sinaiticus is a Greek uncial codex that was discovered in 1844 by Constantine von Tischendorf in St. Catherine's monastery at the foot of Mt. Sinai. It is thought to date to the 4th century and to have come from Egypt. The Vaticanus and the Sinaiticus, being the two most ancient Greek uncials, are preferred by modern textual critics over the vast majority of surviving manuscripts. The translators of the New International Version, for example, call the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus "the two most reliable early manuscripts" (footnote to Mark 16:9-20).

TEXTUAL CRITICISM. See Modern Textual Criticism.

TRADITIONAL TEXT. See Received Text.

UNCIAL. The uncial Greek manuscripts are those written in all caps. The word "uncial" means capital. They are also called majuscules. They began to be replaced with the minuscules in the early 9th century. There are about 263 uncials extant. The three oldest complete (or nearly complete) are B (Codex Vaticanus), Aleph (Codex Sinaiticus), and A (Codex Alexandrinus). Others from the first six centuries are D (Codex Bezae, containing the Gospels and Acts), W (containing the Gospels), and D2 (containing the Pauline Epistles).

VATICANUS. The Vaticanus is a Greek uncial codex that was discovered in the Vatican Library in 1475. It is thought to date from the mid-4th century and to have originated in Egypt. The Vaticanus and the Sinaiticus, being the two most ancient Greek uncials with large portions intact, are preferred by modern textual critics over the vast majority of surviving manuscripts. The translators of the New International Version, for example, call the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus "the two most reliable early manuscripts" (footnote to Mark 16:9-20).

VELLUM. Writing material made of animal skins.

VULGATE, LATIN. See Latin Vulgate.

WESTCOTT-HORT GREEK TEXT. This is the first popular edition of the critical Greek New Testament created through the bogus “science” of modern textual criticism. It leans heavily upon the text found in the Vaticanus and the Sinaiticus, which are two ancient Egyptian manuscripts that contain the Alexandrian Text. It is also called THE EGYPTIAN TEXT and THE CRITICAL TEXT. 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*. Jack Moorman counted only 216 instances in which the Nestle-Aland 26th edition apparatus departs from the Vaticanus and Aleph. The W-H and the UBS delete or question almost the same number of verses (WH--48, UBS--45), the same number of significant portions of verses (WH--193, UBS 185), and the same number of names and titles of the Lord (WH--221, UBS--212).

WHY WE HOLD TO THE KING JAMES BIBLE

I. We hold to the KJV because of the doctrine of divine preservation, and the doctrine of preservation teaches us that the Greek New Testament underlying the KJV is the preserved Word of God. (In this course we do not deal with the Hebrew Old Testament. For information on that see the Way of Life publication *Faith vs. the Modern Bible Versions*.)

II. We hold to the KJV because the theories supporting the Modern Greek text are heretical.

III. We hold to the KJV because the modern texts and versions are the product of end-time apostasy.

IV. We hold to the KJV because of its superior doctrine.

V. We hold to the KJV because of its unmatched heritage.

I. WE HOLD TO THE KING JAMES BIBLE BECAUSE OF THE DOCTRINE OF PRESERVATION.

Section Summary

1. Introductory Points
2. A survey of the doctrine of Bible Preservation
3. A summary of the doctrine of Bible Preservation

Introductory Points

1. *I cannot emphasize too strongly how important the doctrine of biblical preservation is to the issue of Bible texts and versions.* This doctrine is absolutely foundational to the issue, and in this light we will see how wrongheaded the principles of modern textual criticism are at their very root. I know of only one textbook on modern textual criticism written in the past 75 years by a “qualified” textual critic that is *predicated upon* divine inspiration and preservation. The exception is Dr. Edward F. Hills’ *The King James Version Defended*, and the field of modern textual criticism at

large has given Hills no recognition beyond a cursory dismissal.

2. Consider what the Bible says about faith.

The Bible warns that “without faith it is IMPOSSIBLE to please” God (Heb. 11:6) and “whatsoever is not of faith is sin” (Rom. 14:23).

Faith is based *only* upon the testimony of the Scriptures. “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17).

Faith is “the evidence of things NOT SEEN” (Heb. 11:1). Faith is the opposite of seeing (Rom. 8:24). God teaches us to “walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Cor. 5:7) and to “look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen” (2 Cor. 4:18).

3. Consider some important statements on this by men who understood the necessity of faith:

“If you and I believe that the original writings of the Scriptures were verbally inspired by God, then of necessity they must have been providentially preserved through the ages” (John Burgon, *The Revision Revised*, 1883).

“We have a clear choice between one of two diverging pathways, the road of faith or the road of human reason and unbelief. Do we begin with the Word of God or do we begin with the word of men? This is the question and it has in the first instance little to do with texts, but with the faithfulness of our God. To decide these things we need only a believing heart and the ability to read. Of course, textual scholars will deem all non-academics meddling in what they regard as their exclusive area of work unworthy to tie their bootlaces, still less to steal their clothes! ... For it to be of any use, textual study must be grounded upon what the Bible already says about itself. IF WE DO NOT BEGIN WITH THE WORD OF GOD, WE SHALL NEVER END WITH IT!” (David W. Norris, *The Big Picture*).

“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” (Edward F. Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, p. 1).

4. To understand the doctrine of preservation we must understand the nature of revelation in the Bible, that it is a gradual unfolding of doctrine. To interpret the Bible’s doctrine accurately and fully, the student must compare Scripture with Scripture, must compare the Old with the New. The more general statements on preservation in the Old Testament are complimented by the more specific statements of the New.

5. It is also important to understand that the doctrine of preservation has never been under attack as it is in these last days and God’s people have not before seen the need to define this doctrine as clearly as it needs to be defined today. Doctrine has often been developed throughout church history in reaction to heretical assaults. The doctrine of Christ’s deity and the Trinity, for example, were developed during the assaults by Gnostics, Arians, and other heretics of the early centuries, and were further refined during the Unitarian assaults of the 18th and 19th centuries. I am convinced that old commentaries such as Matthew Henry’s dealt little with the doctrine of preservation because while it was something that was commonly accepted it was not well thought out, having not been under serious attack. I believe the doctrine of biblical preservation is being more clearly developed and defined today because of the assault of modern textual criticism.

A SURVEY OF THE DOCTRINE OF BIBLE PRESERVATION

Since we cannot please God apart from faith and since faith comes by hearing the Word of God, we must begin our course by examining the Bible’s teaching on preservation. Does God promise to preserve the Scriptures? To what extent does He promise to preserve them? Is this promise taught explicitly and plainly or is it only implied or hinted at? Does the Bible tell us anything about

how the Scriptures will be preserved? Please give careful attention to the following, because this survey of the Bible's doctrine of preservation is the most important part of the course on Bible texts and versions. The Bible challenges the believer to "prove all things" (1 Thess. 5:21), and that is what we invite each student to do with the following study. Consider our statements prayerfully and test them with the Scriptures and see if we are being faithful to the Word of God.

Deuteronomy 31:24-26; 17:18; Romans 3:1-2

"And it came to pass, when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book, until they were finished, That Moses commanded the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, saying, Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee" (Deut. 31:24-26).

"And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites" (Deut. 17:18).

"What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God" (Rom. 3:1-2).

1. 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. This refutes every theory of inspiration that claims that the Old Testament Scriptures are *anything less* than the very infallible words of God. Even though the Jews did not always obey the Scriptures, they held them in reverence and believed that each jot and tittle was the inspired Word of God.

2. In particular, it was the Jewish priests who were responsible to care for the Scriptures (Deut. 31:24-26; 17:18).

3. Though there were periods of spiritual backsliding in which the Word of God was almost unknown among the Jews (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).

4. There were highpoints to the process of preservation during that era, times of spiritual revival, in which more careful attention was

given to the Scriptures and any errors that might have crept in through neglect were corrected. (The same thing has occurred in the church era, as we will see.)

One of the highpoints in the transmission of the Old Testament text was the revival during the days of King Hezekiah. It was at this time, for example, that men copied out Solomon's proverbs (Prov. 25:1).

There were other revivals during the days of Jehoshaphat and Josiah and doubtless these were also times in which the Scriptures were given special attention and the process of canonization and preservation continued.

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).

A great high point in the preservation of the Old Testament was the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ. He exalted the Old Testament Hebrew text and guaranteed its preservation even to the very jots and tittles (Mat. 4:4; 5:18). The fact that Christ spoke of jots and tittles teaches us that He used and exalted the Hebrew text and not any alleged Greek translation thereof. Christ also referred to the Old Testament by its Hebrew division rather than by the Greek division (Lk. 24:44). The Hebrew division was the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms, whereas the Greek division was the same as it is in English, the Law, the Psalms, and the Prophets. Further, when the Lord Jesus Christ 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 Septuagint (Mat. 23:35). The Hebrew Old Testament begins with Genesis and ends with 2 Chronicles, whereas the Greek Septuagint ends with the prophet Malachi followed by the apocryphal books.

5. 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). Though they did not believe the Bible, they revered it and continue to preserve it from generation to generation.

6. 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 (from Herbert Miller, *General Biblical Introduction*, 1937):

No word or 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.

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.

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.

Every word and every letter was counted, and if a letter were omitted, an extra letter inserted, or if one letter touched another, the manuscript was condemned and destroyed at once.

Psalm 12:6-7

“The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.”

1. This passage teaches that the Scriptures are both *inspired* by God (v. 6) and *preserved* by God (v. 7). Note that the inspiration is in “words” rather than in general thoughts or ideas.

2. To pair the doctrines of inspiration and preservation makes perfect sense and is agreeable with God’s revealed character and purpose. Why would God go to such trouble to verbally inspire the Scripture only to allow it to be corrupted through the process of time or to be preserved in a general sense?

3. Those who support the modern versions commonly deny that Psalm 12:7 has any association to Bible preservation, claiming that it describes only the preservation of God's people not God's words. These argue that the gender difference between "them" in verse 7 (which is masculine) and "words" of verse 6 (which is feminine) requires that we look for a masculine pronoun to fit "them." Their conclusion is that we must leap over verse 6 to the feminine "poor" in verse 5. 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:

The rule of proximity requires that the antecedent of "them" in v. 7 be the "words" of verse 6.

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."

In the context of Psalm 12, the words of men are contrasted with the words of God. This favors the view that verse 7 has God's words in view.

Some of the Reformers of the 16th to the 18th centuries interpreted Psalm 12:7 as the preservation of words. Consider two examples:

Henry Ainsworth wrote in 1626 that Psalm 12:7 refers to the preservation of God's Word. "Briggs commends Ainsworth as the "prince of Puritan commentators" and that his commentary on the Psalms is a "monument of learning." ... Ainsworth states that 'the sayings' [of Psalm 12:7] are 'words' or 'promises' that are 'tried' or 'examined' 'as in a fire.' He cross references the reader to Psalm

18:31; 119:140; and Proverbs 30:5, each reference having to do with the purity of the word” (Peter Van Kleeck).

John Wesley in the 18th century said, “*Thou shalt keep them--Thy words or promises...*”

4. 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. (The following examples of biblical scholars who have held this position are from Peter Van Kleeck’s unpublished thesis *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*. This report was completed in the process of the pursuit of an M.A.R. at Calvin Theological Seminary.)

Martin Luther applied Psalm 12:7 both to God’s people and to God’s words. “Following the arrangement of this Psalm, Luther penned a hymn, two stanzas of which reflect his understanding of verse 6 and 7: ... ‘Thy truth thou wilt preserve, O Lord, from this vile generation...’ In poetic form, Luther grasps the significance of this verse both for the preservation of those who are oppressed and for the Word of God. The two-pronged significance of this interpretation to both people and God’s words in Luther’s Psalter was to have wide-ranging significance in the English Bible tradition” (Peter Van Kleeck).

Myles Coverdale in the Coverdale Bible (1535) 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.” “With the absence of ‘Thou shalt’ to begin verse 7, there is a direct connection between ‘words’ and ‘keep them.’ In the first clause, Coverdale intended the words to be kept; in the second clause people are in view...” (Van Kleeck).

John Rogers in the Matthew’s Bible (1537) followed Coverdale. In a marginal note he observed that two of the greatest rabbinical 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 preferring 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 Psalm 12:7 refers to words with others believing it refers to people.

The Third Part of the Bible (1550) takes the same position. "Taken from Becke's text of 1549 this edition of the scriptures contains the Psalter, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and the Song of Songs. ... In verse 7 there is a note at 'them' which states, 'some understand here certain men, some others word.' Again, the translators and exegetes allowed breadth of interpretation of 'them' to include people and words" (Van Kleeck).

The Geneva Bible (1560) also applies Psalm 12:7 both to God's people and God's words. The text reads, "The words of the Lord are pure words, as the silver, tried in a furnace of earth, fined seven fold. Thou wilt keep them, O Lord: Thou wilt preserve him from this generation forever." The margin reads, "Because the Lord's word and promise is true and unchangeable, he will perform it and preserve the poor from this wicked generation."

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..."

5. The King James Bible, with its faithful translation of the Hebrew, allows for both of these applications. The modern versions, on the other hand, have entirely shut out the doctrine of the preservation of God's Word in this passage by substituting a translation from the Greek and Latin. "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).

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."

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

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."

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 in Psalm 119 is very important, teaching that God's Word is settled both in heaven and on earth.

2. The Word of God was settled in the eternal plan of God. Other references to the pre-existence of the Word of God are found in Isa. 6:6; Dan. 10:21; John 8:26, 28; 17:8. The Bible is an eternal, supernatural book from beginning to end. John Wycliffe believed that the Scripture was "a divine exemplar conceived in the mind of God before creation, and before the material Scriptures were written down" (quoted from Malcolm Lambert, *Medieval Heresy: Popular Movements from the Gregorian Reform to the Reformation*, 1998, p. 230). This is the testimony of Psalm 119:89: "For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven."

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).

God is the author of human language, having created Adam with the ability to communicate with Himself from the beginning (Gen. 2:15-20).

The Scripture, written in providentially developed human language, is capable of imparting the “deep things of God” (1 Cor. 2:10).

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 (Ps. 12:6). A good translation will therefore take each word into account.

God foreknew the times in which the Scripture was written (Dan. 2:21). He created the 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). Thus the cultural context of the Scripture is an integral part of the divine Revelation and cannot be modified in a “dynamic equivalency” fashion. The Bible must be translated accurately and then explained through the teaching process.

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 or carelessness of man cannot thwart even one of God’s testimonies. As these activities are allowed within the plan and purpose of God, they can result in the corruption of some biblical manuscripts and some translations on some occasions, but they cannot result in the permanent corruption of God’s words.

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 parts of God's Word, the individual judgments, the books, chapters, verses, and words.

Proverbs 30:5-6

“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.”

1. Both the inspiration and preservation of God's Word are in view in this passage. Verse 5 refers to the infallible verbal inspiration. Verse 6 refers to preservation in two ways: First, it shows that God is jealous for His words and does not merely commit them upon the uncertain seas of human history. Second, it assumes that God's words will be available. Otherwise, how would it be possible for men to tamper with them?

2. Verse 6 also teaches that men are allowed certain freedom to exercise their will and to attack God's Word. History holds many examples of this. It occurred widely in the 2nd to the 4th centuries after the apostles and is still occurring today. In recent times skeptics have tampered with the Greek New Testament, the Hebrew Old Testament, and with the translations thereof.

3. In spite of man's wicked efforts, God has jealously guarded His Word. He judges those who tamper with it (“lest he reprove thee”) and grants wisdom to His people to reject the corruptions so that the pure Word of God always wins out over the process of time. We see this throughout the church age. Because of the widespread attacks by heretics in the 2nd and 3rd centuries, many Greek manuscripts and translations were corrupted. As time passed, these were rejected by Christians in general and the pure Word of God won out and was found in the majority of Greek and Latin manuscripts and translations. “Thus during the 4th and 5th centuries among the Syriac-speaking Christians of the East, the Greek-speaking Christians of the Byzantine empire, and the Latin-speaking Christians of the West *the same tendency was at work, namely, a God-guided trend away from the false Western and Alexandrian texts and toward the True Traditional Text*” (Edward F. Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, 4th edition, p. 188). Thus, corrupt manuscripts such as the Vaticanus and the Sinaiticus were literally put on a shelf or hidden in the sands of Egypt and were

not used. Yea, it is to this very factor that they owe their preservation.

4. In this passage, as in Psalm 12:6-7, God associates the protection and preservation of His people with that of His Word. There is an intimate connection here, because *the method by which God has preserved the Scripture is its usage among the saints*. Those who are begotten of the Word (1 Pet. 1:23) and live by the Word (Matt. 4:4) love and guard the Word even unto death, and this is exactly what we see in church history. For example, in Britain during the days when Rome ruled, the Scripture was preserved at great cost by the Lollards and other “dissidents” who cherished the Wycliffe Bible and later the Tyndale Bible unto death.

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 lovely than any flower, it does not wither or fade; it stands forever, for the reason that it is in character God’s very Word and He jealously guards it. A plainer statement of biblical preservation could not be made.

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 (Mat. 5:18). 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 prophecies are perfectly intact in the Masoretic Hebrew Old Testament and the Received Greek 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.

Isaiah 59:20-21

“And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD. As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that is upon thee, and

my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever."

1. The preservation of Scripture is a solemn covenant God has made with believers ("them that turn from transgression in Jacob" v. 20). "This is the great and comprehensive promise of that covenant, that God will give and continue his word and Spirit to his church and people throughout all generations" (Matthew Henry). The covenant applies, of course, to all believers who are the seed of Abraham (Rom. 4:16-17; Gal. 3:7).

2. A clearer statement of preservation could not be made.

The promise pertains to the words of God. We know that these words are found in the Scripture and nowhere else (2 Tim. 3:16).

The promise applies particularly to the New Testament. Isaiah is describing the coming of the Messiah, the Redeemer. When he says in verse 21, "My spirit that is upon THEE, and my words which I have put in THY mouth," he is referring to the Messiah. The Lord Jesus Christ spoke the words of God and through His spirit authored the New Testament (Jn. 16:12-13). The words of salvation "at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him" (Heb. 2:3).

The *means* of preservation is described.

Preservation is accomplished through the people of God ("my words ... shall not depart out of ... the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed..."). Man has an important role in the preservation of God's words. In the New Testament dispensation, it is the believing churches that preserve the Scripture (Mat. 28:19-20). Isaiah foresaw this process and described it as God's words being retained in the mouth of God's believing people from generation to generation. Thus, Matthew Henry observes, "...so it is a promise of the continuance and perpetuity of the church in the world to the end of time, parallel to those promises that the throne and seed of Christ shall endure for ever." When we look for the preserved Scripture we must look for it as it is kept and obeyed among God's people, not hidden away somewhere. This is precisely where the Reformers of the 16th and 17th centuries looked when the Greek New Testament was first printed and translations made thereof. They printed the text

commonly received by God's people through the centuries and they rejected manuscripts such as the Vaticanus that had been rejected in early centuries and never widely used.

Preservation is accomplished by the Spirit of God ("My spirit..."). Though man has an important part in the preservation of Scripture, he is too weak and his earthly life too brief to keep the words of God. Preservation is accomplished by God's Spirit. The fact that standard contemporary works on biblical textual criticism do not even mention the Spirit of God exposes their gross deficiency.

The promise extends from generation to generation forever, thus extending throughout the church age and beyond.

Matthew 4:4; Luke 4:4

"But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Mat. 4:4).

"And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God" (Luke 4:4).

1. These verses are a powerful witness to the divine preservation of Scripture. In defeating the Devil, the Lord Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 8:3 to teach that the words of God are part of man's necessary sustenance.

2. Note that it is not merely the word of God in general by which man lives; it is "by every word" that he lives.

3. Jesus taught that the Scripture is living and abiding and preserved. The phrase "it is written" is in the perfect tense, "meaning it has been written in the past and stands written now, preserved until the present time" (D.A. Waite).

4. The importance of this statement is emphasized by being repeated two times in the Gospels and three times altogether in Scripture. Biblical repetition is for emphasis. See Gen. 41:32, where God's dream was repeated to Pharaoh to emphasize its certainty. The modern versions omit "but by every word of God" from Luke 4:4, but the "authority" for this serious omission is a mere four Alexandrian uncials and one minuscule. Standing at the head of this handful of manuscripts we find Vaticanus and Sinaiticus, which John Burgon called "two false witnesses."

Matthew 5:18

“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.”

1. The Lord Jesus was emphatic about the preservation of God’s Word. Even the smallest details are preserved. This can only be accomplished by God’s 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. Modern textual critics exalt the so-called Septuagint or Greek translation of the Old Testament, even claiming that Christ and the apostles used and quoted from it and even using it to correct the Hebrew Masoretic text, but the Greek language does not have jots and tittles so Christ could not have been referring to the preservation the Old Testament in Greek.

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

Matthew 24:35

“Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.”

1. This is an amazing promise pertaining both to inspiration and preservation. The Lord Jesus promised that His words would not pass away, thus guaranteeing that His words would be inscripturated and preserved. John explains that it is not every word spoken by Christ that is preserved but it is those words that are inscripturated (Jn. 21:25 with 20:30-31).

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, their record then revised by others. 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 red; but scripturally speaking, the entire Bible is "red letter" because it is the Word of Christ!

Matthew 28:18-20; 1 Timothy 3:15; 6:14; 2 Timothy 2:2;
1 Peter 2:9

"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Mat. 28:19-20).

"But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15).

"That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Tim. 6:14).

"And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. 2:2).

"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light" (1 Pet. 2:9).

1. These passages describe *the PROCESS or MEANS of preservation*. Evangelicals and fundamentalists who defend textual criticism would have us believe that while the Bible contains a general or vague promise of preservation (if not directly, at least by implication, they say), it certainly 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 in Chattanooga, Tennessee, and 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” (emphasis added). The fact is that the Bible not only infers preservation, it specifically and explicitly promises it and it even tells us *how* it will be accomplished. (Further, how could Price believe a “doctrine” that is only inferred and not explicitly stated in Scripture? When I was a student at Tennessee Temple in the 1970s, I was taught that doctrine must be established upon explicit statements of Scripture and that vague inferences are not sufficient.)

2. God preserves His Word among the churches as it is being obeyed and as the Great Commission is being carried out (Mat. 28:19-20). In the Old Testament it was the Jewish priests that preserved the Scripture (Deut. 17:18). In the New Testament, it is the priesthood of the believers (1 Pet. 2:9). The churches keep or preserve God’s Word as they carry out the Great Commission (1 Tim. 3:15; Mat. 28:19-20).

Thus the Scriptures have been preserved in the church age not by “scholars” but by humble believers.

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.*”

Christ does not foresee that His Words will need to be recovered; rather, He describes a process of preservation that will endure until the end of the age (Mat. 28:19-20). The Lord Jesus Christ, who knows the beginning from the end, assumes here that the Word of God will be available throughout the age. Otherwise, it would not be possible for succeeding generations to teach the “all things” of the New Testament faith.

We see that the Scriptures are not preserved by being hidden away (such as in a remote monastery in the Sinai desert or in the Vatican Library or in a cave by the Dead Sea) but by being used in the midst of the churches. 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 most authentic New Testament manuscripts were replaced in the 4th century by corrupt ones (the textual critic’s doctrine that the Traditional Text was the product of a Recension) 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).

The witness of the Latin 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 and the Latin-based versions 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 promoted today by Zane Hodges, A. Farstad, Wilbur Pickering, and Maurice Robinson. We cannot ignore the Latin and concern ourselves strictly with finding a majority of the surviving Greek manuscripts. And when we refer to the Latin, we are not talking primarily 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 Waldenses and Albigenses and Anabaptists 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 even in the face of a minority witness in Greek.

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. I have worn out Bibles and replaced them with new ones in the brief period of a mere three decades since I have been saved. 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.

3. 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.

4. God’s people and the churches are to be zealous for the details of the Scripture, for the “spots” (1 Tim. 6:14). The laxidaisical attitude that characterizes the textual criticism position, that the omission of thousands of words is of little significance, is not Scriptural. (Note: when we talk about the omission of thousands of words we are referring to the words in Hebrew and Greek and not to words in any translation thereof.)

5. “Faithful men” play an important role in Bible preservation (2 Tim. 2:2), 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.

6. God preserves His Word by His own power (Mat. 19:18, 20). Christ explains how the preservation of Scripture can be possible in light of human frailty and temporality and the vicious and unceasing assault of the devil. It is possible because of God’s own infinite power and His active role in the preservation process. We see this in Christ’s promise, “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. ... 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 the “human element,” upon *man’s* role in the transmission of the text, but the Bible believer traces the hand of *God*.

7. This process has continued down to the end of the church age (Mat. 28:20).

The process of preservation through the churches 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.

The process of preservation through the churches 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 and Syria 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 Romant, the early German (the Tepl version), and early English (the Wycliffe version). But always it was preserved in the common usage among the churches.

The process of preservation through the churches 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.

The process of preservation through the churches 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.

Acts 20:29-30; 2 Corinthians 11:3-4; 2 Peter 2:1-2; 1 John 2:18; 4:1-2

"For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men

arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them” (Acts 20:29-30).

“But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him” (2 Cor. 11:3-4).

“But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of” (2 Pet. 2:1-2).

“Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time” (1 John 2:18).

“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God” (1 John 4:1-2).

1. These passages touch on the doctrine of Bible preservation in that we are informed that false teachers will infiltrate the churches with damnable heresies.

2. A “damnable heresy” (2 Pet. 2:1) is one that brings eternal damnation to the soul, a heresy that a saved person cannot believe. Damnable heresies pertain especially to the Person of Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the Gospel (2 Cor. 11:3-4), and to the infallible inspiration of the Scriptures (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

3. The number of heretics will be large and many will follow their heresies (2 Pet. 2:2).

4. Thus God has not promised to preserve the Scripture by not allowing heretics to operate; He has promised to preserve the Scripture *in spite of* and *in the midst of* their dastardly activities.

5. This tells us that we can expect confusion in the record of the transmission of the Bible through the centuries, that the record will contain the doctrinal corruptions introduced by heretics, as well as the truth. This, of course, is exactly what we find. Manuscripts such as Vaticanus and Sinaiticus give many evidences of having been

tampered with doctrinally.

1 Corinthians 2:12-16; 1 John 2:27

“Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ” (1 Cor. 2:12-16).

“But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him” (1 John 2:27).

1. These verses teach us that the Scriptures have been preserved among and by believers that have the Spirit.

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 any natural process.

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. We need to focus on the rules, not the exceptions.

2. These verses also teach that it is the Spirit of God Himself who preserves the Scriptures.

1 John 2:27 is in the context of the apostle’s warning about heretics and antichrists that had already infiltrated the churches in that 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 inquisition. During such times, evangelism and Bible translation was accomplished under conditions of extreme difficulty, when at all. Entire groups of believing Christians were wiped off of the face of the earth, and their Scriptures and writings destroyed. 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 of the 15th century, compared to what there is to know. (In fact, little has changed in this regard to this day. For example, there are many thousands of fundamental independent Baptist churches across the world today, but they are not even mentioned in the vast majority of influential Christian publications and contemporary histories, and for the most part their preachers are too busy fulfilling the Great Commission to write their own histories. An estimate was made in the 1970s that these churches numbered 10,000, and I would guess that they have multiplied at least five or ten fold since then. Yet if the Lord Jesus “tarries” His return, future historians studying this hour in church history might not even know that this vast group of fundamentalist churches even existed, and the little they might learn of them will be from the testimony of their spiritual enemies who cannot be trusted to give an accurate picture.)

The weakness of man has not prevented the Scriptures from being preserved, for though man has a role in its preservation, the task 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).

Therefore, when we look at the Bible text issue, we must focus more on God than on man, more on the *divine* than the *human* element.

Matthew 11:25; 1 Corinthians 1:26-29

“At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes” (Mat. 11:25).

“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 Cor. 1:26-29)

1. These verses have a bearing on the doctrine of Bible preservation in that they tell us that the truth will be found among ordinary, Spirit-regenerated believers rather than among the scholars of this world.
2. Thus I am *not* surprised that very few scholars understand biblical truth, and I am *not* surprised that those who approach the Bible text-version issue on the basis of divine inspiration and preservation are in the extreme minority.

2 Timothy 3:13; Luke 18:8; Matthew 7:14; Luke 12:32

“But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived” (2 Tim. 3:13).

“I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18:8).

“Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it” (Mat. 7:14).

“Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom” (Lk. 12:32).

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

Truth is not in the majority in this age. The Lord Jesus said “few” find the truth (Mat. 7:14) and He called His flock “little” (Lk. 12:32). Though God preserves His Word and He preserves it among the churches (as we see in Matthew 28:20 and 2 Timothy 2:2), this does not mean that it will be found in the world at large or even among churches in general.

The church age overall is characterized by increasing apostasy (2 Tim. 3:13).

The very end of the age is characterized by a great scarcity of faith and truth (Lk. 18:8). The frightful prophecy of 2 Timothy 3-4 describes *professing Christians* in the last days. See also 2 Peter 3:3-7.

2. These truths relate to the issue of Bible preservation in many ways.

The 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 the Lord Jesus taught us that we should expect the truth to be in the minority.

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.

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.

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.

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 and by the explosion of heretical cults. (See *The Modern Bible Version Hall of Shame* for extensive documentation of this.) 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.

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.

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 biblical prophecy.

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 of the preservation of Scripture. In fact, a stronger statement of the divine preservation of Scripture could not be made, for we are told that the word of God is living and incorruptible and eternal; therefore, it could not possibly cease to exist or be effectually corrupted. It abides; it endures; it lives.

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 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 essential 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.

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: 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 survey of Scripture on the doctrine of biblical preservation is the testimony of Revelation 22:18-19. God gives mankind a dire warning not to tamper with the book’s contents. This applies directly to Revelation, of course, but the warning must apply equally to the entire Bible of which Revelation forms the final chapter.

2. Note that it is the WORDS that man is forbidden to tamper with, not merely the general doctrine 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 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 Scripture. The association is not merely logical; it is biblical.
2. The divine preservation of Scripture is not merely implied or inferred in the Bible; it is explicitly promised and carefully defined. 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 biblical record in general.
6. God gives His people wisdom by His Spirit to reject the corruptions so that the pure Word of God wins out.
7. The method by which God preserves the Scripture is its usage among the saints. God preserves His Word among His people as it is being obeyed. In the Old Testament it was the Jewish priests who preserved God's Word (Deut. 17:18). In the New Testament it is the churches that keep God's Word as they carry out the Great Commission (Mat. 28:19-20; 1 Tim. 3:15).
8. Though God preserves His Word, this does not mean that it will be found in the world at large or even among churches in general. Truth is not in the majority in this age. At times the preserved Scripture can be found in small pockets, especially as the end of the age draws near.
9. The church age is characterized by increasing apostasy, and the record of the Bible throughout the church age is a mixture of truth and error.
10. As 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.

11. It is by the Spirit of God that the pure Scripture has been preserved through the long and dark hours of this age. Men have a role in the preservation of Scripture, but only the eternal God can guarantee its preservation. Thus we must look more to God than to man in this issue.

THE DOCTRINE OF PRESERVATION AUTHENTICATES THE TRADITIONAL GREEK NEW TESTAMENT UNDERLYING THE KING JAMES AND OTHER REFORMATION BIBLES.

Section Summary

1. A foundational fact
2. Four periods of church history:

The Apostolic Period -- The Completion of the Bible
The Post Apostolic Period -- The Corruption of the Bible
The Dark Ages -- The Persecution of the Bible
The Reformation -- The Printing of the Bible

3. Conclusion and summary

A FOUNDATIONAL FACT

There is a foundational fact about Bible versions today that must be understood by every student, and that is this: *All of the translations of the Protestant Reformation were based on the same Greek text whereas all of the modern versions are based on a different Greek text, and this accounts for thousands of changes.* For example in 1 Timothy 3:16 the word “God” is removed from the modern versions. This is because the word “God” is omitted in the modern critical Greek New Testament wherea it was in the text underlying the Reformation Bibles.

1. Generally speaking, the KJV Greek text was the text commonly used among God’s people through the centuries.

It is called the “majority text” because it represents the vast majority of existing Greek manuscripts.

Even the modern version defenders admit that the Reformation text is the common or traditional text.

God’s promise of preservation tells us that this, therefore, is the inspired Scripture.

2. The Greek text underlying the modern versions came from Egypt and is called the Alexandrian text after the Egyptian city of Alexandria, which was a center of learning during the early centuries of the church age. The article “Textual Criticism and the Alexandrian Text” at the www.earlham.edu web site summarizes the standard view of textual criticism as follows: “This text arose in Egypt and is generally conceded to be the most important one. Westcott and Hort, who named this the Neutral Text, thought that Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus had preserved a pure form of the Alexandrian type of text.” Jacobus Petzer admits: “... the vast majority of textual scholars today agrees that the Alexandrian text is most probably the closest representative of the original text available today” (Petzer, “The History of the New Testament Text,” *New Testament Textual Criticism, Exegesis and Church History*, edited by B. Aland and J. Delobel, 1994, p. 25). And Peter van Minnen, in *Dating the Oldest New Testament Manuscripts*, concludes: “It is to be noticed that all the manuscripts listed above come from Egypt. The papyri ... Sinaiticus ... B [Vaticanus] ... We owe the early Egyptian Christians an immense debt” (<http://www.clt.astate.edu/wmarey/Bible%20as%20Literature%20documents/content2.htm>).

Egypt is not the place where the Spirit of God gave the New Testament Scriptures. God chose to deliver the Scriptures to churches in Palestine, Syria, Asia Minor, and Europe. Not one book of the New Testament is associated with Egypt.

Beginning in the book of Genesis, the Bible warns about Egypt. The first mention of Egypt is Gen. 12:10-13 -- “And there was a famine in the land: and Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there; for the famine was grievous in the land. And it came to pass, when he was come near to enter into Egypt, that he said unto Sarai his wife, Behold now, I know that thou art a fair woman to look upon. Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they shall say, This is his wife: and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive. Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister: that it may be well with me for thy sake; and my soul shall live because of thee.”

This was a step of **DISOBEDIENCE** on Abraham’s part, for there is no record that God spoke to him about this. God had told him to leave Ur and go to Canaan, and when he did this he was walking in faith and obedience, because “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing

by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17). But when Abraham turned aside and went down to Egypt, he was walking by natural sight and disobedience.

Abraham’s disobedience quickly led to **DECEPTION**. Thus the very first thing that we see about Egypt in the Scriptures is that it is associated with disobedience and deception. We know that the principle of “first mention” is important, and that this is therefore an important spiritual lesson. “Going down to Egypt in the first two references of Scripture were times of disobedience and deception. Does God have a lesson here for us? The New Testament tells us in 1 Corinthians 10:11 that ‘...all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.’ I believe He does have a lesson here and it concerns faith in His preserved Word and Words. Why do some, including some of our fundamentalist brethren, go to Egypt when it comes to recovering the manuscripts underlying our New Testament Scriptures?” (David Bennett, *Preserved in Egypt or Preserved in God’s Churches*, 2004, p. 1).

Abraham’s journey to Egypt also represented a **MISPLACED TRUST**. Another important reference to the danger of Egypt is Isaiah 31:1 -- “Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong; but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the LORD!” Instead of trusting in God, the Israelites were trusting in man. And this is exactly what we see in modern textual criticism. Its theories were not founded on faith in God’s promise of preservation. Rather, its theories were gathered from unregenerate men in secular fields. It trusts not in God’s promises but in the manuscript record.

A Tale of Two Cities

“There is one point upon which both sides of the current Bible text-version debate agree: the early transmissional history of the New Testament is a ‘tale of two cities’, Antioch and Alexandria. And just as surely as the KJV Text was woven into the spiritual life of Antioch in Syria, so was also the Modern Version Text in Alexandria. ... The choice is a clear one, as there is very little common ground between them.

“Certainly Antioch has by far the more glorious Biblical heritage. It became to the Gentile Christians what Jerusalem had been to the

Jews, and superseded Jerusalem as the base for the spread of the Gospel. The 'disciples were called Christians first in Antioch' (Acts 11:26). It was the starting point for the Apostle Paul's missionary journeys. Mark, Barnabas, and Silas were there; as was Peter and probably Luke. The Book of Acts leaves us with no doubt that Antioch was the centre of early church activity.

"Egypt shares no such glory. It has always been looked upon as a symbol of the world-system which is opposed to the things of God. God would not allow His Son (Mt. 2), His nation (Ex. 12), His patriarchs (Gen. 50), or even the bones of the patriarchs (Ex. 13:19) to remain there. The Jews were warned repeatedly not to return to Egypt, not to rely upon it for help, not to even purchase horses there, etc. Thus, in contrast to what is being claimed today, it is hard to believe that Egypt and Alexandria would have been the central place where God would preserve His Holy Word. Frankly, it was the last place on earth that one could trust in doctrinal and biblical matters. It certainly wasn't safe to get a Bible there! Even Bruce Metzger, a supporter of the Alexandrian Text, is compelled to catalogue the vast amount of religious corruption which came from Alexandria: 'Among Christians which during the second century either originated in Egypt or circulated there among both the orthodox and the Gnostics are numerous apocryphal gospels, acts, epistles, and apocalypses. Some of the more noteworthy are the Gospel according to the Egyptians, the Gospel of Truth, the Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Philip, the Kerygma of Peter, the Acts of John, the Epistle of Barnabas, the Epistle of the Apostles, and the Apocalypse of Peter. There are also fragments of exegetical and dogmatic works composed by Alexandrian Christians, chiefly Gnostics during the second century. We know, for example, of such teachers as Basilides and his son Isidore, and of Valentinus, Ptolemaeus, Heracleon, and Pantaenus. All but the last-mentioned were unorthodox in one respect or another.* In fact, to judge by the comments made by Clement of Alexandria, almost every deviant Christian sect was represented in Egypt during the second century; Clement mentions the Valentinians, the Basilidians, the Marcionites, the Peratae, the Encratites, the Docetists, the Haimetites, the Cainites, the Ophites, the Simonians, and the Eutychites. What proportion of Christians in Egypt during the second century were orthodox is not known' (Metzger, *The Early Versions of the New Testament*, Clarendon Press, 1977, p. 101). [* Metzger errs in implying that Pantaenus was orthodox. As we will

see, he mixed pagan philosophy with Christianity.]

“Let it be said again: Alexandria was the worst possible place to go for a Bible! Yet it is precisely the place that our present-day translators have gone in gathering the major sources of the modern Bible” (Jack Moorman, *Modern Bible Versions: The Dark Secret*).

FIVE PERIODS OF CHURCH HISTORY PERTAINING TO THE GREEK NEW TESTAMENT

To understand the history of the Greek New Testament we have to understand the following four major periods of Church History: *The Apostolic Period* (the completion of the Scriptures), *the Post Apostolic Period* (the corruption of the Scriptures), *the Dark Ages* (the persecution of the Scriptures), and *the Reformation* (the printing of the Scriptures).

THE APOSTOLIC PERIOD -- THE COMPLETION OF THE BIBLE

In this section we will cover the inspiration and canonization of the New Testament from a believing perspective. I would like to thank Dr. Thomas Strouse for his groundbreaking book *The Lord God Hath Spoken: A Guide to Bibliology*, (Emmanuel Baptist Seminary, 296 New Britain Ave., Newington, CT 06111, 860-666-1055), which presents the “Received Bible” position that is so plainly taught in Scripture but that is so commonly ignored by contemporary biblical scholars. In my estimation, his is the best current work on this subject.

During the Apostolic Period, the following important things occurred that are necessary to understand in regard to the Bible version issue:

1. The New Testament was written under divine inspiration.

Jesus Christ received words from God the Father (Jn. 17:8) and He promised that those words would not pass away (Mat. 24:35). He further promised that the Holy Spirit would guide the apostles into all truth, would bring things to their remembrance, and would show them things to come (Jn. 14:25-26; 16:12-13). Thus, the apostles and prophets who wrote the New Testament did not have to depend upon their fallible human devices. Edward Hills wisely observes: “The New Testament contains the words that Christ

brought down from heaven for the salvation of His people and now remain inscribed in holy Writ. ... For ever, O LORD, Thy Word is settled in heaven (Ps. 119:89). Although the Scriptures were written during a definite historical period, they are not the product of that period but of the eternal plan of God. When God designed the holy Scriptures in eternity, He had the whole sweep of human history in view. Hence the Scriptures are forever relevant. Their message can never be outgrown. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the Word of our God shall stand for ever (Isa. 40:8).”

The New Testament was inspired in its words. Paul said this in 1 Corinthians 2:9-13 (“the words” v. 13). When Timothy was instructed to keep the commandment “without spot” (1 Tim. 6:14) Paul was reminding him that every detail of the New Testament is inspired and authoritative.

The Gospels and the Apostolic Epistles were recognized as the Word of God from the beginning. Contemporary books on the history of the Bible commonly state that the authors of the New Testament did not know that they were writing scripture and refer to the reception of the New Testament as scripture as something that was haphazard and that took a long time. Consider the following example of this: “When the actual work of writing began no one who sent forth an epistle or framed a gospel had before him the definite purpose of contributing toward the formation of what we call ‘the Bible.’ ... They had no thought of creating a new sacred literature” (“Canon, New Testament,” *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*). This is heresy. We must understand that most books on the history of the Bible in the past 100 and more years were written by men who have been infected deeply with the skepticism that has permeated biblical scholarship since the late 19th century. Consider the following statements from the Bible itself that prove that the writers of the New Testament understood that they were writing by inspiration and that the New Testament books were recognized as the Word of God by the apostolic churches.

Paul considered his writings to be authoritative, the very words of God (1 Cor. 11:2; 14:37; Gal. 1:11-12; Col. 1:25-26, 28; 1 Thess. 2:13; 2 Thess. 3:6, 14).

Paul expected his writings to be circulated from church to church (Gal. 1:2; Col. 4:16; 1 Thess. 5:27).

Paul stated that Scripture was being written by the New Testament

prophets by divine revelation under inspiration of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 16:25-26; 1 Cor. 2:6-16; Eph. 3:4-5).

Peter said that the word being preached by the apostles was the word of God (1 Pet. 1:25).

Peter put the commandments of the apostles on the same level as that of the Old Testament prophets (2 Pet. 3:2). A Jew would not have dared to make such a claim if he were not convinced that the apostolic writings were Holy Scripture, because he looked upon the Old Testament prophets as the very oracles of God.

Peter calls the epistles of Paul Scripture and puts them on the same level as the Old Testament (2 Pet. 3:15-16). “Although some [of Paul’s epistles] had been out for perhaps fifteen years, the ink was scarcely dry on others, and perhaps 2 Timothy had not yet been penned when Peter wrote. Paul’s writings were recognized and declared by apostolic authority to be Scripture as soon as they appeared” (Wilbur Pickering).

The book of Revelation was written as the prophetic Word of God (Rev. 1:3; 21:5; 22:18-19).

Luke claimed perfect understanding of the things of the Gospel, which can only come by divine revelation (Luke 1:3). Luke is either making a vain boast or he is claiming inspiration.

Paul quotes from the Gospel of Luke and calls it Scripture, putting it on the same level as Deuteronomy (compare 1 Tim. 5:18; Deut. 25:4; Lk. 10:7). Wilbur Pickering observes: “Taking the traditional and conservative point of view, 1 Timothy is generally thought to have been written within five years after Luke. Luke was recognized and declared by apostolic authority to be Scripture as soon as it came off the press, so to speak” (*The Identity of the New Testament Text*, chapter 5).

In warning the believers of false teachers, Jude refers to the “words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Jude 17). He holds these words up as the divine standard.

John held up the teaching of the apostles as the absolute standard of Truth (1 John 4:6).

Conclusion

That the Bible is the infallible Word of God is foundational to every

aspect of the Bible text-version issue. The Bible cannot be treated merely as another book. It must always be treated as something holy and supernatural, something set apart from all other writings.

When it comes to Bible texts and versions we must be concerned with the words and details because it is verbally, plenary inspired. We cannot accept the modern text position that thousands of words are somehow of no consequence. Our goal at all times is to have the very words that the Spirit of God gave to holy men of old.

2. The New Testament was completed and sealed.

“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3).

“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: 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” (Rev. 22:18-19).

The New Testament was finished in the days of the Apostles and sealed in the final chapter, Revelation, with a solemn warning against adding to or taking away from it.

The Roman Catholic Church claims that it gave us the Bible, but we know that this is not true for the following two reasons, among others:

Roman Catholic doctrine and practice is not found in the Bible. The churches described in the New Testament are nothing like the Catholic Church. That “church” was formed over a period of many centuries following the death of the apostles, as false teachers corrupted the New Testament church and added their man-made traditions. In the New Testament we find no papacy, no priesthood after the fashion of Rome’s, no sacraments that are added to faith for salvation, no archbishops or cardinals, no baptismal regeneration, no mass, no infant baptism, no last unction, no Mary as queen of heaven, no Mary as Mother of God, no Immaculate Mary, no Mary assumed into heaven, no prayers to the saints, no treasury of grace, no purgatory, no holy relics or holy robes or holy water, no crucifixes or candles or cathedrals or monks, no “celibate” pastors, no enforced days of fasting, no prohibition

against marriage or against eating meat, nothing about the church of Rome having preeminence over other churches.

Not only is Roman Catholic doctrine and practice not based on the Bible, *it contradicts the Bible*, so it cannot be its source. Catholic dogmas such as the papacy, Mariolatry, the Saints, the Priesthood, the Mass, and Purgatory are not only *not* found in the New Testament, they *contradict* plain New Testament teaching and practice. Consider a few examples:

The papacy contradicts 1 Pet. 5:1-4, among many other passages.

Mariolatry and the Saints contradict 1 Tim. 2:5.

The Mass contradicts 1 Cor. 11:23-26.

Purgatory contradicts 2 Cor. 5:1-8 and Phil. 1:23.

The Catholic Priesthood contradicts the New Testament in that Christ alone is a priest after the order of Melchisedec (Heb. 7:21-27) and Christ established no priesthood for the New Testament churches other than the priesthood of all believers (1 Peter 2:5, 9). There is not one example in the New Testament of a priest being ordained and set apart or performing the type of ministry that we see in the Roman Catholic Church. The N.T. gives qualifications for elders and deacons, but none for priests (1 Tim. 3).

3. The New Testament was received.

“Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come” (John 16:13).

“For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me” (John 17:8).

“For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe” (1 Thess. 2:13).

We see this in John 16:13; 17:8; Acts 2:41; 8:14; 11:1; 17:11; 1 Thess. 1:6; 2:13. Though the record of this history is not extant beyond the pages of Scripture, we know that the reception and canonization of the New Testament books was not the haphazard thing that is described in most books on Bible history. The same

Holy Spirit that gave the New Testament Scriptures by inspiration guided the churches in receiving them.

We have already seen evidence from Scripture that the New Testament books were accepted as the Word of God in the apostolic churches. We have further evidence from the writings of church leaders from the first 100 years after the apostles.

Clement of Rome. “Clement of Rome, whose first letter to the Corinthians is usually dated about A.D. 96, made liberal use of Scripture, appealing to its authority, and used New Testament material right alongside Old Testament material. Clement quoted Psalm 118:18 and Heb. 12:8 side by side as ‘the holy word’ (56:3-4). He ascribes 1 Corinthians to ‘the blessed Paul the apostle’ and says of it, ‘with true inspiration he wrote to you’ (47:1-3). He clearly quotes from Hebrews, 1 Corinthians and Romans and possibly from Matthew, Acts, Titus, James and 1 Peter. Here is the bishop [pastor] of Rome, before the close of the first century, writing an official letter to the church at Corinth wherein a selection of New Testament books are recognized and declared by episcopal authority to be Scripture, including Hebrews” (Wilbur Pickering, *The Identity of the New Testament Text*). Though we don’t know where Pickering gets the business of Clement being “the bishop of Rome” (since the perversion of the office of bishop had not yet taken hold) or speaking with “episcopal authority” (because the only authority a pastor or bishop has is the Bible itself) the fact remains that Clement, writing at the end of the first century, only a short time after the passing of the apostles, recognizes the New Testament books as Scripture alongside of the Old.

Polycarp, in his letter to the Philippian church in about 115 A.D., “weaves an almost continuous string of clear quotations and allusions to New Testament writings. ... There are perhaps fifty clear quotations taken from Matthew, Luke, Acts, Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, 1 and 2 Peter, and 1 John, and many allusions including to Mark, Hebrews, James, and 2 and 3 John. (The only NT writer not included is Jude!) His attitude toward the New Testament writings is clear from 12:1: ‘I am sure that you are well trained in the sacred Scriptures. ... Now, as it is said in these Scriptures: “Be angry and sin not,” and “Let not the sun go down upon your wrath.” Blessed is he who remembers this.’ ... In either case he is declaring Ephesians to be ‘sacred

Scripture.’ A further insight into his attitude is found in 3:1-2. ‘Brethren, I write you this concerning righteousness, not on my own initiative, but because you first invited me. For neither I, nor anyone like me, is able to rival the wisdom of the blessed and glorious Paul, who, when living among you, carefully and steadfastly taught the word of truth face to face with his contemporaries and, when he was absent, wrote you letters. By the careful perusal of his letters you will be able to strengthen yourselves in the faith given to you, “ which is the mother of us all”...’ This from one who was perhaps the most respected bishop in Asia Minor, in his day. He was martyred in A.D. 156” (Pickering).

Justin Martyr (died 165 A.D.) testified that the churches of his day met on Sundays and “read the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets” (*Apology*, I, 67). He also said: “For the apostles in the memoirs composed by them, which are called Gospels, thus handed down what was commanded them...” (*Apology*). “[Just as Abraham believed the voice of God] in like manner we, having believed God’s voice spoken by the apostles of Christ...” (*Trypho* 119). “And further, there was a certain man with us whose name was John, one of the apostles of Christ, who prophesied, by a revelation that was made to him, that those who believe in our Christ would dwell a thousand years in Jerusalem” (*Trypho* 81).

Athenagorus in 177 A.D. quotes Matthew 5:28 and calls it Scripture. “... we are not even allowed to indulge in a lustful glance. For, says the Scripture, ‘he who looks at a woman lustfully, has already committed adultery in his heart’” (*Plea*).

Theophilus, who was ordained pastor of the church at Antioch in about A.D. 170, quotes from 1 Tim. 2:1 and Rom. 13:7 as “the Divine Word” (*Treatise to Autolycus*, iii). In quoting from the Gospel of John he says that John was “inspired by the Spirit” (*Ibid.*, ii). He says, “The statements of the Prophets and of the Gospels are found to be consistent, because all were inspired by the one Spirit of God” (*Ibid.*, ii).

Irenaeus died in 202 A.D. and a large number of his works are extant. Their translation into English covers between 600-700 pages in the *Ante-Nicene Library*. “Irenaeus stated that the apostles taught that God is the Author of both Testaments (*Against Heretics*

IV, 32.2) and evidently considered the New Testament writings to form a second Canon. He quoted from every chapter of Matthew, 1 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians and Philippians, from all but one or two chapters of Luke, John, Romans, 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, and Titus, from most chapters of Mark (including the last twelve verses), Acts, 2 Corinthians, and Revelation, and from every other book except Philemon and 3 John. These two books are so short that Irenaeus may not have had occasion to refer to them in his extant works--it does not necessarily follow that he was ignorant of them or rejected them. Evidently the dimensions of the New Testament Canon recognized by Irenaeus are very close to what we hold today. From the time of Irenaeus on there can be no doubt concerning the attitude of the Church toward the New Testament writings--they are Scripture" (Pickering).

Even some naturalistic modern textual critics have concluded that the New Testament in its current 27-book canon existed in Greek no later than the middle of the 2nd century, which is only about 60 years after the apostles. See David Trobisch, *The First Edition of the New Testament*, Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.

From the second century we have evidence that it was customary for each church to have its own copy of the writings of the apostles that they might read and preach from them. "And on the day called Sunday there is a meeting in one place of those who live in cities or the country, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read as long as time permits. When the reader has finished, the president in a discourse urges and invites us to the imitation of these noble things" (Justin Martyr, *Apology*). Wilbur Pickering observes: "Both Justin Martyr and Irenaeus claimed that the Church was spread throughout the whole earth, in their day--remember that Irenaeus, in 177, became bishop of Lyons, in Gaul [ancient France], and he was not the first bishop in that area. Coupling this information with Justin's statement that the memoirs of the apostles were read each Sunday in the assemblies, it becomes clear that there must have been thousands of copies of the New Testament writings in use by 200 A.D. Each assembly would need a copy to read from, and there must have been private copies among those who could afford them" (*The Identity of the New Testament Text*).

Surely many believers would be motivated to make their own

copies of the Scripture, and doubtless this would have been the case with preachers. I have not seen this important point emphasized in other histories of the Bible, but it is only reasonable. I don't believe it was a matter of having to purchase a copy from a professional scribe. Though time consuming, it is not that difficult to make a copy of the New Testament. In the first few years of my Christian life, which was B.C. or *Before Computers* (I was converted in 1973 at age 23), I copied down copious portions of Scripture in my zeal for memorization and in the process of my studies. Had I lived in an earlier time when the Scriptures were not available in printed form, I have no doubt that I would have made my own copy from Genesis to Revelation, no matter how long it took, and I would also have made copies of portions to give away to other brethren and even to unbelievers. During the early months after I was saved I tediously made copies of my testimony by typing it repeatedly and using carbon paper to multiply my efforts, because I was too poor to afford to have it printed. I handed these out in my evangelistic work. I am confident that multitudes of early believers shared this zeal to make copies both of God's Word and of evangelistic pamphlets. It is only natural, for the believer is born of the Word (Jam. 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:23), lives by the Word (Mat. 4:4), knows the truth by the Word (John 8:31-32), is a doer of the Word (Jam. 1:22), grows by the Word (1 Pet. 2:2), operates by the faith that comes from the Word (Rom. 10:17), is cleansed by the Word (Eph. 5:26), and defends himself by the Word (Eph. 6:17).

In about the year 208, Tertullian pointed to churches founded by the apostles and indicated that the "authentic writings" were still extant and were the absolute standard by which the truth was measured in the believing churches. He urged heretics to "run to the apostolic churches, in which the very thrones of the apostles are still pre-eminent in their places, IN WHICH THEIR OWN AUTHENTIC WRITINGS ARE READ, UTTERING THE VOICE AND REPRESENTING THE FACE OF EACH OF THEM SEVERALLY. Achaia is very near you, (in which) you find CORINTH. Since you are not far from Macedonia, you have PHILIPPI; (and there too) you have the THESSALONIANS. Since you are able to cross to Asia, you get EPHESUS. Since, moreover, you are close upon Italy, you have ROME, from which there comes even into our own hands the very authority (of the apostles themselves)" (Tertullian, *Prescription against Heretics*, 36, cited from Pickering). Pickering observes: "Some have thought that Tertullian was claiming that

Paul's Autographs were still being read in his day (208), but at the very least he must mean they were using faithful copies. Was anything else to be expected? For example, when the Ephesian Christians saw the Autograph of Paul's letter to them getting tattered, would they not carefully execute an identical copy for their continued use? Would they let the Autograph perish without making such a copy? (There must have been a constant stream of people coming either to make copies of their letter or to verify the correct reading.) I believe we are obliged to conclude that in the year 200 the Ephesian Church was still in a position to attest the original wording of her letter (and so for the others)..."

In A.D. 367 Athanasius, who boldly resisted the Arian heresy denying the deity of Jesus Christ (though he had his own heresies!), published a list of Old and New Testament books that he said were "handed down and believed to be divine." This list contained all of the 27 books that are in our New Testament today.

All of the Reformation confessions of faith upheld the 66 books of the Bible as divine Scripture. Examples are the Reformed Confession of 1534, the Helvetic Confession of 1536, the Belgic confession of 1561, and the Westminster Confession of 1643, and the Baptist Philadelphia Confession of Faith, 1742, to mention a few. The Westminster says the 66 books of the Bible were "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."

What is the significance of these historical facts?

First, these facts show that the same Spirit that inspired the Scripture enlightened the believers to recognize and receive it (Jn. 16:13; 1 Jn. 2:20). Thus, the process of canonization was not haphazard as it is commonly depicted in contemporary books on the history of the Bible. God did not leave this crucial matter to chance. He guided ever so particularly so that the churches would receive the inspired writings and reject those that were spurious.

Second, it is obvious that the true text of Scripture was not lost among Bible believers in the early centuries; the authentic apostolic writings were still available in the early 3rd century; and there was no need to practice textual criticism in the early centuries of the churches.

Third, the early believers were literate. "...the world into which Christianity was born was, if not literary, literate to a remarkable degree; in the Near East in the first century of our era writing was an essential accompaniment of life at almost all levels to an extent without parallel in living memory" (*Cambridge History of the Bible*, Vol. I, p. 48).

Fourth, we can expect that the majority of extant manuscripts and versions will in all likelihood represent the pure text of Scripture, because the authentic copies were multiplied greatly throughout all of the Bible-believing churches by the zeal of faithful saints. Corrupt manuscripts and versions were used for a time and in certain localities, such as Egypt, but did not win out because of the providential activity of the Holy Spirit and the vigilance of believers.

Fifth, we can expect to find the purest text of the New Testament Scriptures not in Egypt but in Asia Minor and Europe. "I believe we may reasonably conclude that in general the quality of copies would be highest in the area surrounding the Autograph and would gradually deteriorate as the distance increased. ... Taking Asia Minor and Greece together, the Aegean area held the Autographs of at least eighteen (two-thirds of the total) and possibly as many as twenty-four of the twenty-seven New Testament books; Rome held at least two and possibly up to seven; Palestine may have held up to three (but in A.D. 70 [when Rome destroyed Jerusalem] they would have been sent away for safe keeping, quite possibly to Antioch); Alexandria (Egypt) held none. The Aegean region clearly had the best start, and Alexandria the worst--the text in Egypt could only be second hand, at best. On the face of it, we may reasonably assume that in the earliest period of the transmission of the N.T. Text the most reliable copies would be circulating in the region that held the Autographs" (Wilbur Pickering, *The Identity of the New Testament Text*, chapter 5).

4. The New Testament was carefully preserved and transmitted to the next generations.

"I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; that thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Tim. 6:13-14).

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of

the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matt. 28:19-20).

"And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. 2:2).

The believers in the early churches were taught to keep the Scripture "without spot" (1 Tim. 6:13) and to pass along exactly THE SAME things they had been taught by the apostles to faithful men who would be able to teach others (2 Tim. 2:2).

They were taught to carefully transmit the faith to succeeding generations of disciplines and churches. Christ commanded this in Matt. 28:19-20, instructing the churches to teach the disciples to "keep all things whatsoever I have commanded you." This would require that the believers possess "all things" in writing, which they did in the Gospels, Acts, and the epistles.

There is nothing haphazard or careless about this process. The only ones who would be haphazard or careless in this regard would be the false teachers and nominal Christians.

5. The New Testament was multiplied and went into all the world.

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

"But the word of God grew and multiplied" (Acts 12:24).

"So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed" (Acts 19:20).

"But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world" (Rom. 10:18).

"But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith" (Rom. 16:26).

"Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth" (Col. 1:6).

"If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister" (Col. 1:23).

This divine multiplication worked to safeguard the text of Scripture from the efforts of heretics to corrupt it. This is why we should generally look to the majority of witnesses in Greek and the versions.

The fact that the Gospel was preached to all nations and tongues reminds us that the New Testament was translated into other languages at a very early period (the Syriac and old Latin date to the 2nd century), and ancient translations are important witnesses to the text. "This translation of the Written Word into various tongues is but a carrying out of that which the miracle of Pentecost indicated as a distinctive characteristic of this age, namely, that everyone should hear the saving truth of God in the tongue wherein he was born. Thus, the agreement of two or more of the earliest Versions would go a long way toward the establishment of the true reading of any disputed passage. It is appropriate at this point to direct attention to the very great value of a Version as a witness to the purity of the original Text from which it was translated. Those who undertake a work of such importance as the translation of the New Testament into a foreign language would, of course, make sure, as the very first step, that they had the best obtainable Greek Text. Therefore a Version (as the Syriac or Old Latin) of the second century is a clear witness as to the Text recognized at that early day as the true Text" (Philip Mauro, *Which Version: Authorized or Revised?* 1924).

Through this process the New Testament books in Greek and other languages were distributed throughout the world in the first two centuries, throughout the Middle East, to Africa, Asia Minor, Europe, as far as England in the west and India in the east.

The church at Antioch was central to the missionary process (Acts 13:1-4). This was the church that sent out Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, who personally carried the Gospel throughout Asia Minor and Europe and who wrote many of the New Testament epistles. It is therefore very significant that the Received Text is also called the "Antiochian" or "Syrian" text, from the fact that it can be traced to that part of the world. "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 was the third city of the

empire, a city with an independent and proud spirit; and something of this same independent spirit was part of its heritage as the ‘mother of all Gentile churches.’ ... Antioch may well have been the prime source of the earliest copies of most of the New Testament Scriptures for newly established churches. It will be recalled that Antioch was the place where the first Gentile missions originated; it was the home base for the apostle Paul; Luke may have been there; Mark, Barnabas and Silas, Paul’s companions, were there; Peter visited Antioch; Matthew may have written his Gospel there” (Harry Sturz, *The Byzantine Text-type*, pp. 104, 105).

6. The New Testament faith and Scriptures were attacked even in the first century.

This attack took the form of heretical assaults against the New Testament faith.

Paul testified of this in many places, giving us a glimpse into the vicious assault that was already plaguing the work of God.

Consider his last message to the pastors at Ephesus (Acts 20:29-30). Paul warned them that false teachers would come from without and would also arise from within their own ranks.

Consider Paul’s second epistle to Corinth (2 Cor. 11:1-4, 12-15). The false teachers at Corinth were corrupting three of the cardinal doctrines of the New Testament faith, the doctrine of Christ, Salvation, and the Holy Spirit; and the churches were in danger of being overthrown by these errors.

Peter testified of this in 2 Peter 2. He warned in verse one that there would be false teachers who hold “damnable heresies,” referring to heresies that damn the soul to eternal hell. If someone denies, for example, the Virgin Birth, Deity, Humanity, Sinlessness, Eternality, Atonement, or Resurrection of Jesus Christ he cannot be saved. Heresies pertaining to such matters are damnable heresies. The corruption of the “doctrine of Christ” results in a “false christ.”

John gave similar warnings in his epistles (1 Jn. 2:18, 19, 22; 4:1-3; 2 Jn. 8).

The Lord Jesus Christ warned that many of the apostolic churches were already weak and were under severe stress from heretical attacks (Rev. 2:6, 14-15, 20-24; 3:2, 15-17).

Thus the New Testament faith was being attacked on every hand in

the days of the apostles by Gnosticism, Judaism, Nicolaitanism, and other heresies.

Some of those who held heretical doctrine corrupted New Testament manuscripts and created spurious ones.

The Lord Jesus alluded to this when He warned that the devil would sow tares among the wheat (Mat. 13:25, 39). This applies both to the devil's attack upon the churches and his attack upon the Scriptures, the church's foundation.

Paul testified of this.

2 Cor. 2:17 -- "For we are not as many which corrupt the Word of God." He warned that there were many false teachers who were corrupting the Word of God.

2 Thess. 2:2 -- "That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand." Paul warned the churches that false teachers were forging epistles purporting to be authored by the apostles.

Peter testified of this in 2 Pet. 3:16 -- "... in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do the other scriptures." Peter warned that false teachers were wresting the Scriptures, particularly Paul's writings.

This attack became more severe after the death of the apostles. We will see more about the importance of this as we progress in these studies.

7. The New Testament was defended by God's people.

"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. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock" (Acts 20:28-29).

"Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample" (Phil. 3:17).

"But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them" (2 Tim. 3:14).

"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (2 Tim. 4:2-4).

“Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us. But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things” (1 John 2:18-20).

“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. 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” (Jude 3-4).

The believers in the early churches were taught not only to receive the Word of God but also to use it as the standard of Truth and to defend it against all enemies. The believers were taught to contend for the faith. Thus, they were not passive in the face of false teachers and their wicked attempts to corrupt the Word of God. The Lord Jesus Christ commended churches that carried out this obligation (Rev. 2:6). And when churches were careless in this regard, they were rebuked (2 Cor. 11:1-4; Gal. 1:6-9; Rev. 2:14-16, 20).

Churches that are zealous for the truth tend to be equally zealous for the Scriptures that teach the truth. The following quotes exemplify the attitude of the early churches toward those who were trying to pervert the truth:

Irenaeus. “...there shall be no light punishment upon him who either adds or subtracts anything from the scripture.” Irenaeus stated this in the context of the words of Revelation 13:18, which were being assaulted in his day *by the change of one letter*. Some were saying that John wrote 616 instead of 666, and Irenaeus went to the defense of this one letter of Scripture with alacrity. He “asserts that 666 is found ‘in all the most approved and ancient copies’ and that ‘those men who saw John face to face’ bear witness of it” (Wilbur Pickering). At that point he warns those who made the change of *a single letter* that they would be judged of God. My prayer is that more brethren today would have the zeal of Irenaeus toward the defense of God’s words.

Polycarp. “Whoever perverts the sayings of the Lord ... that one is the firstborn of Satan.” This preacher minced no words when

describing false teachers. In this he follows the example of Christ (Mat. 23:13-33) and the apostles (Acts 13:9-10; 2 Pet. 2:1-22; Jude 4-20)

All of this must be received by faith (Heb. 11:1, 6). Faith believes what God says in His Word (Rom. 10:17), period. Faith is not sight and does not depend upon “the manuscript record” or any other record in addition to Scripture. We believe that the world was created as Genesis says even though no man was there to observe it. Likewise, we believe that the Scriptures were divinely inspired, canonized, and preserved because God’s Word says so! We have other evidence on both counts, but we don’t *need* other “evidence,” and if the extra-biblical evidence appears to contradict faith it is only because we don’t yet have enough facts or we don’t yet have the understanding sufficient to interpret the facts.

THE POST-APOSTOLIC PERIOD -- THE ATTEMPT TO REPLACE THE APOSTOLIC BIBLE WITH A CORRUPTION

“The history of the New Testament text is the history of a conflict between God and Satan” (John Burgon).

1. Consider some testimonies to the severe attack upon the Bible during the 200-300 years following the apostles:

Frederick Nolan: “In the age in which the [Latin] Vulgate was formed, the church was infested with Origenists and Arians; an affinity between any manuscript and that version consequently conveyed some suspicion that its text was corrupted. ... the founders of those different sects had tampered with the text of Scripture ... in some instances the genuine text had been wholly superseded by the spurious editions” (Nolan, *Inquiry into the Integrity of the Greek Vulgate*, 1815, pp. 468, 69).

F.H.A. Scrivener: “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 ... 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 Stephen, thirteen centuries after, when moulding the Textus Receptus” (Scrivener, *A Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament*, II, 4th edition, 1894, pp. 264, 265).

John Burgon: “In the age which immediately succeeded the Apostolic there were heretical teachers not a few, who finding their tenets refuted by the plain Word of God bent themselves against the written Word with all their power. From seeking to evacuate its teaching, it was but a single step to seeking to falsify its testimony” (John Burgon and Edward Miller, *The Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text of the Holy Gospels*, 1896). “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).

Dionysius, a pastor at Corinth, in a letter dated about A.D. 168-176, testified that his own letters as well as the Scriptures had been altered: “For when the brethren desired me to write epistles, I did so. And these the apostles of the devil have filled with tares, cutting out some things and adding others: for whom the woe is reserved. It is not marvelous, therefore, if some have set themselves to tamper with the Dominical Scriptures as well, since they have also laid their designs against writings that do not class as such” (Hugh Lawlor and J.E.L. Oulton (trans.), *Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea, the Ecclesiastical history and the Martyrs of Palestine*, London: SPCK, nd., IV. 23, p. 130; cited from Sturz, *The Byzantine Text-type*, p. 116).

Hippolytus (or perhaps Gius) wrote sometime around AD 230, “They [heretics] laid hands fearlessly on the divine Scriptures, saying that they had corrected them” (Malcolm Watts, *The Lord Gave the Word*, Trinitarian Bible Society, 1998).

Irenaeus, who died in 202 A.D., complained that the Marconians produced “an unspeakable number of apocryphal and spurious

writings, which they themselves had forged, to bewilder the minds of the foolish.” In writing against the Valentinians, he said: “They, however, who would be wiser than the apostles, write in the following manner [referring to Matt. 11:27]: ‘No man *knew* the Father, but the Son...’ and they explain it as if the true God were known to none prior to our Lord’s advent; and that God who was announced by the prophets, they allege not to be the Father of Christ” (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*).

Tertullian (c. 160-200 A.D.), in “Prescription against Heretics,” complained that the Marcionite and Valentinian heretics tampered with the Scriptures. “He said they abuse Scripture by the rejection of parts or through changing by diminishing or adding and also by false interpretation. He charged the Marcionites of being especially guilty of textual corruption and the Valentinians with using perverse interpretation, though ‘they also have added and taken away.’ He argues that the genuine text is in the hands of the catholic churches [referring not to *the Roman Catholic Church* but to “catholic” in the sense of *the churches in general*] because their text is older than that of the heretics. He maintains that the late date of the changed manuscripts proves their forgery” (Harry Sturz, *The Byzantine Text-type*, p. 117).

Gaius (also spelled Caius), who wrote between A.D. 175 and 200, named Asclepiades, Theodotus, Hermophilus, and Apollonides as heretics who prepared corrupted copies of the Scriptures and who had disciples who multiplied copies of their fabrications (John Burgon, *The Revision Revised*, p. 323). Gaius named four heretics who denied the deity of Christ and who were altering the text and distributing copies made by their disciples. Gaius said their guilt was certain because they could not produce the originals from which they made their copies. Note the following amazing quote by Gaius, which opens for us a window into that era as to the activities of the false teachers and the manifold changes they made to the New Testament manuscripts, disagreeing among themselves as much as they disagreed with the apostles: “The Divine Scriptures these heretics have audaciously *corrupted* ... laying violent hands upon them under pretence of *correcting* them. That I bring no false accusation, any one who is disposed may easily convince himself. He has but to collect the copies belonging to these persons severally; then, to compare one with another; and he will discover that their discrepancy is extraordinary. Those of Asclepiades, at all

events, will be found discordant from those of Theodotus. Now, plenty of specimens of either sort are obtainable, inasmuch as these men's disciples have industriously multiplied the (so-called) 'corrected' copies of their respective teachers, which are in reality nothing else but 'corrupted' copies. With the foregoing copies again, those of Hermophilus will be found entirely at variance. As for the copies of Apollonides, they even contradict one another. Nay, let any one compare the fabricated text which these persons put forth in the first instance, with that which exhibits their *latest* perversions of the Truth, and he will discover that the disagreement between them is even excessive. Of the enormity of the offence of which these men have been guilty, they must needs themselves be fully aware. Either they do not believe that the Divine Scriptures are the utterance of the Holy Ghost,--in which case they are to be regarded as unbelievers: or else, they account themselves wiser than the Holy Ghost,--and what is that, but to have the faith of devils? As for their denying their guilt, the thing is impossible, seeing that the copies under discussion are their own actual handywork; and they know full well that not such as these are the Scriptures which they received at the hands of their catechetical teachers. *Else, let them produce the originals from which they made their transcripts.* Certain of them indeed have not even condescended to falsify Scripture, but entirely reject Law and Prophets alike" (Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, v. 28; cited from Burgon, *The Revision Revised*, pp. 323, 324).

Some observations about this quote:

The false teachers who were tampering with the text were those who held heresies pertaining to the Person of Jesus Christ; thus we can assume that the changes that they made were associated with their heresies and were for the purpose of modifying the Scriptures to their heretical doctrine.

The heretics disagreed among themselves and made changes to the texts that were contradictory to those made in other manuscripts and by other heretics.

This type of thing is exactly what we see in the Egyptian manuscripts that are preferred by the modern textual critics. The Vaticanus New Testament disagrees with the Sinaiticus in over 3,000 places *in the Gospels alone, not counting spelling mistakes.* Papyrus 45 disagrees with papyrus 66 in 73 places *apart from*

obvious scribal mistakes in the mere 70 verses that these fragments are extant!

Clement of Alexandria (c. 150-230 A.D.) mentions the following heretics in Egypt in the 2nd century: the Valentinians, the Basilidians, the Marcionites, the Peratae, the Encratites, the Docetists, the Haimetites, the Cainites, the Ophites, the Simonians, and the Eutychites (Metzger, *Early Versions*, p. 101). Clement complained that some of these tampered with the Gospels “for their own sinister ends” (Sturz, *The Byzantine Text-type*, p. 117).

Eusebius (270-340 A.D.) listed many spurious books that were produced “by the heretics under the name of the apostles,” mentioning Peter, Thomas, and Matthew, Andrew, and John. He called these writings “the fictions of heretical men” and warned that they are “to be rejected as altogether absurd and impious.”

Augustine (c. 400) testified that some had omitted John 7:53-8:11 from manuscripts. “Certain persons of little faith, or rather enemies of the truth faith, fearing, I suppose, lest their wives should be given impunity in sinning, removed from their manuscripts the Lord’s act of forgiveness toward the adulteress, as if He who had said ‘sin no more’ had granted permission to sin” (quoted from Edward Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, p. 151).

2. Consider some examples of the attack upon the Bible by heretics during the Post-Apostolic period:

Gnosticism

Gnosticism refers to a doctrine of salvation through a secret knowledge of divine things. The Greek word “gnosis” means knowledge. Gnosticism is a broad term encompassing a wide variety of heresy, held both by non-Christians and those who professed Christ. Gnosticism was developed by non-Christians who borrowed from Greek philosophy, Judaism, and Oriental mysticism. Elements of Gnosticism were then borrowed by professing Christians, who intermingled Gnostic thought with New Testament teaching.

Gnosticism denied that the world was made directly by the one God of the Bible. Instead, it taught that God was separated from the allegedly evil creation by a system of emanations or “aeons” or angels. “Gnostics taught that matter was evil and spirit was good.

Therefore they were faced with the problem of how a good God could create an evil world. A system of emanations was their answer, that is, there emanated from God an infinite chain of beings that became increasingly evil. Finally, at the end of the line came the Demiurge, or somewhat evil God, who was identified with the Jehovah of the Old Testament, and who was thought to be the Creator of the world and man” (*McClintock & Strong Cyclopedia*).

Gnostics differentiated between the Christ spirit and the man Jesus. “There was a great variety of Gnostic systems, but a common pattern ran through them all. From the pleroma, or spiritual world of aeons the divine Christ descended and united Himself for a time (according to Ptolemy, between the baptism and the passion) to the historical personage” (J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 1958, p. 141).

According to Gnostic teaching, certain select individuals called “spirituals” are chosen to come to an understanding of the secret *gnosis*. This promoted an aristocratic pride among those who thought of themselves as the chosen ones. This idea was borrowed by “Christian” Gnostics who taught that Jesus was one of these spirituals and that he learned the *gnosis* in Egypt. This doctrine is still held today and is taught in books such as *The Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ*, which I studied and believed before I was converted.

As Gnosticism taught that the material creation is evil, most Gnostics held extreme ascetic ideas about sex and marriage, believing that marriage is evil. At the opposite end of the scale were Gnostics who lived very licentious lives, claiming that “they were the pearls who could not be stained by any external mud.” These included Carpocrates and his son Epiphanes, who taught that promiscuity was God’s law (Lion’s *History of Christianity*, p. 97).

Gnosticism focused on secret knowledge and traditions, secret teachings allegedly passed down from Adam or from Jesus or from the apostles, etc. By its very nature it was complicated and difficult to understand.

The seedbed for Gnosticism was Alexandria, Egypt. Some of the influential Gnostics who taught at Alexandria were Ptolemy, Basilides, Isidore, Carpocrates, Epiphanes, and Valentinus.

Gnosticism was so widespread that it almost overthrew sound New Testament faith in some parts of the world, particularly in Egypt. “Gnosticism at any rate came within an ace of swamping the central tradition” (Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, p. 142).

Gnostic teachings are identified with the spirit of antichrist in 1 John 2:18-27; 4:3-6; 2 John 7-11.

Paul refutes gnostic-type teachings in Col. 2:8-23; 1 Tim. 4:1-8; 6:20; 2 Tim. 2:16-18.

Marcion

According to Tertullian, Marcion was a Christian who turned aside to Gnostic heresies. “Justin Martyr and Irenaeus wrote against him: besides Origen and Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian in the West, and Epiphanius in the East, elaborately refuting his teaching, and give us large information as to his method of handling Scripture” (John Burgon and Edward Miller, *Causes of the Corruption*, p. 212).

Marcion believed the God of the Old Testament is different from the God of the New and that the Old and New Testaments are contradictory. He looked upon Christ as some type of phantom and not a real man. He taught that Christ redeemed Old Testament rebels such as Cain and Korah. He denied the bodily resurrection.

Marcion was not afraid to tamper with the Scriptures. In particular, he removed portions of them. “Marcion and his followers have betaken themselves to mutilating the Scriptures. ... they assert that these alone are authentic which they themselves HAVE SHORTENED” (Irenaeus, c. 150 A.D.). “Marcion has left a mark on the text of Scripture of which traces are distinctly recognizable at the present day” (Burgon and Miller, *Causes of the Corruption*, p. 212).

In light of Marcion’s habit of “shortening” the Scriptures, it is important to note that a chief characteristic of the modern Critical Text is its omissions. Compared to the Received Text, the omissions alone total 2,886 words, equivalent to removing the entire books of 1 and 2 Peter from the New Testament.

Valentinus

Valentinus lived in Egypt in the 2nd century.

He taught a convoluted, Plato-influenced Gnostic doctrine that God the Father, Christ, and the Holy Spirit were all somehow created; the Father was created by the first Great Cause, and Christ and the Holy Spirit were subsequently created by the Father.

He denied the Godhead of Jesus Christ. He made a sharp distinction between the Word and the Son. According to the Valentinians, the Word is God but the Son is something lesser. Some Valentinians denied the physical nature of Christ's body, believing it was "psychical."

Another heresy associated with Valentinus, or at least with some of his followers, was Docetism, which was an attack upon the humanity of Christ. According to this doctrine, Christ's human nature was only an appearance. Docetism "altogether denied the real, humanly-sensuous side of Christ's life, and only acknowledged as real the revelation of the divine Being. ... Docetism was a most subtle element, which wrought variously before it had any discernible concentration in any leading men or sects, and it infused its unreal and fantastic leaven into various Gnostic sects, and other later ones which grew out of Gnosticism. It was a deep, natural, rationalistic, pseudo-spiritualistic, anti-incarnation element. It was firmly set against the real union of the divine and human in Christ, and against all dogmas which depend upon the reality of the incarnation" (*McClintock & Strong Cyclopaedia*).

Adoptionism

This was the heresy, already briefly touched upon, that Jesus was born an ordinary man and that he became the Son of God at his baptism when the Christ Spirit came upon him. "There was a strong movement in the early centuries to deny Christ's 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.' The heresy follows this line of reasoning: 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 separated personages. Many names and groups are associated with this wicked teaching, foremost of whom were the Gnostics" (Jack Moorman, *Modern Bible Versions: The Dark Secret*, p. 15).

Sabellianism

This heresy, taught by Sabellius in the early 3rd century, denied the doctrine of the Trinity, claiming that the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are merely three ways in which God has revealed Himself, that they are not three eternal Persons in one God. “The one divine substance simply assumes three forms (the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost) in its threefold relation to the world. ... In illustration of this, Sabellius compares the Father to the visible globe of the sun, the Son to its illuminating effects, and the Spirit to its warming influence, while the sun, *per se*, would correspond to the simple divine substance ... As the three manifestations are conceived of as successive, so, also, are they but temporary and transitory. The divine substance does not manifest itself simultaneously in three forms, but as each new manifestation is made the previous one ceases; and when, finally, all three stages have been passed, the triad will again return into the monad, and the divine substance will again be all and in all. ... [Sabellius] differs from the orthodox view by his denial of the trinity of essence and the permanence of the threefold manifestation, thus making of the Father, Son, and Spirit simply a transient series of phenomena, which fulfil their mission, and then return into the abstract one divine substance” (*McClintock & Strong Cyclopaedia*).

Arianism

This heresy was promoted by Arius, an elder in the church at Alexandria, Egypt, in the early 4th century.

According to the teaching of Arius, the Son of God was not equal to God, not eternal, but was created by God the Father before the foundation of the world. Arius taught that the Father alone is God and the Son is a creature, though the most perfect and exalted of creatures.

Arius argued doctrine from human logic rather than strictly from the Scriptures, reasoning, “The Father is a Father; the Son is a Son; therefore the Father must have existed before the Son; therefore once the Son was not; therefore he was made, like all creatures, of a substance that had not previously existed.”

Tatian

Tatian lived in the second century and his Christianity was intermingled with pagan philosophy and Gnostic tendencies.

He practiced an extreme asceticism, prohibiting marriage (claiming that it is a state of fornication) and prohibiting the eating of meat. Thus he taught “doctrines of devils” (1 Tim. 4:1-5). Writing toward the end of the 2nd century, Irenaeus of Lyons warned that Tatian denounced marriage as “corruption and fornication.”

He taught a works salvation, claiming that “eternal life demands a radical renunciation of possessions, family life and marriage, i.e., the prize demands a life in abstinence and virginity” (T.V. Philip, *East of the Euphrates: Early Christianity in Asia*, <http://www.religion-online.org/showchapter.asp?title=1553&C=1361>). He thus confused the salvation, which is a gift (Eph. 2:8-9), with the reward for Christian service, which is a prize (Phil. 3:14).

Tatian further taught Docetic doctrines pertaining to the person of Christ, separating the divine Word from the man Jesus. He wrote, “...the Logos descended to Jesus and was mingled with his soul; the Logos dwelt in him as in a temple” (Tatian, *Oration to the Greeks*, 15:2, quoted from Jack Moorman, *A Closer Look*, p. 52).

Tatian’s most famous work was a harmony of the four Gospels called the *Diatessaron* (*dia tessaron*, meaning *through the four*), also known as the *Gospel of Tatian*. Tatian’s harmony contained “several textual alterations which lent support to ascetic or encratite [ascetic] views” (Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*). “Tatian was able to weave into the gospel his encratite views. He modified several of the sayings of Jesus in the canonical texts to suit his purpose” (Philip, *East of the Euphrates*). Indeed, Tatian was “censured as being a dangerous compiler and falsifier of Holy Writ” (McClintock & Strong). “But Tatian beyond every other writer of antiquity appears to me to have caused alterations in the Sacred Text” (Burgon and Miller, *Causes of the Corruption*, p. 212).

3. Consider some examples of spurious writings created during this period:

The Gospel of Nicodemus

The Gospel of Nicodemus dates to the 2nd and 3rd centuries and is composed of the Acts of Pilate and the Gospel of James. It claims to have been written by Pilate with material obtained from Nicodemus and contains an account of the trial and death of Christ “embellished with fabulous additions.”

It contains a mythical account of Christ in Hell and a mythical history of Mary's early years.

The Shepherd of Hermas

The Shepherd of Hermas dates to the 2nd century. It consists of five Visions, twelve Mandates, and ten Similitudes, all claiming to be divine revelations.

It describes fanciful visions of a female angel who preaches repentance. The angel offers forgiveness through repentance, prayer, and good works apart from the gospel of Jesus Christ.

It promotes ascetism through fasting and poverty. It teaches the error that martyrdom results in forgiveness of sins.

It teaches the heresy of "Adoptionism." Following is a quote: "The Redeemer is the virtuous man chosen by God, with whom that Spirit of God was united. As He did not defile the spirit, but kept Him constantly as His companion, and carried out the work to which the Deity had called Him ... He was in virtue of a Divine decree, adopted as a son" (*Shepherd of Hermas*, quoted from Jack Moorman, *A Closer Look: Early Manuscripts and the Authorized Version*, p. 5).

The Epistle of Barnabas

This spurious writing probably was made at the end of the 1st or the early part of the 2nd century. It is mentioned by Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Eusebius, and Jerome.

It was not written by the Barnabas who was Paul's companion on his first missionary journey from Antioch. Instead it was written by an anonymous heretic. "The probable opinion is that this epistle existed anonymously in the Alexandrian Church, and was ignorantly attributed to Barnabas. It was probably written by a Jewish Christian, who had studied Philo, and who handled the O.T. in an allegorical way..." (*McClintock and Strong Cyclopedia*).

It is filled with errors and fanciful allegorizing. For example it claims that the Law of God was disannulled when Moses broke the tables of stone, that all of the Jews were to spit on the scapegoat, that Abraham was familiar with the Greek alphabet, and that water baptism saves the soul.

Origen considered the Shepherd of Hermas and the Epistle of Barnabas as canonical Scripture (Goodspeed, *The Formation of the New Testament*, p. 103).

The Gospel of Thomas

The Gospel of Thomas was used by a Gnostic sect in the middle of the 2nd century. The following description is from the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*: “They are very largely concerned with a record of miracles wrought by Jesus before He was 12 years of age. They depict Jesus as an extraordinary but by no means a lovable child. Unlike the miracles of the canonical Gospels those recorded in this gospel are mainly of a destructive nature and are whimsical and puerile in character. It rather shocks one to read them as recorded of the Lord Jesus Christ. The wonder-worker is described by Renan as ‘*un gamin omnipotent et omniscient*, wielding the power of the Godhead with a child’s waywardness and petulance. Instead of being subject to His parents He is a serious trouble to them; and instead of growing in wisdom He is represented as forward and eager to teach His instructors. The parents of one of the children whose death He had caused entreat Joseph, ‘Take away that Jesus of thine from this place for he cannot dwell with us in this town; or at least teach him to bless and not to curse.’ Three or four miracles of a beneficent nature are mentioned; and in the Latin gospel when Jesus was in Egypt and in his third year, it is written (chapter 1), ‘And seeing boys playing he began to play with them, and he took a dried fish and put it into a basin and ordered it to move about. And it began to move about. And he said again to the fish: Throw out the salt which thou hast, and walk into the water. And it so came to pass, and the neighbors seeing what had been done, told it to the widowed woman in whose house Mary his mother lived. And as soon as she heard it she thrust them out of her house with great haste.’”

Many heretical writings were discovered in 1946 at Nag Hammadi in Upper Egypt. These include the Acts of Peter, the Apocryphon of John (giving a Gnostic account of the origin of the universe), the Gospel of Truth, the Gospel according to Philip, the Revelation of Adam, and the Gospel According to Thomas.

There were many other spurious gospels written in those days that have not survived but are mentioned in the writings of Eusebius and others, such as the Gospel of Eve, Gospel of Bartholomew,

Gospel of Basilides, Gospel of Hesychius, Gospel of Judas Iscariot, Gospel of Apollos, Gospel of Cerinthus, Gospel of Marcion, Gospel of Philemon, Gospel of the Twelve Apostles, Gospel of the Egyptians, and Gospel of the Nazarenes.

4. The heretical school in Alexandria, Egypt

Egypt was a hotbed of heresy and fanaticism. As we have seen, prominent Gnostics were associated with Alexandria. “Egypt was soon filled with religious and philosophical sectaries of every kind, and particularly that almost every Grecian sect found an advocate and professor in Alexandria.”

The unscriptural practice of **ascetic monasticism** arose in Egypt in those days. In a confused attempt to gain holiness, men and women would live in caves, avoid marriage, deprive themselves of sleep and food for long periods, forgo conversation and bathing, sit on top of pillars for months at a time, etc. The ascetics began to congregate into monasteries in the 3rd century and by the middle of the 4th century there were an estimated 3,000 monks and 27,000 nuns.

Alexandria was the home of **PHILO**; this was where he taught and wrote from about A.D. 40 to 60. Though there is no certain evidence that Philo ever professed Christianity, he helped create the atmosphere in Alexandria that corrupted the churches there almost from their inception. He did this in two ways, chiefly, by intermingling pagan philosophy with the Bible and by interpreting the Bible allegorically to allow for philosophy.

He intermingled the philosophy of pagans such as Plato, the Cabala, and the Essenes with the teaching of the Scripture. Philo especially loved the Greek philosopher **Plato**, who lived about 350 years before Christ. Plato taught the pre-existence and transmigration of souls (reincarnation), and a doctrine of “recollection.” He taught that human “souls are parts of a vast universal Soul of the World, proceeding from the Divine Logos and created in the Logos by God, the Logos or Reason not eternally co-existent with God but created. The soul is considered immortal, but resurrection of the body is denied. Furthermore, the soul forgets, or is not conscious of, its experiences upon earth” (James Sightler, *Tabernacle Essays on Bible Translation*, 1992, p. 2). Plato also taught a counterfeit trinity -- “first, the absolute pure being incomprehensible to man’s mind; second, the Logos or Universal

Reason or Divine Nous; and third, the Soul of the World which proceeded from the Logos. The Logos was not an eternal but a created being, so that this trinity is inherently unequal” (Sightler, p. 2). *Plato taught by means of myths which he called “facts,” claiming that the historicity of these “facts” was not significant, only that they were vehicles for religious “truth.”* This division of truth from historical fact was picked up by theological modernists in the 19th century, who found in it a way to believe in Christianity without accepting it as historically true.

Philo taught a type of Gnosticism that paved the way for Arianism. He “taught that it was not God or the Absolute who created the universe but the Logos or Reason with the aid of a series of intermediate beings known collectively as the Pleroma.”

Philo interpreted the Scripture allegorically. This allowed Philo to make the Scripture say anything whatsoever, for if the Bible does not mean what it says literally as interpreted by the ordinary rules of human language, no one can know for certain what it means. Philo’s allegorical method also created a distinction between the initiated that understood the “deeper meaning of Scripture” and the uninitiated that understood only the “surface” meaning. “He pronounced those who would merely tolerate a literal interpretation of the Scriptures as low, unworthy, and superstitious ... Philo, besides this, regarded as higher that conception of Scripture which penetrated beneath the shell of the letter to what he thought to be the kernel of philosophical truth ... In this way, in spite of his opposition to Hellenic mysteries, Philo set up a radical distinction of initiated and uninitiated, a mode of interpretation which leads very easily to the contempt of the letter, and thus to an unhistorical, abstractly spiritualistic tendency” (*McClintock & Strong Cyclopedia*).

A school at Alexandria was established in about 180 A.D. by **PANTAENUS**. Like Philo, Pantaenus mixed pagan philosophy with Christianity. He is called “a Christian philosopher of the Stoic sect” (*McClintock & Strong Cyclopedia*).

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA (his full name was Titus Flavius Clement) (115-215 A.D.), a student of Pantaenus, taught at Alexandria from about 190-202 A.D. Clement also intermingled Christianity with pagan philosophy; he was one of the fathers of purgatory; he taught baptismal regeneration; he taught that most

men will be saved; he accepted apocryphal books as divinely inspired; he believed that men could become God. Clement “saw Greek philosophy as a preliminary discipline, a schoolmaster, to point the pagan world the way to Christ” (Sightler, *Tabernacle Essays on Bible Translation*, 1992, p. 7).

Clement’s heresy on baptism: “When we are baptized, we are enlightened. Being enlightened, we are adopted as sons. Adopted as sons, we are made perfect. Made perfect, we are become immortal. ... It is a washing by which we are cleansed of sins; a gift of grace by which the punishment due our sins are remitted; an illumination by which we behold that holy light of salvation--that is, by which we see God clearly” (cited from W.A. Jurgens, *The Faith of the Early Fathers*).

Clement’s heresy on the godhood of man: “That which is true is beautiful; for it, too, is God. Such a man becomes God because God wills it. Rightly, indeed, did Heraclitus say: ‘Men are gods, and gods are men; for the same reason is in both’” (Ibid.).

Another heretic associated with Alexandria was **ORIGEN** (185-254 A.D.), who succeeded Clement. He laid the foundation for modern versions with his commentaries and textual changes. Philip Schaff admitted that Origen’s “predilection for Plato (the pagan philosopher) led him into many grand and fascinating errors.” The Lutheran historian Johann 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” (*An Ecclesiastical History, Ancient and Modern, from the Birth of Christ to the Beginning of the Eighteenth Century*, 1840).

Origen held the following doctrinal errors, among others:

He denied the infallible inspiration of Scripture.

He rejected the literal history of the early chapters in Genesis and of Satan taking the Lord Jesus up to a high mountain and offering him the kingdoms of the world (Will Durant, *The Story of Civilization*, Vol. III, p. 614). Durant quotes Origen: “Who is so foolish as to believe that God, like a husbandman, planted a garden in Eden, and placed in it a tree of life ... so that one who tasted of the fruit obtained life?”

He accepted infant baptism.

He taught baptismal regeneration and salvation by works. “After these points, it is taught also that the soul, having a substance and life proper to itself, shall, after its departure from this world, be rewarded according to its merits. It is destined to obtain either an inheritance of eternal life and blessedness, if its deeds shall have procured this for it, or to be delivered up to eternal fire and punishment, if the guilt of its crimes shall have brought it down to this” (Origen, cited by W.A. Jurgens, *The Faith of the Early Fathers*).

He believed the Holy Spirit was possibly a created being of some sort. “In His case [that of the Holy Spirit], however, it is not clearly distinguished whether or not He was born or even whether He is or is not to be regarded as a Son of God” (Origen, cited by W.A. Jurgens, *The Faith of the Early Fathers*).

He believed in a form of purgatory and universalism, denying the literal fire of hell and believing that even Satan would be saved eventually. “Now let us see what is meant by the threatening with eternal fire. ... It seems to be indicated by these words that every sinner kindles for himself the flame of his own fire and is not plunged into some fire which was kindled beforehand by someone else or which already existed before him. ... And when this dissolution and tearing asunder of the soul shall have been accomplished by means of the application of fire, no doubt it will afterwards be solidified into a firmer structure and into a restoration of itself” (Origen, cited by W.A. Jurgens, *The Faith of the Early Fathers*).

He believed that men’s souls are pre-existent and that stars and planets possibly have souls. “In regard to the sun, however, and the moon and the stars, as to whether they are living beings or are without life, there is not clear tradition” (Origen, cited by W.A. Jurgens, *The Faith of the Early Fathers*).

He 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”). That Origen believed Jesus Christ had an origin is evident from this statement: “Secondly, that Jesus Christ Himself, who came, was born of the Father before all creatures; and after He had ministered to the Father in the creation of all things,—for through Him were all things made” (Origen, quoted by W.A.

Jurgens, *The Faith of the Early Fathers*).

He 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.

Origen 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. This destroyed the apostolic doctrine of the imminency of the return of Christ (Mt. 24:42, 44; 25:13; Mk. 13:33) and the literal Tribulation and Millennial Kingdom. It also did away with a literal fulfillment of God’s promises to Israel and set the stage for the persecution of the Jews by the Roman Catholic Church.

Origen was 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.” He produced the *Hexapla*, which consisted of six translations of the Old Testament.

Origen 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”).

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. Contrary to Origen’s claim, 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 youth 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, Christ was exposing the sinful condition of the young man’s heart and his deceit in thinking that he was righteous. Christ was using the law for its divinely-intended purpose, which is to reveal man’s sin and to lead him to repentance and faith in the Gospel.

Origen brazenly tampered with the text of Scripture.

Consider the testimony of Presbyterian scholar Robert Dabney: “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. ... 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 Nicolaitanes. 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).

Of Origen's textual efforts, Frederick Nolan makes the following important observation: "... HE CONTRIBUTED TO WEAKEN THE AUTHORITY OF THE RECEIVED TEXT OF THE NEW [TESTAMENT]. In the course of his Commentaries, he cited the versions of Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion, on the former part of the Canon, he appealed to the authority of Valentinus and Heracleon on the latter. WHILE HE THUS RAISED THE CREDIT OF THOSE REVISALS, WHICH HAD BEEN MADE BY THE HERETICKS, HE DETRACTED FROM THE AUTHORITY OF THAT TEXT WHICH HAD BEEN RECEIVED BY THE ORTHODOX. Some difficulties which he found himself unable to solve in the Evangelists, he undertook to remove, BY EXPRESSING HIS DOUBTS OF THE INTEGRITY OF THE TEXT. In some instances he ventured to impeach the reading of the New Testament on the testimony of the Old, and to convict the copies of one Gospel on the evidence of another: *thus giving loose to his fancy, and indulging in many wild conjectures, HE CONSIDERABLY IMPAIRED THE CREDIT OF THE VULGAR OR COMMON EDITION, as well in the New as in the Old Testament*" (emphasis added) (Nolan, *Inquiry into the Integrity of the Greek Vulgate*, 1815, pp. 432-34).

Origen's textual work is used to support the Alexandrian text preferred by modern textual critics. He is treated by them with great respect.

Origen is mentioned repeatedly and favorably by modern textual critics. For example, he is mentioned on 12 pages of Kurt and

Barbara Aland's *The Text of the New Testament* and on four pages of Bruce Metzger's *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*. These prominent textual critics see Origen in a positive light rather than as a corruptor of God's Word.

The Alands call him "the most significant and widely influential Greek theologian of the early Church..." (*The Text of the New Testament*, p. 181). They call Origen's Alexandrian School "most impressive" (p. 200). Metzger calls him "one of the most assiduous and erudite scholars of his age" (*The Text of the New Testament*, p. 151).

Influential textual critic Frederic Kenyon testified 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).

The Codex Sinaiticus was corrected in the Old Testament according to Origen's work (Alexander Souter, *The Text and Canon of the New Testament*, p. 23).

It is possible that Vaticanus and Sinaiticus are two of the 50 copies of the Bible that were copied under the direction of Origen's disciple Eusebius at the command of Constantine, the father of church statism. This was believed by Constantine Tischendorf, F.J.A. Hort, Alexander Souter, Edward Miller, Caspar Gregory, and A.T. Robertson, among others. T.C. Skeat of the British Museum believed that Vaticanus was a "reject" among the 50 copies (Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 48).

EUSEBIUS (270-340 A.D.) was another influential name in Alexandria. He collected the writings of Origen and promoted his false teachings. "Eusebius worshiped at the altar of Origen's teachings. He claims to have collected eight hundred of Origen's letters, to have used Origen's six-column Bible, the *Hexapla*, in his Biblical labours. Assisted by Pamphilus, he restored and preserved Origen's library" (Jack Moorman, *Forever Settled*, p. 130). Eusebius "founded at Caesarea a library of biblical and patristic writings on papyrus rolls, the nucleus of which consisted of Origen's voluminous writings, especially his editions and interpretations of biblical books" (Alexander Souter, *The Text and Canon of the New Testament*, p. 23).

Eusebius produced 50 Greek Bibles for Constantine, father of the church state. These copies were to “be written on prepared parchment in a legible manner” (Geisler and Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible*, p. 181). As we have seen, many modern textual critics believe that Vaticanus and Sinaiticus are two of the copies made under the direction of Eusebius.

Frederick Nolan and other authorities have charged Eusebius with making many changes in the text of Scripture. Nolan charged Eusebius with removing Mark 16:9-20 and John 8:1-11, among other things. “As it is thus apparent that Eusebius wanted [lacked] not the power, so it may be shewn that he wanted not the will, to make those alterations in the sacred text, with which I have ventured to accuse him. ... 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” (Nolan, *An Inquiry into the Integrity of the Greek Vulgate*, 1815, pp. 35, 326-332).

As we have already seen, Alexandria was the source, and for some time the principal stronghold, of the heresy of **ARIANISM**. Arius was an elder in the church at Alexandria around 315 A.D. Arianism arose in Alexandria and spread rapidly in that area and to regions beyond.

And what New Testament text was used in Alexandria, Egypt? As we have already noted, it was the Alexandrian text that is favored by the modern textual critics and the translators of the modern Bible versions.

5. There was an opposing school at ANTIOCH.

Here we move for a moment from Egypt to Syria where the great missionary church was located at Antioch. “Antioch soon became a central point for the diffusion of Christianity among the Gentiles, and maintained for several centuries a high rank in the Christian world” (*McClintock & Strong Cyclopedia*). The *McClintock & Strong Cyclopedia* claims that the “theological seminary” at Antioch was established at the end of the 4th century, but that was only in a more formal sense, and it is admitted even in that volume that the school “had been prepared for a century before by the learned presbyters of the Church” (*McClintock & Strong*). In fact, the church at Antioch was a serious Christian discipleship and missionary training school from its inception. The principles that Paul taught pertaining to the thorough training of Christian workers (2 Tim. 2:2) and the necessity of pastors being grounded in the faithful Word (Titus 1:9) would no doubt have been practiced at Antioch, his sending church.

Ignatius was a prominent pastor at Antioch until his death in the early part of the 2nd century. It is probable that he, along with Polycarp, knew the apostle John and had heard him preach. Ignatius was martyred in Rome between 107 and 115 A.D. by being thrown to the wild beasts.

Theophilus was a prominent pastor at Antioch in the second half of the second century, having been ordained in about 170 A.D. He died in about 193 A.D. He was converted to Christ from heathenism by studying the Scriptures and wrote an apology for the Christian faith in the form of three letters to his friend Autolycus that are still extant. “The work shows much learning and more simplicity of mind” and “contains a more detailed examination of the evidence for Christianity, derived both from Scripture and from history” (*McClintock & Strong*). Theophilus was the author of other works, including writings against the heresies of Marcion and Hermogenes, a commentary on the Gospels (still extant in Latin), and a commentary on the book of Proverbs.

Dorotheus was a pastor at Antioch at the end of the 3rd century. According to Eusebius, Dorotheus was “much devoted to the study of the Hebrew language, so that he read the Hebrew Scriptures with great facility” and could be heard in the church “expounding the Scriptures with great judgment.”

While the school at Alexandria was promoting Gnosticism and allegoricalism, Antioch was promoting faithfulness to the apostolic teaching and the literal method of Bible interpretation. “As distinguished from the school of Alexandria, its tendency was logical rather than intuitional or mystical” (*McClintock & Strong*). Wilbur Pickering observes that this fact has serious implications in regard to the issue of texts and translations, because “a literalist is obliged to be concerned about the precise wording of the text since his interpretation or exegesis hinges upon it.” He notes that the 1,000 extant manuscripts of the Syriac Peshitta “are unparalleled for their consistency” and that “it is not unreasonable to suppose that the Antiochian antipathy toward the Alexandrian allegorical interpretation of Scripture would rather indispose them to view with favor any competing forms of the text coming out of Egypt” (*Identity of the New Testament Text*, chapter 5).

Antioch long resisted Roman Catholic doctrinal novelties, such as Mary as the mother of God and purgatory and infant baptism and reverence for relics, but gradually the Antioch church weakened, became affected by Arian heresy at one point, and eventually submitted to Rome.

What text of the New Testament was used at Antioch? The text of the church at Antioch was the Traditional Text. This is why Hort called the Received Text “the Antiochan text” and “the Syrian text.” Hort said, “The fundamental text of the late extant Greek MSS. generally is, beyond all question, identical with the dominant Antiochian or Graeco-Syrian text of the second half of the IVth century” (Westcott and Hort, *The Greek New Testament*, Introduction, p. 92). John Burgon, who looked carefully into the history of the early biblical text and particularly into the writings of “church fathers” (his index of quotations from early church leaders handled more than 86,000 references), testified that the New Testament text used by Chrysostom (a pastor at Antioch until A.D. 398, when he moved to Constantinople) was practically identical to that of the Traditional Text of the Reformation (*The Revision Revised*, p. 296).

6. The great persecutions instigated by the Roman Emperors is another important fact pertaining to these early centuries of the church age, that touches on the issue of Bible texts and versions.

Under these persecutions not only were Christians put to death but also their Scriptures and writings were systematically destroyed. The most severe of the campaigns was that under Diocletian (A.D. 284-305). "...the period of persecution which lasted almost ten years in the West and much longer in the East was characterized by the systematic destruction of church buildings (and church centers), and any manuscripts that were found in them were publicly burned. ... The persecution by Diocletian left a deep scar not only in church history but also in the history of the New Testament text" (Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, pp. 65, 70).

The Diocletian persecution was most effective in the Byzantine area. This is doubtless one reason why so few Greek Byzantine manuscripts from that era have survived.

The period following the persecutions is an important one in the history of the transmission of the New Testament text. This is recognized by some modern textual critics, though they do not properly understand the implications, not viewing this history through the eyes of faith. Consider this statement by Kurt and Barbara Aland: "Innumerable manuscripts were destroyed during the persecutions and had to be replaced. The result was a widespread scarcity of New Testament manuscripts which became all the more acute when the persecution ceased. For when Christianity could again engage freely in missionary activity there was a tremendous growth in both the size of the existing churches and the number of new churches. There also followed a sudden demand for large numbers of New Testament manuscripts in all provinces of the empire" (Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 65).

What New Testament text came out of these persecutions to become the missionary text as the churches again multiplied freely? It was the Traditional Text! Can we not see the preserving hand of God here? Wilbur Pickering observes: "...if, as reported, the Diocletian campaign was most fierce and effective in the Byzantine area, the numerical advantage of the 'Byzantine' text-type over the 'Western' and 'Alexandrian' would have been reduced, giving the latter a chance to forge ahead. BUT IT DID NOT HAPPEN. THE CHURCH, IN THE MAIN, REFUSED TO PROPAGATE THOSE FORMS OF THE GREEK TEXT" (*The Identity of the New Testament Text*, ch. 5).

7. The Greek language began to die out as a living language in areas outside of Asia Minor and Greece by the late second century.

“Aland argues that before 200 the tide had begun to turn against the use of Greek in the areas that spoke Latin, Syriac or Coptic, and fifty years later the changeover to the local languages was well advanced” (Pickering, *The Identity of the New Testament Text*, ch. 5). Some of the Papyri found in Egypt and published in the 1930s and 1950s show evidence that the scribes did not know Greek; they had to copy letter by letter and made many nonsensical mistakes.

8. What do these facts from the 2nd to the 4th centuries have to do with the modern Bible versions?

First, the Westcott-Hort principle that “oldest is best” in regard to Greek New Testament manuscripts is proven to be bogus. In light of the conditions that existed in the Post-Apostolic centuries, “oldest” means absolutely nothing in regard to the purity of New Testament manuscripts. An ancient Greek manuscript could as easily represent a corrupted text as it could a pure one, and if it came from Egypt, the likelihood that it is corrupt is multiplied greatly.

Second, what the extant Greek manuscripts, ancient versions, and quotations from “church fathers” reveal is exactly what we would expect to find in light of what we know about the first four centuries of the church age. We find on one hand that there was a settled text arising from the region of Syria, Greece, and Asia Minor, the one called the Traditional or Byzantine Text; and on the other hand there was a separate group of abnormal texts arising particularly in Egypt that represent not one text type after the fashion of the Traditional Text but a bewildering variety of contradictory texts outside of the mainstream. Hort’s contention that the abnormal text is the pure one, whereas the stable text is the impure, flies in the face of God’s promises. “What we find upon consulting the witnesses is just such a picture. We have the Majority Text, or the Traditional Text, dominating the stream of transmission with a few individual witnesses going their idiosyncratic ways. We have already seen that the notion of ‘text-types’ and recensions, as defined and used by Hort and his followers, is gratuitous. Epp’s notion of ‘streams’ fares no better. There is only one stream, with a number of small eddies along the

edges. When I say the Majority Text dominates the stream, I mean it is represented in about 95% of the MSS. ... The argument from statistical probability enters here with a vengeance. Not only do the extant MSS present us with one text form enjoying a 95% majority, but the remaining 5% do not represent a single competing text form. The minority MSS disagree as much (or more) among themselves as they do with the majority. For any two of them to agree so closely as do P75 and B [Vaticanus] is an oddity. We are not judging, therefore, between two text forms, one representing 95% of the MSS and the other 5%. Rather, we have to judge between 95% and a fraction of 1% (comparing the Majority Text with the P75, B text form for example). Or to take a specific case, in 1 Tim. 3:16 some 600 Greek MSS (besides the Lectionaries) read 'God' while only seven read something else. Of those seven, three have private readings and four agree in reading 'who.' So we have to judge between 99% and 0.6%, 'God' versus 'who'" (Wilbur Pickering, *The Identity of the New Testament Text*).

Third, the "Antiochian text" has the best claim to purity. Asia Minor was where the apostolic churches were located; it is where Greek was spoken natively. Egypt, on the other hand was a hotbed of anti-christ heresy and Gnostic fanaticism. "The use of such designations as 'Syrian,' 'Antiochian,' and 'Byzantine' for the Majority Text reflects its general association with that region. I know of no reason to doubt that the 'Byzantine' text is in fact the form of the text that was known and transmitted in the Aegean area from the beginning. In sum, I believe that the evidence clearly favors that interpretation of the history of the text which sees the normal transmission of the text as centered in the Aegean region, the area that was best qualified, from every point of view, to transmit the text, from the very first. The result of that normal transmission is the 'Byzantine' text-type. In every age, including the second and third centuries, it has been the traditional text" (Wilbur Pickering, *The Identity of the New Testament Text*, ch. 5).

Fourth, the ancient Greek manuscripts most favored by modern textual criticism are Egyptian. This includes Vaticanus, Sinaiticus, Alexandrinus, Ephraem Syrus, Freer Washington, the Beatty Papyri, and the Bodmer Papyri (Pickering, *Identity of the New Testament Text*, ch. 6). Vaticanus and Sinaiticus are even thought by some to be two of the Bibles that Eusebius produced for Constantine.

The testimony of Edward Miller:

“Now there are various reasons for supposing that B and Aleph were amongst these fifty manuscripts [created by Eusebius for Constantine in A.D. 330-340]. ... These manuscripts are unrivalled for the beauty of their vellum and for their other grandeur, and are just what we should expect to find amongst such as would be supplied in obedience to an imperial command, and executed with the aid of imperial resources. ... They abound in omissions, and show marks of such carelessness as would attend an order carried out with more than ordinary expedition. And even the corrector, who always followed the copyist, did his work with similar carelessness to the scribe whom he was following. ... There is therefore very considerable foundation for the opinion entertained by many that these two celebrated manuscripts owe their execution to the order of Constantine, and show throughout the effects of the care of Eusebius, and the influence of Origen, whose works formed the staple of the Library of Pamphilus, in the city where they were most likely written. Such was probably the parentage, and such the production of these two celebrated manuscripts, which are the main exponents of a form of Text differing from that which has come down to us from the Era of Chrysostom, and has since that time till very recent years been recognized as mainly supreme in the Church” (Miller, *A Guide to Textual Criticism*, 1886, pp. 82, 83). See also Burgon and Miller, *The Traditional Text*, pp. 164, 165.

The testimony of A.T. Robertson:

“It is quite possible that Aleph and B are two of these fifty” (Robertson, *An Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, 1925, p. 80).

The testimony of Caspar Gregory:

“This Manuscript [Vaticanus] is supposed, as we have seen, to have come from the same place as the Sinaitic Manuscript. I have said that these two show connections with each other, and that they would suit very well as a pair of the fifty manuscripts written at Caesarea for Constantine the Great” (Gregory, *The Canon and Text of the New Testament*, p. 345).

T.C. Skeat of the British Museum told Bruce Metzger that he felt codex Vaticanus was a “reject” among the fifty copies, “for it is deficient in the Eusebian canon tables, has many corrections by different scribes, and ... lacks the books of Maccabees apparently through an oversight” (Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 48).

Fifth, the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus are associated with the aforementioned spurious epistles such as the Shepherd of Hermas and the Epistle of Barnabas.

Sixth, 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 testimony of Robert Dabney: “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).

The testimony of John Burgon and Edward Miller: “Emphatically condemned by Ecclesiastical authority, and hopelessly outvoted by the universal voice of Christendom, buried under fifteen centuries, the corruptions I speak of survive at the present day chiefly in that little handful of copies which, calamitous to relate, the school of Lachmann and Tischendorf and Tregelles look upon as oracular: and in conformity with which many scholars are for refashioning the Evangelical text under the mistaken title of ‘Old Readings.’ ... 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, pp. 208, 209).

Following are some examples:

Mark 9:24 -- “Lord” is omitted in both Sinaiticus (Aleph) and Vaticanus (B)

Mark 16:9-20 -- These verses are omitted in Aleph and B,

- thus ending Mark's gospel with the disciples in fear and confusion, with no resurrection and glorious ascension.
- Luke 2:33 -- "Joseph" is changed to "the child's father" Aleph, B
- 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. 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
- 9:35 -- "Son of God" changed to "Son of man" 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
- 10:14 -- "am known of mine" is changed to "mine own know me," thus destroying "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 Christ himself fulfills the promise of David

- 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 Jesus 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.
- 14:10 -- “judgment seat of Christ” changed to “judgment seat of God” in Aleph and B, thus destroying this plain identification of 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 the Sinaiticus (the Vaticanus does not contain the epistle to Timothy)
- 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.

THE 4TH TO 10TH CENTURIES -- THE TRADITIONAL TEXT WINS THE BATTLE

- 1. The battle against the apostolic New Testament was fierce and unrelenting, but the God who gave the Scripture kept it.** “There was a struggle over the text of Scripture in those early centuries, but there was a clear winner!” (Jack Moorman, *Modern Bibles the Dark Secret*). The modern textual critics admit that the Traditional Text won the day by the fourth century. Under the section on the Dark Ages we will show that the Bibles used by the churches, both Greek and translations, represented the Traditional Text.
- 2. The persecutions by the Roman emperors having ceased under Constantine (311 A.D.), the churches again had liberty to preach and carry out missionary**

work, and they did this with great enthusiasm. Though most of the record of this work of faith has perished, we do know that translations were made in those days by missionaries and were used widely and we know that they represented the Traditional Text.

The Gothic Bible (c. 350 A.D.)

This influential translation was a missionary Bible. In the 2nd and 3rd centuries the warring Goths or Visigoths swept down from Scandinavia to southeastern Europe, north of the Lower Danube and west of the Black Sea, and from here they raided the crumbling Roman Empire. In 410 A.D. they invaded Rome itself.

In an invasion into Cappadocia, in Asia Minor, they took captive the grandparents of Ulfilas or Wulfilia (“little wolf”), who lived from 311-383. God touched the heart of this man to carry the Gospel to the very people who had enslaved his grandparents, and he became known as “the Apostle to the Goths.” His burden was to translate the Bible into the Goth language, and for this purpose he invented an alphabet from Greek, Latin, and Germanic runic. And since there were not Gothic words for many Bible terms, he extended the language so that the Word of God could be translated properly. One thousand years later John Wycliffe did the same thing for the English language.

The Gothic version was widely used across much of Europe, including France, Spain, northern Italy, and Germany. “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).

Sadly, only a few fragments remain of this ancient missionary Bible and even those fragments are largely palimpsests, meaning the original Gothic has been scraped off and overwritten with something else. But what is known of the Gothic version demonstrates that it is representative of the Traditional Text. Frederick Kenyon said, “The type of text represented in it, is for the most part that which is found in the majority of Greek manuscripts.” Jack Moorman observes: “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).

The Slavonic Bible (c. 850 A.D.)

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. The invention of the alphabet and the publication of books in Slovenian resulted in the spread of literacy and in the Christianization, at least, of many Slovenians. 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 would produce such translations.

The Slavonic represented the Traditional Text. According to *McClintock & Strong* “The Byzantine text ... was the original from which the Slavonic version was made” (see *McClintock & Strong*, “Byzantine Recension”). The Slavonic reads, “God was manifest in the flesh,” in 1 Timothy 3:16.

3. During this period of great missionary activity the Alexandrian text was rejected with great finality and buried in the sands of Egypt, so to speak, and the Traditional text was multiplied.

I am not saying that the Alexandrian text was ever spread over a wide region or that it actually stood head to head with the Traditional Text across the biblical world. The Alexandrian text was always more of a local text.

Even the modern textual critics admit that the Vaticanus type text ceased to be used, attempting to account for this with their bogus recension theory. Consider the surviving uncial manuscripts. Of the roughly 260 extant uncials, most of them are from the 5th to the 10th centuries, and for the most part these “actually preserve little more than a purely or predominantly Byzantine Majority text” (Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 103). It is only a handful of the uncials from before this time that exhibits the strangely unstable Alexandrian text.

The only churches that did not use the Traditional Text were some in Egypt. An example is the Coptic version.

4. At this point we need to consider the issue of the hand copying of manuscripts as it affects the history of Bible texts and versions.

Throughout this period from the Apostles in the 1st century to the invention of printing in the 15th, the Scriptures were copied by hand.

There were different types of Greek manuscripts.

They were written on different types of material.

PAPYRUS manuscripts were made from the papyrus plant that grew alongside rivers in Egypt (and a few other places). “The papyrus plant grew to a height of six meters [18 feet] ... Its thick stem was divided into sections and sharp tools were used to cut it lengthwise into wafer-thin strips. These strips were laid side by side to form a single layer with the fibers of the pith running in parallel, and on top of it a second layer was placed with the fibers running at right angles to the first. The two layers were then moistened, pressed together, and smoothed down. Finally, any projecting fibers were trimmed off and the papyrus sheet was cut

to a desired size. The product did not have the brown to dark brown color we are familiar with from the samples of papyrus in museum showcases, but ranged from a light gray to a light yellow (the darker color results from centuries under the Egyptian sands). Nor was it at all as fragile as surviving samples appear, but sufficiently flexible for sheets to be pasted together in rolls of up to ten meters in length, to be written on and have a useful library life of several decades” (Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 75). Papyrus was used from the 1st to the 10th centuries.

PARCHMENT OR VELLUM was made of animal skins. “Vellum properly means ‘calfskin’ [the word veal is related to it], but the term was later applied to other skins of finer quality as well. The word ‘parchment’ comes from the name of the city Pergamus, which was noted for the quality of parchment produced there. The term was originally used to denote skins of lesser quality than the finer vellum. Now, however, the two terms are commonly used interchangeably” (J. Harold Greenlee, *Scribes, Scrolls, and Scriptures*, p. 10). “The hide (theoretically of any animal, but usually of a sheep or goat) first had the hair and flesh removed by a solution of lime mordant, and was then trimmed to size, polished, and smoothed with chalk and pumice stone to prepare the surface for use” (Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 76). To produce a N.T. on vellum required the hides of about 60 sheep or goats. Vellum was not used for New Testament writings until the fourth century. 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, *Causes of the Corruption of The Traditional Text*, 1896, 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).

PAPER began to be used extensively in the 12th century (the earliest extant Greek manuscript on paper is from the ninth).

Roughly 1,300 of the extant Greek manuscripts are written on paper (2 uncials, 698 minuscules, and 587 lectionaries) (Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 77).

They were written in different forms of letters.

UNCIAL manuscripts (also called *majuscules*) were written in all capital letters with no space between words and little or no punctuation. (The name *uncial* is from the Latin word *uncialis*, which means inch-high.) There are about 263 uncials extant, dating from the 2nd to the 11th centuries. Many of the most ancient are fragments. Only five contain the whole or nearly the whole New Testament (Aland, *The Text of the N.T.*, p. 78).

Uncial writing in Greek and English would look like this in Philippians 1:1-2:

PAULOSKAITIMOQEOSDOULOIIHSOUCRISTOUPASITOISAGIOISE
NCRISTWIHSOUTOISOUSINENFILIPPOISSUNEPISKOPOISKADIA
KONOISCARISUMINKAIEIRHNHAPOQEOPATROSHMWNKAIKURI
OUIHSOUCRISTOU

PAULANDTIMOTHEUSTHESERVANTSOFGODJESUSCHRISTOALLTH
ESAINTSINCHRISTJESUSWHICHAREATPHILIPPIWITHTHEBISHO
PSANDDEACONSGRACEBEUNTOYOUANDPEACEFROMGODOUR
FATHERANDFROMTHELORDJESUSCHRIST

MINISCULE manuscripts (also called *cursive*) are written in the modern style of writing, in lower and upper case with some punctuation and spaces between the words, and thus are much easier to read and interpret than the uncials. There are roughly 2,812 minuscule Greek manuscripts extant (about 203 contain the whole or nearly the whole N.T.) The minuscules date from the ninth century forward, but the cursive style of writing dates to at least three centuries before Christ (Burgon and Miller, *The Traditional Text*, p. 157).

They were bound in different ways.

Some were made into **SCROLLS**. A papyrus scroll of the Gospel of Matthew was about 30 feet in length. A scroll of the entire New Testament would have been about 200 feet. The *Isaiah* A scroll found in the first Dead Sea cave is written on parchment and is about 24-feet long. Therefore, Scriptures written as scrolls were distributed only in portions.

Some were made into **BOOKS** (called *codexes* or *codices*). The

sheets were stacked together and sewn at the edge. Christians used books from the beginning.

Consider some of the types of errors that crept into the manuscripts through hand copying. (For more about this see *The Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text of the Holy Gospels* by John Burgon and Edward Miller (1896), which is available from the Dean Burgon Society, 900 Park Ave., Collingswood, NJ 08108, 800-564-6109, www.BibleForToday.org.)

1. There were errors resulting from the omissions of words and phrases or entire lines. The most common mistake in copying is to skip over a word or phrase. Sometimes the eye will lose its place and skip over an entire line.

2. There were errors resulting from adding words or phrases. Sometimes a copyist will carelessly copy a word or phrase twice when the mind wanders.

3. There were errors of misspelling and such. The word “Bethesda” (Jn. 5:2) is spelled 30 different ways in various manuscripts (*The Revision Revised*, p. 5).

4. There were errors resulting from mistaking one word for another. This was especially easy to do when copying uncials that were in all caps. Some Greek letters and many words are similar to others.

5. There were errors resulting from wrong word division. The uncials did not have divisions between the words, so it was easy for a copyist to make the division in the wrong place. For example, GODISNOWHERE could be GOD IS NOWHERE or GOD IS NOW HERE.

6. There were errors resulting from faulty memory. It is not uncommon for a copyist to try to copy a portion from memory and to make a mistake because his memory is inaccurate.

7. As we have seen, there were also errors that were produced by malicious tampering. “In the age which immediately succeeded the Apostolic there were heretical teachers not a few, who finding their tenets refuted by the plain Word of God bent themselves against the written Word with all their power. From seeking to evacuate its teaching, it was but a single step to seeking to falsify its testimony” (John Burgon and Edward Miller, *The Causes of the*

Corruption of the Traditional Text of the Holy Gospels, 1896).

How can such errors be weeded out of the manuscript record?

Generally speaking, it is not that difficult to find and correct scribal errors by comparing manuscripts. One of the assignments for this course is for each student to write the first three chapters of the Gospel of John by hand, then count the mistakes and see what sort they are. By comparing all of the copies made by the students in one class, it will become evident that normal copying errors can be corrected with relative ease. For example, if a word is omitted or misspelled by one student, it will probably be correct in the other copies. Likewise, if a heretic tried to add or omit something to the text to support his doctrine, this can be detected by comparing all of the copies together. This can be illustrated easily. If one of the students in this course decided to add or omit something as he was copying John 1-3 this would be detected as his copy was compared to the others. Whether the addition or omission was made maliciously or merely as a joke or for some other reason, it could be detected with relative ease by a comparison of manuscripts.

5. THE CONVERSION OF THE UNCIAL MANUSCRIPTS TO THE CURSIVE STYLE was a very important event during this period under discussion (the 4th to the 10th centuries).

It is only reasonable to assume that the conversion process required a critical examination that only those uncials considered the most authentic would be used, perhaps not in every case but broadly speaking across the spectrum of the entire process. Surely those involved in this important process knew that the times had changed and that the uncials would no longer be used, that the conversion process would not be reversed, just as those who lived in the 15th and 16th centuries knew that the conversion from manuscript to print was permanent. Jakob van Bruggen has made the following valuable observation about this era: "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 the oldest, best and most customary manuscripts come to us in the new

uniform of the minuscule script, does it not?” (Jacob Van Bruggen, *The Ancient Text of the New Testament*, p. 26).

It is important to understand that the manuscript record was far more ancient and extensive in that day than in our day. So much of the record that was then extant was destroyed during the tumultuous, persecution-filled millennium that has passed since that day. Jack Moorman observes: “Does it not seem likely that scribes of the Ninth Century [only a few hundred years after the apostles] 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).

The conversion process of the 9th and 10th centuries also teaches us that ancient uncials were once extant that contained the Traditional Text. “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*, p. 27).

6. Another important factor in the preservation of the Greek New Testament during this era was THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE, which kept the Greek manuscripts from the 5th to the 15th centuries.

The Greek language began to die out as a living language in areas outside of Asia Minor and Greece in the late second century. “Aland argues that before 200 the tide had begun to turn against the use of Greek in the areas that spoke Latin, Syriac or Coptic, and fifty years later the changeover to the local languages was well advanced” (Pickering, *The Identity of the New Testament Text*, ch. 5).

During the Dark Ages, when Greek was not a common language outside of the Byzantine part of the world and Latin dominated

scholarship, the Greek manuscripts were guarded by Orthodox scholars.

Byzantine Greek manuscripts were subsequently transmitted to Europe in 1453 at the fall of Constantinople, at almost exactly the same time that Gutenberg printed the first Bible with movable type. Does anyone think this was a mere coincident?

Though there are slight differences between the Byzantine Greek manuscripts, they are generally amazingly uniform, especially when compared to the Alexandrian manuscripts that differ widely one from another.

THE DARK AGES (11TH TO THE 16TH CENTURY) -- THE PERSECUTION OF THE BIBLE

1. During the period when the Roman Catholic Church was in power, she did everything she could to keep the Bible out of the hands of the common people.

It was illegal to translate the Bible into the common languages, even though most people could not read the official Catholic Bible because it was in Latin, a language known only to the highly educated. (I am using the term “Dark Ages” to describe the entire period when Rome ruled Europe and England. I realize that it is common today to use this term only in reference to a portion of that period, but in my estimation a better term could not be devised to describe the entirety of Rome’s rule.)

Consider some of the laws Rome made against Bible translation. These began to be made in the 13th century and were in effect through the 19th.

In the year 1215 **POPE INNOCENT III** issued a law commanding “that they shall be seized for trial and penalties, WHO ENGAGE IN THE TRANSLATION OF THE SACRED VOLUMES, or who hold secret conventicles, or who assume the office of preaching without the authority of their superiors; against whom process shall be commenced, without any permission of appeal” (J.P. Callender, *Illustrations of Popery*, 1838, p. 387). Innocent “declared that as by the old law, the beast touching the holy mount was to be stoned to death, so simple and uneducated men were not to touch the Bible or venture to preach its doctrines” (Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, VI, p. 723).

The **COUNCIL OF TOULOUSE** (1229) FORBADE THE LAITY TO POSSESS OR READ THE VERNACULAR TRANSLATIONS OF THE BIBLE (Pierre Allix, *Remarks on the Ecclesiastical History of the Ancient Churches of the Albigenses*, II, 1692, p. 213). This council ordered that the bishops should appoint in each parish “one priest and two or three laics, who should engage upon oath to make a rigorous search after all heretics and their abettors, and for this purpose should visit every house from the garret to the cellar, together with all subterraneous places where they might conceal themselves” (Thomas M’Crie, *History of the Reformation in Spain*, 1856, p. 82). They also searched for the illegal Bibles.

The **COUNCIL OF TARRAGONA** (1234) “ORDERED ALL VERNACULAR VERSIONS TO BE BROUGHT TO THE BISHOP TO BE BURNED” (Paris Simms, *Bible from the Beginning*, p. 1929, 162).

In 1483 the infamous Inquisitor General Thomas Torquemada began his reign of terror as head of **THE SPANISH INQUISITION; King Ferdinand and his queen** “PROHIBITED ALL, UNDER THE SEVEREST PAINS, FROM TRANSLATING THE SACRED SCRIPTURE INTO THE VULGAR TONGUES, OR FROM USING IT WHEN TRANSLATED BY OTHERS” (M’Crie, *History of the Reformation in Spain*, p. 192). For more than three long centuries the Bible in the common tongue was a forbidden book in Catholic Spain and multitudes of copies perished in the flames, together with those who cherished them.

In England, too, laws were passed by the Catholic authorities against vernacular Bibles. The **CONSTITUTIONS OF ARUNDEL**, issued in 1408 by Archbishop of Canterbury Thomas Arundel, made this brash demand: “WE THEREFORE DECREE AND ORDAIN THAT NO MAN SHALL, HEREAFTER, BY HIS OWN AUTHORITY, TRANSLATE ANY TEXT OF THE SCRIPTURE INTO ENGLISH, OR ANY OTHER TONGUE, by way of a book, libel, or treatise, now lately set forth in the time of John Wyckliff, or since, or hereafter to be set forth, in part or in whole, privily or apertly, upon pain of greater excommunication, until the said translation be allowed by the ordinary of the place, or, if the case so require, by the council provincial” (John Eadie, *The English Bible*, vol. 1, 1876, p. 89). Consider Arundel’s estimation of the man who gave the English speaking people their first Bible: “This pestilential and most wretched John Wycliffe of damnable memory, a child of the old

devil, and himself a child or pupil of Anti-Christ, who while he lived, walking in the vanity of his mind ... crowned his wickedness by translating the Scriptures into the mother tongue” (David Fountain, *John Wycliffe: The Dawn of the Reformation*, p. 45).

Pope Leo X (1513-1521), who railed against Luther’s efforts to follow the biblical precept of faith alone and Scripture alone, called the **FIFTH LATERAN COUNCIL** (1513-1517), which charged that no books should be printed except those approved by the Roman Catholic Church. “THEREFORE FOREVER THEREAFTER NO ONE SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO PRINT ANY BOOK OR WRITING WITHOUT A PREVIOUS EXAMINATION, TO BE TESTIFIED BY MANUAL SUBSCRIPTION, BY THE PAPAL VICAR AND MASTER OF THE SACRED PALACE IN ROME, and in other cities and dioceses by the Inquisition, and the bishop or an expert appointed by him. FOR NEGLECT OF THIS THE PUNISHMENT WAS EXCOMMUNICATION, THE LOSS OF THE EDITION, WHICH WAS TO BE BURNED, a fine of 100 ducats to the fabric of St. Peters, and suspension from business for a year” (Henry Lea, *The Inquisition of the Middle Ages*, 1906).

These restrictions were repeated by the **COUNCIL OF TRENT** in 1546, which placed translations of the Bible in the vernacular, such as the German, Spanish, French, and English, on its list of prohibited books and forbade any person to read the Bible without a license from a Catholic bishop or inquisitor.

Following is a quote from Trent: “...IT SHALL NOT BE LAWFUL FOR ANYONE TO PRINT OR TO HAVE PRINTED ANY BOOKS WHATSOEVER DEALING WITH SACRED DOCTRINAL MATTERS WITHOUT THE NAME OF THE AUTHOR, OR IN THE FUTURE TO SELL THEM, OR EVEN TO HAVE THEM IN POSSESSION, UNLESS THEY HAVE FIRST BEEN EXAMINED AND APPROVED BY THE ORDINARY, UNDER PENALTY OF ANATHEMA AND FINE prescribed by the last Council of the Lateran” (Fourth session, April 8, 1546, *The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, Translated by H.J. Schroeder, pp. 17-19).

These rules were affixed to Rome’s Index of Prohibited Books and were constantly reaffirmed by Popes in the 16th, 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries. These prohibitions, in fact, have never been rescinded. It is true that the Council of Trent did not absolutely forbid the reading of the Scriptures under all circumstances. It

allowed a few exceptions. The priests were allowed to read the Latin Bible. Bishops and inquisitors were allowed to grant license for certain faithful Catholics to read the Scriptures in Latin as long as these Scriptures were accompanied by Catholic notes and if it was believed that these would not be “harmful” by such reading. *In practice, though, the proclamations of Trent forbade the reading of the Holy Scriptures to vast majority of the people.* Rome’s claim to possess authority to determine who can and cannot translate, publish, and read the Bible is one of the most blasphemous claims ever made under this sun.

The attitude of 16th century Catholic authorities toward the Bible was evident from a speech Richard Du Mans delivered at the Council of Trent, in which he said “that *the Scriptures had become useless*, since the schoolmen had established the truth of all doctrines; and though they were formerly read in the church, for the instruction of the people, and still read in the service, yet *they ought not to be made a study, because the Lutherans only gained those who read them*” (William M’Gavin, *The Protestant*, 1846, p. 144). It is true that the Bible leads men away from Roman Catholicism, but this is only because Roman Catholicism is not founded upon the Word of God!

Pope Clement VIII (1592-1605) confirmed the Council of Trent’s proclamations against Bible translations (Eadie, *History of the English Bible*, II, p. 112) and went even further by forbidding licenses to be granted for the reading of the Bible under any conditions (Richard Littledale, *Plain Reasons against Joining the Church of Rome*, 1924, p. 91).

The restrictions against ownership of the vernacular Scriptures were **repeated by the popes until the end of the 19th century**:

Benedict XIV (1740-1758) confirmed the Council of Trent’s proclamations against Bible translations (Eadie, *History of the English Bible*, II, p. 112) and issued an injunction “that no versions whatever should be suffered to be read but those which should be approved of by the Holy See, accompanied by notes derived from the writings of the Holy Fathers, or other learned and Catholic authors” (D.B. Ray, *The Papal Controversy*, p. 479).

It was during the reign of Pope Pius VII (1800-1823) that the

modern Bible society movement began. The British and Foreign Bible Society was formed in March 1804, the purpose being “to encourage a wider circulation of the Holy Scriptures without note or comment.” Other societies were soon created for the same exalted purpose. Germany (1804); Ireland (1806); Canada (1807); Edinburgh (1809); Hungary (1811); Finland, Glasgow, Zurich, Prussia (1812); Russia (1813); Denmark and Sweden (1814); Netherlands, Iceland (1815); America, Norway, and Waldensian (1816); Australia, Malta, Paris (1817); etc. One of the societies began distributing a Polish Bible in Poland. The Pope, instead of praising the Lord that the eternal Word of God was being placed into the hands of spiritually needy people, showed his displeasure by issuing a bull against Bible Societies on June 29, 1816. The Pope expressed himself as “shocked” by the circulation of the Scriptures in the Polish tongue. He characterized this practice as a “most crafty device, by which the very foundations of religion are undermined,” “a pestilence,” which he must “remedy and abolish,” “a defilement of the faith, eminently dangerous to souls.” Pope Pius VII also rebuked Archbishop Buhusz of Mohilev in Russia because of his endorsement of a newly formed Bible society (Kenneth Latourette, *The Nineteenth Century in Europe*, p. 448). The papal brief, dated September 3, 1816, declared that “if the Sacred Scriptures were allowed in the vulgar tongue everywhere without discrimination, more detriment than benefit would arise” (Jacobus, *Roman Catholic and Protestant Versions Compared*, p. 236).

Pope Leo XII (1823-29) issued a bull to the Bishops in Ireland, May 3, 1824, in which he affirmed the Council of Trent and condemned Bible distribution. “It is no secret to you, venerable brethren, that a certain Society, vulgarly called The Bible Society, is audaciously spreading itself through the whole world. After despising the traditions of the holy Fathers, and in opposition to the well-known Decree of the Council of Trent, this Society has collected all its forces, and directs every means to one object,—the translation, or rather the perversion, of the Bible into the vernacular languages of all nations. ... IF THE SACRED SCRIPTURES BE EVERYWHERE INDISCRIMINATELY PUBLISHED, MORE EVIL THAN ADVANTAGE WILL ARISE THENCE, on account of the rashness of men” (Bull of Leo XII, May 3, 1824; cited from Charles Elliott, *Delineation of Roman Catholicism*, 1851, p. 21). This Pope re-published the Index of Prohibited Books on March 26, 1825, and mandated that the decrees of the Council of Trent be enforced against distribution of

Scriptures (R.P. Blakeney, *Popery in Its Social Aspect*, 1854, p. 137).

Pope Gregory XVI (1831-46) ratified the decrees of his predecessors, forbidding the free distribution of Scripture. In his encyclical of May 8, 1844, this Pope stated: "Moreover, we confirm and renew the decrees recited above, DELIVERED IN FORMER TIMES BY APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY, AGAINST THE PUBLICATION, DISTRIBUTION, READING, AND POSSESSION OF BOOKS OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES TRANSLATED INTO THE VULGAR TONGUE" (James Wylie, *The Papacy*, 1867, p. 182). This encyclical was delivered against Bible societies in general, and mentioned in particular the Christian Alliance, which was formed in 1843 in New York for the purpose of distributing Scriptures.

Pope Pius IX (1846-78) in November 1846 issued an encyclical letter in which he denounced all opponents of Roman Catholicism, among which he included "those insidious Bible Societies." He said the Bible societies were "renewing the crafts of the ancient heretics" by distributing to "all kinds of men, even the least instructed, gratuitously and at immense expense, copies in vast numbers of the books of the Sacred Scriptures translated against the holiest rules of the Church into various vulgar tongues..." What a horrible crime! Distributing the Scriptures freely to all people! It was Pius IX who had himself and his fellow popes declared "infallible" at the Vatican I Council in 1870.

Pope Leo XIII (1878-1903) published an "Apostolic Constitution" in 1897 which stated: "All versions of the vernacular, even by Catholics, are altogether prohibited, unless approved by the Holy See, or published under the vigilant care of the Bishops, with annotations taken from the Fathers of the Church and learned Catholic writers" (Melancthon Jacobus, *Roman Catholic and Protestant Bibles*, p. 237).

Where the Roman Catholic Church held power the Bible was always scarce. Consider a few examples: When the government of New Orleans was taken over in 1803, "it was not till after a long search for a Bible to administer the oath of office that a Latin Vulgate was at last procured from a priest" (William Canton, *The Bible and the Anglo-Saxon People*, I, p. 245). In Quebec, as late as 1826, MANY PEOPLE HAD NEVER HEARD OF THE NEW TESTAMENT (Canton, II, 61). The situation was the same in South America, where the citizens under Rome "for about three centuries,

were almost entirely without the Bible.” It was 1831 before the first Bible was printed in Spanish America, and even then the copies were exorbitantly expensive (Canton, II, 347). Thus, even when Catholic authorities finally printed some Bibles, they were priced far beyond the reach of most people. Between December 1907 and February 1908 a diligent search was made to determine how many Bibles were available in Catholic Ireland. Not a portion of the Bible was available in bookshops in Athlone, Balbriggan, Drogheda, Mullingar, Wexford, and Clonmel. A shop assistant at Mullingar said, “I never saw a Catholic Bible.” When asked about the New Testament, a sales person at The Catholic Truth Society replied, “We don’t keep it.” The extensive survey concluded “that IN NINE TENTHS OF THE CITIES, TOWNS, AND VILLAGES OR IRELAND A ROMAN CATHOLIC COULD NOT PROCURE A COPY OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC BIBLE OR NEW TESTAMENT” (Alexander Robertson, *The Papal Conquest*, 1909, pp. 166-167).

These facts uncover only the tip of iceberg in regard to Rome’s attitude toward the Bible in former times. Our book “Rome and the Bible: The History of the Bible through the Centuries and Rome’s Persecution against It” documents this more extensively. It is available from Way of Life Literature, P.O. Box 61368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org.

The Waldenses

The Waldenses (also called Vaudois or Albigenses) are an example of what occurred during this period. They lived in the mountains of Italy and France and eventually spread throughout Europe; they refused to join the Catholic Church or recognize the Pope. They received the Bible as the sole source for faith and practice and had their own translations, which they diligently reproduced in hand-written copies. Rome persecuted the Waldenses throughout the Dark Ages up until the 18th century.

A few brief descriptions of the persecutions against the Waldenses follow. Note that many entire books have been written about these persecutions and the following facts only hint at the destruction and torment poured out upon these people. [For more information, the reader’s attention is invited to the *Fundamental Baptist CD-Rom Library*, which contains dozens of rare old Baptist and Waldensian histories, including *Baptist History* by John M. Cramp (1852), *The Story of the Baptists in All Ages and Countries* by Richard Cook

(1888), *Memorials of Baptist Martyrs* by J. Newton Brown (1854), *A History of the Baptists* by Thomas Armitage (1890), *A History of the Christian Church (Waldenses)* by William Jones (1819), *History of the Ancient Churches of Piedmont and Albigenses* by Pierre Allix (1690, 1692), *A History of the Waldenses* by J.A. Wylie (1860), and *A History of the Ancient Christians of the Valleys of the Alps* by Perrin (1618). The *Fundamental Baptist CD-Rom Library* is available from Way of Life Literature, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org.]

12th Century. The Roman Catholic Church persecuted Peter Waldo and refused to accept his translation of the New Testament into the Romaunt language. Pope Alexander III (1159-1181) expelled Waldo and his followers from his diocese, and the next pope, Lucius III, put his papal curse upon them (William Blackburn, *History of the Christian Church*, 1880, pp. 309, 310). The Council of Tours in 1163 promoted inquisition against Bible believers, issuing a decree that stated: “No man must presume to receive or assist heretics, nor in buying or selling have any thing to do with them, that being thus deprived of the comforts of humanity, they may be compelled to repent of the error of their way” (Gideon Ouseley, *A Short Defence of the Old Religion*, 1821, p. 221). “Many Albigenses, refusing the terms, were burnt in different cities in the south of France” (G.H. Orchard, *A Concise History of the Baptists*, 1855, p. 199). The Third Lateran Council “gave permission to princes to reduce heretics to slavery and shortened the time of penance by two years for those taking up arms against them” (Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, V, p. 519).

13th Century: In the year 1209, Pope Innocent III called for a crusade against the Waldenses in France. Anyone who volunteered to war against the “heretics” (so called by Rome because they dissented from her dogmas) was promised forgiveness of sin and many rewards. Tens of thousands took up arms for the Pope and marched against the hated Waldenses. Some 200,000 dissenters were killed by the Pope’s army within a few months. Two large cities, Beziers (Braziers) and Carcasone, were destroyed, together with many smaller towns and villages. The war was conducted for 20 years! Thousands were made homeless and were forced to wander in the woods and mountains to escape their tormentors. The cruelties practiced by the Catholic persecutors were horrible and often unspeakable. The Christians were thrown from high cliffs, hanged, disemboweled, pierced through repeatedly,

drowned, torn by dogs, burned alive, and crucified. In one case, 400 mothers fled for refuge with their babies to a cave in Castelluzzo, which was located 2,000 feet above the valley in which they lived. They were discovered by the rampaging Catholics; a large fire was built outside of the cave and they were suffocated.

15th Century: In 1487 Pope Innocent VIII called for a crusade against the Waldenses in Italy, Germany, and elsewhere. He promised forgiveness of sins and a share in the plunder to those who participated. Charles VIII of France and Charles II of Savoy agreed to raise an army for the destruction of the Waldenses. This regular army, which numbered about 18,000 soldiers, was joined by thousands of “ruffians,” urged on by the promise of forgiveness of sins and the expectation of obtaining spoil from the Waldensian possessions. James Wylie describes these volunteers as “ambitious fanatics, reckless pillagers, merciless assassins” (*History of the Waldenses*, 1860, p. 29). This army attacked the Waldensian mountain valleys in northern Italy simultaneously from the plains to the south and from France to the west. Thousands of Bible-believing Christians perished in this crusade. Their homes and crops were destroyed. Many entire villages were razed. Their women were raped and then viciously murdered. Their children were dashed against trees and thrown off cliffs. More than 3,000 Waldensian Christians, men, women, and children, perished in one cave called Aigue-Froid to which they had fled for safety. These were the inhabitants of the entire village of Val Loyse, and the property of these pitiful people was distributed to the participants of the crusade. Many entire large valleys were burned and pillaged and depopulated. This crusade against the Waldensians lasted for a year.

16th Century: Following is a brief description of the persecutions in the 16th century as given by a Waldensian pastor: “There is no town in Piedmont under a Vaudois pastor, where some of our brethren have not been put to death ... Hugo Chiamps of Finestrelle had his entrails torn from his living body, at Turin. Peter Geymarali of Bobbio, in like manner, had his entrails taken out at Lucerna, and a fierce cat thrust in their place to torture him further; Maria Romano was buried alive at Rocco-patia; Magdalen Foulano underwent the same fate at San Giovanni; Susan Michelini was bound hand and foot, and left to perish of cold and hunger at

Saracena. Bartholomew Fache, gashed with sabres, had the wounds filled up with quicklime, and perished thus in agony at Fenile; Daniel Michelini had his tongue torn out at Bobbio for having praised God. James Baridari perished covered with sulphurous matches, which had been forced into his flesh under the nails, between the fingers, in the nostrils, in the lips, and over all his body, and then lighted. Daniel Revelli had his mouth filled with gunpowder, which, being lighted, blew his head to pieces. Maria Monnen, taken at Liouisa, had the flesh cut from her cheek and chin bone, so that her jaw was left bare, and she was thus left to perish. Paul Garnier was slowly sliced to pieces at Rora. Thomas Margueti was mutilated in an indescribable manner at Miraboco, and Susan Jaquin cut in bits at La Torre. Sara Rostagnol was slit open from the legs to the bosom, and so left to perish on the road between Eyrat and Lucerna. Anne Charbonnier was impaled and carried thus on a pike, as a standard, from San Giovanni to La Torre. Daniel Rambaud, at Paesano, had his nails torn off, then his fingers chopped off, then his feet and his hands, then his arms and his legs, with each successive refusal on his part to abjure the Gospel” (Alex Muston, *A History of the Waldenses: The Israel of the Alps*, 1866).

Not only were the Waldensian Christians themselves destroyed during these persecutions, but their literature and vernacular Scriptures were destroyed with a vengeance. The Catholic priests who accompanied the armies made certain of this. So many copies of the Waldensian Scriptures were destroyed that we have little information about their Bibles. Only seven copies of the Romaunt New Testament have survived.

In the 17th century, Samuel Morland visited the Waldenses in northern Italy as the representative of England’s ruler, Oliver Cromwell. Morland tried to assist the Waldenses in the bitter persecutions that were still being poured out upon them. Entire armies had been sent to destroy the Waldensian villages in the 17th century. Practically all of their documents had been destroyed. Morland gathered up any remaining materials he could find and in 1658 sent them back to England to be deposited in the library at the University of Cambridge. On a visit to the library in April 2005 I examined the F packet, which contains five small bound volumes of Waldensian doctrinal material plus a 14th-century Romaunt New Testament (though incomplete).

Consider some examples of how the Bible was persecuted by Rome:

The English Bible was persecuted

JOHN WYCLIFFE (1324-1384), the father of the English Bible, is an example of how Rome treated the Bible in these days.

Wycliffe, the vicar of St. Mary's Church at Lutterworth, completed (probably with assistants) the English New Testament in 1380 and the Old Testament in 1382. He rejected many of Rome's heresies, including the doctrine that the people should not have the Bible in their own language. Here is one of the powerful statements that he made to the Catholic authorities: "You say it is heresy to speak of the Holy Scriptures in English. You call me a heretic because I have translated the Bible into the common tongue of the people. Do you know whom you blaspheme? Did not the Holy Ghost give the Word of God at first in the mother-tongue of the nations to whom it was addressed? Why do you speak against the Holy Ghost? You say that the Church of God is in danger from this book. How can that be? Is it not from the Bible only that we learn that God has set up such a society as a Church on the earth? Is it not the Bible that gives all her authority to the Church? Is it not from the Bible that we learn who is the Builder and Sovereign of the Church, what are the laws by which she is to be governed, and the rights and privileges of her members? Without the Bible, what charter has the Church to show for all these? It is you who place the Church in jeopardy by hiding the Divine warrant, the missive royal of her King, for the authority she wields and the faith she enjoins" (David Fountain, *John Wycliffe*, pp. 45-47).

Rome persecuted Wycliffe bitterly and attempted unsuccessfully to have him imprisoned. Pope Gregory XI issued five bulls against Wycliffe, but he was protected by the Queen of England and others.

Wycliffe died on December 31, 1384, and forty-three years later, in 1428, Roman Catholic authorities dug up Wycliffe's bones and burned them.

Rome also persecuted Wycliffe's followers, the Lollards, imprisoning them and putting many of them to death. The Lollards' Tower in London was so named because it is one of the places where they were imprisoned and tortured. It was illegal to own a

copy of the Wycliffe Bible, and most of these priceless handwritten Scriptures were burned.

WILLIAM TYNDALE (1484-1536), the first to translate the English Bible from Greek and Hebrew, is another example of Rome's persecutions.

As a young man Tyndale had a burden to translate the Bible into English directly from the Hebrew and Greek so that his people could have the Word of God from the purest fountains. When he expressed this plan to authorities in England, then under Roman Catholic rule, he learned that it would not be possible to do this work in his own country.

While employed at Little Sodbury Manor after graduation from Oxford, Tyndale preached in that part of western England and debated the truth with Catholic priests. One evening a priest exclaimed, "We are better without God's laws than the pope's." Hearing that, Tyndale replied: "If God spare my life, ere many years I will cause a boy that driveth a plough shall know more of the Scriptures than thou doest."

Tyndale traveled to Europe to pursue this objective, where he had to move from place to place and hide his work from the ecclesiastical authorities.

After completing the New Testament and a portion of the Old, Tyndale was arrested in May 1535. He was imprisoned for 16 months in the castle at Vilvorde, Belgium.

On October 6, 1536, Tyndale was strangled and then burned at the stake. His ashes were thrown into the river that flowed alongside the castle.

The Spanish Bible was persecuted

In the fifteenth century a Roman Catholic priest named **BONIFACIO FERRER** translated the whole Scriptures into the Valencian or Catalonian dialect of Spain. He died in 1417, but his translation was printed in Valencia in 1478. In spite of the fact that it was produced by a Catholic, "it had scarcely made its appearance when it was suppressed by the Inquisition, who ordered the whole impression to be devoured by the flames. So strictly was this order carried into execution, that scarcely a single copy appears to have

escaped” (M’Crie, *History of the Progress and Suppression of the Reformation in Spain*, 1829, pp. 191, 92). In 1645 four leaves of this translation were discovered in a monastery.

In 1543 the **FRANCISCO DE ENZINAS** Spanish New Testament was published with the title “The New Testament, that is, the New Covenant of our Only Redeemer and Saviour Jesus Christ, translated from the Greek to the Castillian [Spanish] language.” Enzinas presented a copy of his New Testament to Charles V, Emperor of the Roman Empire (1519-1558), during the emperor’s visit to Brussels, who gave it to his Catholic confessor, Pedro de Soto. “After various delays, Enzinas, having waited on the confessor, was upbraided by him as an enemy to religion, who had tarnished the honor of his native country; and refusing to acknowledge a fault, was seized by the officers of justice and thrown into prison” (M’Crie, *History of the Reformation in Spain*, pp. 194-95). Francisco’s father and uncles visited him in prison and reproached him for dishonoring his family. After fifteen months’ confinement he miraculously escaped prison in Brussels and fled to Antwerp, then on to England, where, in 1548, he was given the chair of Greek at Cambridge. He returned to the continent in 1550 and died of the plague at Strasbourg in 1553. Most of his New Testaments were burned and all of his manuscripts were destroyed by the Inquisition.

What a contrast this was with the attitude of the Roman Catholic Church. As late as 1747, the inquisitor general in Spain fretted that “some men carried their audacity to the execrable extreme of asking permission to read the sacred scriptures in the vulgar tongue, not afraid of finding in them the most deadly poison” (M’Crie, p. 202, f3).

Pope Julius III addressed a bull to the inquisitors in 1550 in which he warned them of the Spanish Bibles which were being smuggled into the country (M’Crie, *History of the Reformation in Spain*, p. 203). The inquisitors were given instructions “to seize all the copies, and proceed with the utmost rigour against those who should retain them, without excepting members of universities, colleges or monasteries. ... At the same time the strictest precautions were adopted to prevent the importation of such books by placing officers at all the sea-ports and land-passes, with authority to search every package, and the person of every traveller that should enter the kingdom” (M’Crie, p. 204).

For examples of the persecution of the German, Dutch, French, and other Bibles by the Roman Catholic Church, see *Faith vs. the Modern Bible Versions*, Part I.

2. During the Dark Ages the Traditional Greek Text was preserved among the Bible believing churches.

Even the modern textual critics admit that the Traditional Text of the Reformation was the text in common use throughout this period. Consider two testimonies:

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). Actually Metzger's own research demonstrates that the Traditional Text was dominant from the 4th century forward. Metzger sees nothing in this except an accident of history, but the Bible believer sees the providential hand of God.

Eldon Epp observes: "The TR and its precursor, the Byzantine ecclesiastical text, had maintained a position of dominance for as long as a millennium and a half when the mortal wound was inflicted by Westcott and Hort" (Epp, "The Twentieth Century Interlude in NT Textual Criticism," *Studies in the Theory and Method of New Testament Textual Criticism*, p. 100). A millennium and a half prior to 1881 takes us back to 381 A.D. Thus Epp admits that the Traditional Text was dominant from the 4th century onward.

It is the obvious dominance of the Traditional Text that caused Westcott and Hort to create the theory of a 4th century Lucian Recension. According to this theory, the Traditional Text was created in the 4th century through an official revision that conflated together the various Greek texts. This newly produced Greek text was then promoted by official sanction so that it came to dominate over the Alexandrian or Egyptian text. All of this is a figment of Hort's imagination, but he was forced to adopt this position because of the obvious dominance of the Traditional Text.

The following is a summary of the evidence that the Traditional Text underlying the Reformation Bibles is the Preserved Word of God. There are three witnesses: Greek manuscripts, quotations from Church Fathers, and ancient versions. (For a more extensive study of this evidence see *The Modern Bible Version Question-Answer Database*, “Is it true that most of the manuscript evidence supports the Traditional Text of the Reformation?” This book is available from Way of Life Literature, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org. See also Jack Moorman’s *A Closer Look: Early Manuscripts and the Authorized Version*, available from Bible for Today, 900 Park Ave., Collingswood, NJ 08108, 856-854-4452.)

The Greek Manuscripts

The vast majority of extant Greek New Testament manuscripts support the Traditional Text. A large percentage (roughly 98%) of the extant Greek manuscripts, numbering roughly 5,400, represent the Traditional type of text found in the Reformation Bibles.

Consider the testimony of *THE GREEK UNCIALS* (also called *majuscules*):

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. Many of the earliest are fragments.

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 uses the expression “little more,” because he despises the Traditional Text, but he admits that the testimony of the uncials is largely in favor of this Text.

Consider the testimony of *THE GREEK MINUSCULES*:

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.

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?” (Jacob Van Bruggen, *The Ancient Text of the New Testament*, pp. 26, 27).

“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).

Consider the testimony of *THE GREEK LECTONARIES*:

The lectionaries are collections of New Testament readings used in church services. (The word *lection* is from a Latin root meaning “to read.”)

There are about 2,280 Greek lectionaries extant (Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, 2nd edition, p. 163).

They are “a Byzantine type of text” (Aland, p. 169), meaning they represent the Traditional Text found in the Reformation Bibles.

Consider the testimony of *THE GREEK BYZANTINE EMPIRE*:

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 (within ever narrowing boundaries) 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 from roughly 452 to 1453 A.D., at which time Constantinople fell to the Ottoman Turks.

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 early 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.

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.

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.

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 in Europe. 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.

The Byzantine Greek New Testament was largely the basis for the Received Text printed in the early 1500s. 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.

The Ancient Versions

The Ancient Versions also 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, 856-854-4452).

Following is a summary of some of the important ancient versions:

Old Latin (Italick)

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).

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.

There is a significant difference between the Old Latin in the West and the Old Latin in Africa. The Old Latin in Africa contains a bewildering variety of readings including blatantly corrupt ones. 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).

From what we do know, the western Old Latin was close to the Traditional Text. See Jack Moorman, *A Closer Look*, pp. 28-30.

The Old Latin continued to be used by Christians separated from Rome, particularly the Waldenses and Albigenses, until the 13th century. "When Jerome's revision took hold of the church, the Old Latin representatives for the most part dropped out of notice. Some of them, however, 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.

Syriac Peshitta

This translation is from Syria, which was the home of the famous missionary church at Antioch (Acts 13).

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'" (quoted from 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.

There are about 350 ancient manuscripts of the Syriac Peshitta and they represent the Traditional Text.

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’ (Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, 4th edition, pp. 173, 174).

The refutation of this theory is summarized from Jack Moorman as follows. (See also Burgon and Miller, *The Traditional Text*, pp. 135-147.)

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).

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.

Georgian

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, was made from the Armenian (*The Text of the New Testament*, p. 205).

The extant Georgian manuscripts represent the Traditional Text.

For example, 1 Timothy 3:16 reads “God was manifest in the flesh.”

Gothic

We have already seen (under the section on the 4th to the 10th centuries) that the Gothic Bible was a missionary Bible and that it represents the Majority or 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’” (Hills, pp. 174, 175).

Slavonic

We have already looked at the Slavonic Bible under the section on the 4th to the 10th centuries. It was a missionary Bible that represented the Traditional Text.

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”). I have had the privilege of walking in the valleys in northern Italy where the Waldenses were based and of examining the beautiful little copy of the Romaunt New Testament located at the Cambridge University Library, one of only seven surviving copies. The Romaunt New Testaments represented the Traditional Text and contained the Trinitarian statement in 1 John 5:7.

Old German

The Tepl is an old German translation used by the Waldenses from the 14th through the 15 centuries. Comba, who wrote a history of the Waldenses, said the Tepl was a Waldensian version (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. It represents the Traditional Text rather than the Alexandrian.

English

The first English New Testament was completed by John Wycliffe and his co-laborers in 1380 and used extensively by the persecuted Lollards throughout the 15th century. It represents the Traditional Text rather than the Alexandrian.

These ancient Bibles used by persecuted saints in the process of fulfilling the Great Commission were the predecessors of the Reformation Bibles that went to the ends of the earth from the 16th to the 19th centuries and textually they were very similar, with only minor differences. They did not represent the Alexandrian text preferred by modern textual critics (which explains why they have been largely ignored by textual scholars in the last 150 years).

The Ancient "Fathers"

The evidence from quotations of ancient "Church Fathers" also testifies to the authenticity of 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.

Following are some introductory thoughts about the "Church Fathers":

First, the term "church fathers" is a misnomer that was derived from the Catholic Church's false doctrine of hierarchical church polity. These men, who lived in the centuries following the apostles, 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. The Roman Catholic Church exalted men to authority beyond the bounds designated by Scripture, making them "bishops" and "fathers" over

churches located within entire regions, and this unscriptural terminology (“church fathers”) has been adopted even by Protestants and not a few Baptists.

Second, 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. The “Apostolic Fathers” are grossly misnamed, because none of them were actually apostles.

Third, much more could be said about the “church fathers,” but we are getting off the subject. (For more information see the *Advanced Bible Studies* course on Church History, available from Way of Life Literature.) 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 John Burgon

Burgon’s textual research into New Testament quotations from ancient church writings has never 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.

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*).

Specific examples of quotations that support the Traditional Text:

Ignatius (d. 107 AD), a pastor at the great missionary church in Antioch, 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.

Polycarp (70 to 155 AD), the pastor of Smyrna. Polycarp was martyred for his faith by being burned at the stake.

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.” 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”).

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 versions reading of “judgment seat of God” (Polycarp’s epistle to the Philippians, 6:2).

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, and 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. Amen and amen and amen!

THE REFORMATION -- THE PRINTING OF THE BIBLE

The fourth great period that we need to examine in understanding the preservation of the New Testament is the Reformation, when the handwritten manuscript era ended and the Bible was put into print.

1. God’s promise of Preservation tells us that the Bible came out of the Dark Ages intact (Psalm 100:5; Mat. 24:35; 28:19-20; 1 Pet. 1:25). Faith in divine providence is the only way we can possibly have confidence in the Bible after it endured so many centuries of continual, vicious assault. The preservation of the Scriptures is a greater miracle than the formation of the glorious starry universe, but the God who can do one can easily do the other. Any man who believes in the God of Genesis 1:1 can believe in the God of Matthew 5:18.

“The God who brought the New Testament text safely through the ancient and medieval manuscript period did not fumble when it came time to transfer this text to the modern printed page. This is the conviction which guides the believing Bible student as he considers

the relationship of the printed *Textus Receptus* to the Traditional New Testament text found in the majority of the Greek New Testament manuscripts. ... It is inconceivable that the divine providence which had preserved the New Testament text during the long ages of the manuscript period should blunder when at last this text was committed to the printing press" (Edward F. Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, 4th edition, pp. 199, 200).

2. The Greek New Testament was first printed in 1516 and went through several editions.

This Greek New Testament has many different names:

It is called the *RECEIVED TEXT* [*Textus Receptus* in Latin], because it was the text commonly passed down through the centuries in Greek, Latin, and in various ancient translations, such as the Syriac, Slavonic, Georgian, and Gothic.

It is called the *MAJORITY TEXT*, because it represents the vast majority of the more than 5,400 existing manuscripts. Roughly 98% of the Greek manuscripts are of this type. (Note that the term *Majority Text* has taken a slightly different meaning today, since the publication of a Greek text by that name in 1982 by Thomas Nelson. The Hodges-Farstad *Majority Text* is a little different from the Received Text. It omits 1 John 5:7, for example, because it is based on the principle that only the witness of the Greek manuscripts should be used to ascertain the reading, while the important witness of ancient writings, ancient lectionaries, and ancient versions are ignored. See *Faith vs. the Modern Bible Versions*, Part IX, "We Hold to the King James Bible Because We Reject the 'Majority Text' Position.")

It is called the *TRADITIONAL TEXT* (John Burgon's term), because it represents the text traditionally used in the churches.

It is called the *COMMON TEXT* or *KAPPA TEXT*, because it represents the text commonly found in the Greek New Testament manuscripts. This was the name used by Hermann von Soden in his researches. Von Soden, who made the most extensive study of the Byzantine Text that has ever yet been undertaken (Hills, p. 181), concluded: "The substance of the text remains intact throughout the whole period of perhaps 1,200 years. Only very sporadically do readings found in other text-types appear in one or another of the varieties."

It is called the *BYZANTINE TEXT*, because it 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. The Byzantine period lasted from about 452 to 1453 A.D. (at which time Constantinople fell to the Ottoman Turks). In reality, the Traditional Text is not strictly Byzantine, as that was only one area in which it was maintained. We have Traditional type Greek manuscripts from the western part of the old Roman Empire as well as from the east.

It is called the *ANTIOCHIAN TEXT* or the *SYRIAN TEXT* (Hort's term), because it was that form of text preserved in Antioch, the capital of the Roman province of Syria, which, of course, is where the great missionary church was located (Acts 13:1-4).

The Greek Received Text was first published by **DESIDERIUS ERASMUS** (1466-1536).

Erasmus published five editions of the Greek New Testament (1516, 1519, 1522, 1527, 1535).

Erasmus was born at Rotterdam and had the best education then available. He visited England three times (in 1499, in 1505, and again in 1509-1514, when he taught at Cambridge University).

He was probably the greatest scholar then living. "By his travels he was brought into contact with all the intellectual currents of his time and stimulated to almost superhuman efforts. He became the most famous scholar and author of his day and one of the most prolific writers of all time, his collected works filling ten large volumes in the Leclerc edition of 1705 (phototyped by Olms in 1962). As an editor also his productivity was tremendous. Ten columns of the catalogue of the library in the British Museum are taken up with the bare enumeration of the works translated, edited, or annotated by Erasmus, and their subsequent reprints. ... To conclude, there was no man in all Europe better prepared than Erasmus for the work of editing the first printed Greek New Testament text, and this is why, we may well believe, God chose him and directed him providentially in the accomplishment of this task" (Edward Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, 4th edition, p. 196).

Erasmus was a humanist, but this must not be defined after the modern fashion. 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.

Erasmus was much more doctrinally sound than the typical Catholic of his day.

Erasmus’ *Enchiridion* (*Christian Soldier’s Manual*) was so sound that William Tyndale translated it into English.

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.”

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.

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).

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.

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).

Erasmus wrote boldly against many of Rome’s errors. Consider some excerpts from his writings:

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 Cæsar. 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.'

Though Erasmus was not a reformer after the fashion of a Luther or a Zwingli or a Tyndale, and though it does not appear that he was very spiritually courageous, he desired the Scriptures to be placed in the hands of every man. As we have seen, 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.

Erasmus said:

"I vehemently dissent from those who would not have private persons read the Holy Scriptures nor have them translated into the vulgar tongues, as though either Christ taught such difficult doctrines that they can only be understood by a few theologians, or the safety of the Christian religion lay in ignorance of it" (Erasmus, quoted by Preserved Smith, *Erasmus: A Study of His Life, Ideals, and Place in History*, 1923, p. 184).

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."

Erasmus died in 1536 in Basel, Switzerland, *among his Protestant friends*, "without relations of any sort, so far as known, with the Roman Catholic Church" (Edward Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, p. 195). There is a famous painting of Erasmus sitting with his Protestant friends, the original of which is in the Erasmus Museum in Brussels. I saw it on our visit there in April 2003.

Erasmus' work was rejected by the Catholic Church. His books were burned throughout Europe. Erasmus' works were placed on the Index of Prohibited Books by Pope Paul IV in 1559, and Erasmus himself was branded as a heretic by the Council of Trent which met from 1545 to 1564.

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. 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).

Erasmus' first edition was finished hastily and contained errors but these were corrected in subsequent editions. "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*" (Edward F. Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, p. 202). The fact that defenders of modern textual criticism invariably bring up the irrelevant issue of the errors in Erasmus' first edition demonstrates either that they are blindly following another man's arguments or that their goal is to hide the truth.

In 1533, Sepulveda furnished Erasmus with 365 alternative readings from the Vaticanus manuscript, such as the omission of “is preferred before me” in John 1:27 and “who is in heaven” in John 3:13, but Erasmus rejected them.

Contrary to popular belief, Erasmus’ manuscript authority was sufficient, and he consciously rejected the Vaticanus type manuscripts. “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 other with the Vatican manuscript. 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” (Frederic Nolan, *An Inquiry into the Integrity of the Greek Vulgate*, 1815, pp. 413-15). Thus Erasmus exercised a clear principle for discarding the Vaticanus type manuscripts and for accepting the Traditional.

Sadly, Erasmus was one of those men we often find at crucial stages in church history; he was an “In Betweenite,” a “Mr. Facing Both Ways.” He wrote sharply against many Catholic errors and respected the Reformers and even the Anabaptists in many areas but he refused to join himself plainly with them and take a clear stand. His Catholic enemies complained that he laid the egg that Luther hatched, but he added a complaint of his own, that the bird was not one to his liking!

Erasmus should be viewed through the eyes of faith in the God of the Bible. “Although he was not himself outstanding as a man of faith ... he was providentially influenced and guided by the faith of others. ... God works providentially through sinful and fallible human beings, and therefore His providential guidance has its

human as well as its divine side. ... 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. ... 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” (Edward Hills, *The King James Bible Defended*, pp. 199, 202, 203).

For a discussion of Erasmus and 1 John 5:7, see “The Modern Bible Version Question-Answer Database,” which is available from Way of Life Literature.

The Greek Received Text was revised by men who separated from Rome.

ROBERT STEPHANUS (also known as Estienne) (1503-1559) published four editions of the Greek Received Text (in 1546, 1549, 1550, and 1551). He was responsible for the modern verse divisions of the Bible. He was the first to incorporate italics into his Bibles, indicating words that are not in the original languages. His son testified that he printed the Bible because of his “burning with the love of God.”

THEODORE BEZA (1519-1605) published ten editions of the Greek Received Text, four of which were independent folio editions and the others were smaller reprints of these. The folio editions appeared in 1565, 1582, 1588-9, 1598. He became the head of the Protestant community in Geneva upon the death of John Calvin in 1564. Beza traveled to many cities to represent the persecuted Waldenses of Italy. In his writings Beza viewed the Roman Catholic Church as apostate and the Waldenses as faithful Christians who had maintained the New Testament faith through the Dark Ages.

A family of Dutch printers named **ELZEVIR** published two editions of the Greek Received Text, the first in 1624 and the second in 1633. In the preface to the second edition the phrase *TEXTUS RECEPTUS* (RECEIVED TEXT) made its first appearance -- “You have therefore the text now received by all [*textum ab omnibus receptum*] in which we give nothing changed or corrupt.” This was not merely an advertising blurb but a statement of faith that was shared by all Protestants and Baptists of that day.

Dr. Edward Hills observes: “This statement has often been assailed as a mere printer’s boast or ‘blurb,’ and no doubt it was partly that.

But in the providence of God it was also a true statement. For by this time the common faith in the current New Testament text had triumphed over the humanistic tendencies which had been present not only in Erasmus but also in Luther, Calvin, and Beza. The doubts and reservations expressed in their notes and comments had been laid aside and only their God-guided texts had been retained. The Textus Receptus really was the text received by all” (Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, 4th edition, p. 208).

Kurt and Barbara Aland, prominent textual critics who reject the Received Text, admit that it was formerly accepted as the inspired apostolic Scripture by Protestants in general. Note the following two statements: “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...” (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, pp. 6,7). “It is UNDISPUTED that from the 16th to the 18th century orthodoxy’s doctrine of verbal inspiration assumed ... [that the] Received Text [was that inspired 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” (Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, 2nd edition, 1987).

The Received Text was still regarded as the preserved apostolic Scripture by Protestants and Baptists in general until well into the 20th century and it continues to be regarded as such by hundreds of thousands of biblical fundamentalists to this very day. We have documented this in *For Love of the Bible: The Battle for the Authorized Version and the Received Text from 1800 to Present*, which is available from Way of Life Literature.

There is only a very slight difference between any of these various editions. According to the comparison done by Reuss in 1872, Beza’s 3rd edition of 1582 departs from Stephanus’ 4th edition of 1551 only 38 times in the entire New Testament (Hills, p. 206). And according to Frederick Scrivener’s research, the King James translators departed from Beza’s 5th edition only 190 times. In

contrast, of three of the chief Alexandrian manuscripts (Sinaiticus and Vaticanus and Codex D), Vaticanus disagrees with Sinaiticus 652 times and with Codex D 1,944 times *in Mark alone*. Sinaiticus and Vaticanus disagree with one another in more than 3,000 places in the four Gospels alone! Jack Moorman makes this important observation about the Received Text: “These ... differences for the entire New Testament, many of which are very small, are a striking demonstration of the narrow limits of variation within the Received Text tradition. There is, in fact, just enough variation to show the independence of witnesses. Their work reflects a refining process in the providential preservation of the Word of God” (Moorman, *8000 Differences between the Textus Receptus and the Nestle-Aland NT Greek Texts*, 2002, p. vii).

Following are some of the most important of the differences between editions of the 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,” while the 1st and 2nd editions of Stephanus have “Bethany.”

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 have “without thy works,” while Erasmus, Stephanus, and the first edition of Beza have “by thy works.”

3. The Greek Received text and the Hebrew Masoretic text were translated into the major languages of the world between the 16th and 19th centuries.

The Received Text was translated into the MAJOR EUROPEAN LANGUAGES: German (1521), English (1524), French (1528), Spanish (1569), Slovenian (1584), French Geneva (1588), Welsh (1588), Hungarian (1590), Dutch (1637), Italian (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), Basque of Spain (1857), Russian (1865), Bulgarian (1864)

The Received Text was translated into NATIVE AMERICAN LANGUAGES IN AMERICA: Pequot (1663), Mohawk (1787), Eskimo (1810), Delaware (1818), Seneca (1829), Cherokee (1829), Ojibway (1833), Dakota (1839), Ottawa (1841), Shawnee (1842), Pottawotomi (1844), Abenaki (1844), Nez Perce (1845), Choctaw (1848), Yupik (1848), Micmac (1853), Plains Cree (1861), Muskogee (1886)

The Received Text was translated into the major languages of INDIA: Malay (1734), Persian (1800), Bengali (1809), Oriya (1815), Marathi (1821), Kashmiri (1821), Nepali (1821), Sanskrit (1822), Gujarati (1823), Punjabi (1826), Bihari (1826), Kannada (1831), Assamese (1833), Hindi (1835), Urdu (1843), Telugu (1854), and 35 other languages

The Received Text was translated into MANY OTHER LANGUAGES AROUND THE WORLD: Syriac (1645), Armenian (1666), Bullom of Sierra Leone (1816), Saraiki of Pakistan (1819), Faroe of the Faroe Islands (1823), Turkish (1827), Sranan of Suriname (1829), Javanese of Indonesia (1829), Aymara of Bolivia (1829), Malay of Indonesia (1835), Manchu of China (1835), Malagasy of Madagascar (1835), Burmese of Burma (1835), Mandinka of Gambia (1837), Hawaiian (1838), Mongolian (1840), Karaite of the Crimea Mountains (1842), Azerbaijani of the U.S.S.R. (1842), Subu of Cameroon (1843), Mon of Burma (1843), Maltese (1847), Garifuna of Belize-Nicaragua (1847), Ossete of Russia (1848), Bube of Equatorial Guinea (1849), Arawak of Guyana (1850), Maori of the Cook Islands (1851), Tontemboan of Indonesia (1852), Somoan (1855), Sesotho of Africa (1855), Setswana of

South Africa (1857), Hausa of Nigeria (1857), Nama of Africa (1866), Maori of New Zealand (1858), Dayak of Indonesia (1858), Isixhosa of South Africa (1859), Karan of Burma (1860), Nubian of Egypt (1860), Igbo of Nigeria (1860), Efik and Yoruba of Nigeria (1862), Tibetan (1862), Ga of Ghana (1866), Tongan of Africa (1862), Twi of Ghana (1863), Isizulu of Africa (1865), Niuean of Tonga (1866), Dehu of New Caledonia (1868), Benga of Africa (1871), Ewe of Africa (1877), Batak of Indonesia (1878), Thai (1883). (Some of the previous information on Bible versions is derived from *Scriptures of the World*, United Bible Societies, 1988 and *The Bible in America*, 1936.)

We would emphasize that this list of translations is only partial. By the end of the nineteenth century, the Bible or portions thereof had been produced in almost 900 languages (P. Marion Simms, *The Bible in America*, p. 177).

Though we cannot give the exact particulars of the textual basis for all of these translations, we do know that the vast majority of these were Received Text Scriptures. I know this from correspondence with Bible Society leaders and missionaries, as well as from my own study of various sources, including personal examination of several of the translations referred to above (Slovak, Czech, Carey Nepali, Judson Burmese, German Luther, Russian, and Spanish). Some were translated from the English Authorized Version; some, from the Greek Received Text; others, from important European Received Text versions such as the Spanish and the German.

When we say these were Received Text Bibles, we do not mean that they were exactly like the English King James Bible in every detail; we mean that they were textually the same as the KJV. They included the words and verses disputed by the modern texts. They contained "God" in 1 Tim. 3:16, for example. They contained Matthew 17:21 and Mark 9:44, 46 and Mark 16:9-20 and John 7:53--8:11 and Acts 8:37--and the hundreds of other verses and portions of verses that are omitted or questioned in the new Bibles.

It is important to understand that in many cases the early Received Text versions in these languages have fallen into disuse since the twentieth century and have been replaced with Westcott-Hort type versions. This has been an objective of the national Bible Societies for many decades.

4. God's people had confidence in the preserved

Scriptures throughout this period, in the 1500s, 1600s, 1700s, and 1800s:

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 (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.”

The testimony of Canon I of the Formula Consensus Helvetica, 1675 (which upheld the absolute authority not only the Greek Received Text but even the vowel points in the Masoretic Hebrew Text):

“God, the Supreme Judge, not only took care to have his word, which is the ‘power of God unto salvation to every one that believes’ (Rom. 1:16), committed to writing by Moses, the Prophets and the Apostles, BUT HAS ALSO WATCHED AND CHERISHED IT WITH PATERNAL CARE FROM THE TIME IT WAS WRITTEN UP TO THE PRESENT, SO THAT IT COULD NOT BE CORRUPTED BY CRAFT OF SATAN OR FRAUD OF MAN. Therefore the Church justly ascribes to it his singular grace and goodness that she has, and will have to the end of the world (2 Pet. 1:19), a ‘sure word of prophecy’ and ‘Holy Scriptures’ (2 Tim. 3:15), from which though heaven and earth pass away, ‘the smallest letter or the least stroke of a pen will not disappear by any means’ (Mat. 5:18).”

The testimony of the Protestant 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.” This was the testimony of Baptist churches in the 17th century and they applied it to the King James Bible.

I would remind my readers that even the modern textual critics admit this:

“It is undisputed that from the 16th to the 18th century orthodoxy’s doctrine of verbal inspiration assumed ... [that the] Received Text [was the inspired 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).

The only mistake in Aland's statement is their limitation of the period of "faith" from the 16th to the 18th century, whereas it actually lasted until late in the 19th century.

5. Bible believers of that era were not trying to "recover" the pure Scriptures; they were busy preaching the Scriptures to the ends of the earth!

Consider the testimony of John Burgon about the purity of the Received Text:

Burgon spent 30 years tracing the history of the Bible through the ages. He made tours of European libraries, examining and collating N.T. manuscripts wherever he went. He conducted extensive correspondence with librarians and scholars in many parts of the world. He visited the Vatican Library in 1860 to examine the Vaticanus. In 1862, he visited Mt. Sinai to inspect manuscripts at St. Catherine's, where the Sinaiticus manuscript had been discovered.

His index of New Testament citations by the Church Fathers consists of 86,489 quotations, more than 4,000 of which are from writers that died before the year 400 A.D. This massive 16-volume work, titled *Index of Texts of the New Testament Quoted by the Fathers*, is in the British Library.

Burgon's research proves that the Traditional Text was in existence and was widely quoted in the first three centuries following the apostles. Thus, contrary to the myth that is often promoted by defenders of the modern versions, the Text underlying the King James Bible is demonstrated to be at least as ancient as the text that was produced by modern textual criticism.

The following was Burgon's conclusion as to the preservation of the Reformation Text: "Call this text Erasmusian 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).

Conclusion and Summary of this section: We hold to the King James Bible because it is based on the preserved Greek New Testament

1. We have a choice today between the Alexandrian Greek text that came from Egypt or the Traditional Greek text that came from Antioch. The textual issue really does come down to “A Tale of Two Cities.”

2. To summarize, we have traced the New Testament text through four important periods in church history:

Period 1: The First Century, which was the time of the completion of the New Testament

During the lifetime of the apostles, the New Testament was written under divine inspiration, completed, and sealed.

The New Testament Scriptures were also recognized and received by God’s people through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The same Spirit that inspired the Scripture enlightened the believers to recognize and receive it.

The New Testament Scriptures were carefully preserved by the believers and transmitted to the next generations.

The New Testament Scriptures were multiplied and distributed throughout the world.

Though the Word of God was viciously attacked, God’s people defended it and kept it pure.

Period 2: The Post Apostolic Era, which was a time of corruption and confusion

The New Testament faith and the New Testament manuscripts were viciously and widely assaulted by false teachers.

There was a heretical school of theology at Alexandria, Egypt, and associated with this school were Origen and Eusebius who had a role in the creation of the Alexandrian Text that is preferred by modern textual critics.

The Vaticanus and Sinaiticus manuscripts come from Egypt and bear clear evidence of theological corruption, especially pertaining to the Deity of Jesus Christ, a doctrine that was under attack in that time and place.

Period 3: The Dark Ages, which was a time when the Bible was persecuted by the Roman Catholic Church

The Catholic Church made laws against translating and reading the Bible in the common languages.

These laws were promoted by the Popes until the end of the 19th century.

Christians who held to the apostolic faith were persecuted and their literature and Scriptures were destroyed.

Bible translators were persecuted.

The Traditional Greek text of the Reformation is the text that was used most widely by God's churches through the centuries. It is supported by the majority of Greek manuscripts, versions, and quotations from the writings of ancient church leaders.

Period 4: The Reformation, which was the time of the printing of the Bible

Because of God's promise of preservation, we can be sure that He was guiding in this important hour of church history and that the Greek text that was printed and then translated into the major languages of the world was the apostolic text.

3. The Bible that came to us out of the Dark Ages is the Masoretic Hebrew Old Testament and the Greek Received Text and those versions that have been translated from them, such as the King James in English and the Luther in German. The doctrine of preservation tells us that this is the pure Word of God. Consider the testimony of John Burgon, who looked into this issue as diligently as any man who has lived in the last 200 years:

"I am utterly disinclined to believe, so grossly improbable does it seem --that at the end of 1800 years 995 copies out of every thousand, suppose, will prove untrustworthy, and that the one, two, three, four, or five which remain, whose contents were till yesterday as good as unknown, will be found to have retained the secret of what the Holy Spirit originally inspired. I AM UTTERLY UNABLE TO BELIEVE, IN SHORT, THAT GOD'S PROMISE HAS SO ENTIRELY FAILED, that at the end of 1800 years, much of the text of the Gospel had in point of fact to be picked by a German critic out of a waste-paper basket in the convent of St. Catherine; and that the entire text had to be remodelled after the pattern set by a couple of copies which had remained in neglect during fifteen centuries, and had probably owed their survival to that neglect; whilst hundreds of others had been thumbed to pieces, and had bequeathed their witness to copies made from them" (Burgon and Miller, *The Traditional Text of the Holy Gospels Vindicated and Established*, 1896, p. 12).

4. If the Reformation text is not the preserved Word of God, it will never be recovered.

The original autographs are gone and there is no way for certain, apart from faith in divine preservation, to know what they said.

Much of the evidence required to reconstruct the original text is missing from the first 1,200 years of the church age. The vast majority of manuscripts from that era are gone. Much of the material, in fact, from the next 300 years is also gone (such as that pertaining to the Waldenses, the Albigenses, the Anabaptists, and even the Lollards in England).

II. WE HOLD TO THE KING JAMES BIBLE BECAUSE THE THEORIES UNDERLYING THE MODERN GREEK TEXT ARE HERETICAL

Section Summary

1. What is modern textual criticism?
2. Why We Reject Modern Textual Criticism
 - a. Its goal is unscriptural
 - b. Its theories are strange and unscriptural
 - c. Its rules are unsettled and constantly changing
 - d. Its fruit has been uncertainty and skepticism
3. Conclusion

WHAT IS MODERN TEXTUAL CRITICISM?

1. Textual criticism is the application of modern linguistic theories to the recovery of ancient documents.

The theories of modern textual criticism were initially developed over a period of roughly 100 years from the late 1700s to the late 1800s. During that introductory period its popularity was limited to textual scholars, for the most part, while it was resisted by Bible believers in general. After the publication of the Westcott-Hort Greek New Testament in 1881, the theories of modern textual criticism quickly gained dominancy in the field of biblical scholarship.

2. Modern textual criticism was devised largely by men who treated the Bible as another book and who either did not believe in the doctrine of Bible preservation or refused to predicate their textual theories on this doctrine.

We will document this more extensively later in these studies. Here we will give two examples.

Karl Lachmann, the first textual critic to entirely reject the Received Text, was a “classical scholar” who approached the Bible in the same way that he approached ordinary classical books. Bruce Metzger, who says Lachmann is 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).

Westcott and Hort, the editors of the influential Greek New Testament of 1881, operated under the following principle: “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).

3. Modern textual criticism claims that the Traditional Greek Text, the Text underlying the Reformation Bibles, is corrupt and has a special distaste for it.

(There is a strange duplicity here on the part of the textual critics and their supporters, in that on the one hand they claim that the difference between texts is not very large and not doctrinal and that this issue should not therefore be divisive, while on the other hand they attack the Traditional Text of Scripture as gravely defective, corrupt, flawed, and full of errors.)

This was recognized in the 19th century by Presbyterian scholar Robert Dabney: “Their common traits may be said to be AN ALMOST CONTEMPTUOUS DISMISSAL OF THE RECEIVED TEXT, as unworthy not only of confidence, but almost of notice; the rejection of the great mass of the codices of the common text as recent and devoid of nearly all authority; and the settlement of the text by the testimony of a very few MSS. for which they claim a superior antiquity, with the support of a few fathers and versions, whom they are pleased to regard as judicious and trustworthy” (Robert Dabney, *Discussions: Evangelical and Theological*, pp. 354, 55).

Westcott and Hort despised the Received Text. Following is what F.J.A. Hort wrote in 1851, when he was only 23 years old and before he had developed his textual theories or done any serious research in this field: “I had no idea till the last few weeks of the importance of texts, having read so little Greek Testament, and dragged on with THE VILLAINOUS TEXTUS RECEPTUS...Think of THAT VILE TEXTUS RECEPTUS leaning entirely on late MSS.; it is a blessing there are such early ones” (*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). Wilbur Pickering observes: "It appears that Hort did not arrive at his theory through unprejudiced intercourse with the facts. Rather, he deliberately set out to construct a theory that would vindicate his preconceived animosity for the Received Text" (*Identity of the New Testament Text*, ch. 3). Note, too, that Hort was deceived into thinking that the Received Text leans "entirely on late manuscripts."

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).

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>).

This bias, based upon a mythical recension, has tainted most of the serious research into ancient texts and translations since the beginning of the 20th century. Modern textual critics are so biased against the Received Text as to be undependable as witnesses to the textual evidence. After examining the way influential textual critics misuse the manuscript evidence, Wilbur Pickering observed, "It seems clear that the 'Byzantine' text cannot win in a court presided over by a judge of Kenyon's bent" and "there is reason to ask whether editors with an anti-Byzantine bias can be trusted to report the evidence in an impartial manner" (Pickering, *Identity of the New Testament Text*, ch. 4).

4. The Greek text produced by modern textual criticism is much shorter than the Received Text New Testament.

It is shorter by 2,886 words. This is equivalent to removing the entire books of 1 and 2 Peter from the Bible (Jack Moorman, *Missing in Modern Bibles: Is the full Story Being Told*, Bible for Today, 1981).

Modern textual criticism removes or questions dozens of entire verses:

Matthew 17:21; 18:11; 23:14

Mark 7:16; 9:44, 46; 11:26; 15:28; 16:9-20

Luke 17:36; 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

It further removes a significant portion of 147 other verses.

5. Modern textual criticism was not popular until the publication of the Westcott and Hort Greek N.T. in 1881.

The first two English versions of any influence based on this text were the English Revised Version of 1881 and the American Standard Version of 1901.

6. Modern textual criticism favors A FEW GREEK UNCIAL MANUSCRIPTS (e.g. Sinaiticus and Vaticanus) and a small number of other manuscripts of similar character over the vast majority of the 5,471 Greek manuscripts and lectionaries extant.

(For the number of extant manuscripts I have followed Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, 2nd edition, pp. 102, 106, 128, 163; plus I have added the 20 additional papyri that are listed in the 4th edition of the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament, 2001 printing).

Writing in 1883, John Burgon observed, "...especially B [Vaticanus] and Aleph [Sinaiticus], have within the last twenty years established a tyrannical ascendancy over the imagination of the Critics, which can only be fitly spoken of as a blind superstition" (*The Revision Revised*, p. 11). 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 and "eccentric" minority.

THE VATICANUS (B)

Introductory facts:

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.

It is thought to date from the mid-4th century and to have originated in Egypt (Frederic Kenyon, *The Text of the Greek Bible*).

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.

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*).

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. The great altar over the supposed tomb of St. Peter is overwhelmed by 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 rows of marble caskets containing dead Popes! A life-size 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). The Vatican is one of the last places on earth one would expect to find the preserved Word of God.

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>). 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 already documented in these studies (and which we have documented 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).

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).

The Vaticanus is very strange and corrupt:

It was corrected by revisers in the 8th, 10th, and 15th centuries (W. Eugene Scott, *Codex Vaticanus*, 1996).

The entire manuscript has been mutilated.

“...every letter has been run over with a pen, making exact identification of many of the characters impossible” (*Vaticanus and Sinaiticus* - ww.waynejackson. freeserve.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*).

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).

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 (Burton, *The Revision Revised*, p. 75).

Vaticanus omits Mark 16:9-20, but a blank space is left for that section of Scripture. John Burton first wrote about this in *The Last Twelve Verses of the Gospel of St. Mark Vindicated*, 1871, pp. 86-87. Wilbur Pickering summarizes this matter as follows: “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”).

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. 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.

Vaticanus contains the false Roman Catholic apocryphal books such as Judith, Tobias, and Baruch (but not the books of the Maccabees).

THE SINAITICUS (ALEPH)

Consider its history:

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!

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).

Consider the location of Codex Sinaiticus today:

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.

The monks at St. Catherine’s discovered several leaves from Genesis in 1975.)

Consider the strangeness of Codex Sinaiticus:

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.

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).

The first of the revisions was done by Pamphilus (who died in 309 A.D.) against the Hexapla of Origen (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, and taught that the Holy Spirit was the first creature made by God, among other heresies.

Mark 16:9-20 is omitted in the Sinaiticus, but 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” (Wilbur Pickering, *The Identity of the New Testament Text*, appendix F, “Mark 16:9-20 and the Doctrine of Inspiration”).

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.

Sinaiticus exhibits 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.

Concluding facts about these two uncials:

First, Vaticanus, Sinaiticus, and a handful of similar manuscripts are preferred by modern textual critics above the vast majority.

Tischendorf was so enamored with the Sinaiticus that he altered the eighth edition of his Greek New Testament (1869-72) in 3,369 instances to conform to this manuscript. For Tischendorf, Sinaiticus “served as the critical standard to establish the text” (Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 14).

Westcott and Hort thought that “the original New Testament text had survived in almost perfect condition in these two manuscripts [Sinaiticus and Vaticanus], especially in B [Vaticanus]” (Edward Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, 4th edition, p. 66). For Westcott and Hort, Vaticanus was “their touchstone” (Aland, p. 14).

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). The Nestle’s text was merged with the United Bible Societies’ Greek New Testament beginning with the 3rd edition in 1975, thus bringing the latter more in line with the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus.

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).

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).

We could give dozens of pages of similar quotations from modern translators and textual critics. 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, which exhibit similar Egyptian readings.

Second, 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).

Third, 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).

Fourth, Vaticanus (B) or Sinaiticus (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 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 the following 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

Fifth, 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.

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.

Sixth, 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).

Seventh, there is therefore clear evidence that Vaticanus and Sinaiticus represent a corrupt text that was the product of tampering by theological heretics in the first two centuries after the apostles.

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).

This is also documented by Herman Hoskier in *Codex B and Its Allies: A Study and an Indictment* (London: Bernard Quaritch, 1914).

Eighth, 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!

7. Modern textual criticism has also found support for its Egyptian text in THE POPYRI.

Following are some basic introductory facts about the papyri:

The papyri New Testament manuscripts are so called because they are written on papyrus. The letters are written in uncial or all caps.

116 papyrus manuscripts are listed in the 4th edition of the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament (2001 printing).

The papyri encompass the oldest extant New Testament manuscripts. Four of papyrus fragments are dated to the 2nd century and roughly 40 are dated to the 3rd.

Not all of the papyri are so old. Thirty-eight of them date from the 5th to the 8th centuries.

The papyri are fragmentary and give only slight evidence for the New Testament books. 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). (P74 dates to the seventh century.)

They are no papyrus manuscripts extant for 1 Timothy or 2 Timothy.

There is only one fragmentary papyrus for 2 John and 3 John.

There are only two fragmentary papyri for the following books: 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Colossians, 2 Thessalonians, Titus, Philemon, 2 Peter, 1 John.

There are only three fragmentary papyri for the following: Mark, Ephesians, Philippians, 1 Peter, Jude.

There are more than 10 fragmentary papyri for only three books: Matthew (18), John (22), and Acts (13).

There are two major collections of New Testament papyri. It is possible that the two collections 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).

The Chester Beatty Collection is housed in the Beatty Museum in Dublin. These manuscripts were found in a pot on the east bank of the Nile south of Cairo (Edward Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, p. 130). Nothing more is known about the history of these ancient manuscripts. The manuscripts were published in 1933-37.

The Bodmer Collection of manuscripts was published in 1956-62. The more than 50 papyrus documents belonging to the Bodmer Library were purchased by M. Martin Bodmer in Geneva in 1954 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 Cologne, a suburb of Geneva (Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 39).

Consider some important facts about the papyri relating to textual criticism:

First, the papyri owe their survival to the fact that they were located in Egypt, and it is not surprising, therefore, that they

generally reflect an Egyptian or Alexandrian text. After examining a number of heretical readings in early Egyptian manuscripts, Edward Hills concludes: “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” (Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, 1984, p. 134).

Second, the papyri exhibit evident signs of corruption. Consider three examples:

P46

This papyrus is part of the Chester Beatty collection and contains portions of most of the Pauline Epistles. It is dated c. 225 A.D.

It “abounds with scribal blunders, omissions, and also additions” (Zuntz, *The Text of the Epistles*, 1953, p. 212).

It also contains evidence of gnostic corruption. 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 p46 is, without a doubt, a corrupt manuscript that was modified to fit heretical views that Christ was a spirit separate from the man Jesus.

P66

This papyrus, belonging to the Bodmer collection, contains portions of the Gospels of Luke and John. It is dated c. 200 A.D.

"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 not even the entire Gospel of John!

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 back to the heretic named Valentinus, who denied the Godhead of Jesus Christ (Burgon and Miller, *Causes of Corruption*, pp. 215, 216). 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.

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.

P66 omits “who is in heaven” in John 3:13, thus removing this powerful witness to Christ’s omnipresence.

P75

This papyrus, belonging to the Bodmer collection, contains portions of Luke and John. It is dated c. 200 A.D.

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).

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 says 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).

Third, the extensive study done by Harry Sturz demonstrates that the papyri, though 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 comes from that area where the Alexandrian/shorter text was prevalent. [Most 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*).

Fourth, 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).

Fifth, to allow the papyri to overthrow the testimony of the centuries would be to throw the text of Scripture into perpetual doubt. “If we thought this, our faith would be always wavering. We could never be sure that a [manuscript] dealer would not soon appear with something new from somewhere” (Hills, p. 130).

Conclusion to the section “What Is Modern Textual Criticism?”

1. Textual criticism is the application of modern linguistic theories to the recovery of ancient documents.
2. Modern textual criticism was devised largely by men who treated the Bible like any other book and who either did not believe in the doctrine of Bible preservation or refused to predicate their textual theories on this doctrine.
3. Modern textual criticism claims that the Traditional Greek Text, the Reformation Text, is corrupt and has a special distaste for it.

4. The Greek text produced by modern textual criticism is much shorter than the Received Text New Testament.
5. Modern textual criticism was not popular until the publication of the Westcott and Hort Greek N.T. in 1881.
6. Modern textual criticism favors a few Greek uncials (e.g. Sinaiticus and Vaticanus) and a small number of other manuscripts of similar character over the vast majority of the 5,471 Greek manuscripts and lectionaries extant.
7. Vaticanus (B) or Sinaiticus (Aleph), either individually or together, are the source of most of the omissions and glaring changes in the modern versions.
8. These manuscripts originated in Egypt, a hotbed of theological heresy.
9. These manuscripts bear evidence of being corrupt above all other Greek uncials or minuscules.
10. 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.
11. 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.
12. The Egyptian Papyri also show evident signs of heretical corruption.

WHY WE REJECT MODERN TEXTUAL CRITICISM

Section Summary

1. We reject modern textual criticism because its goal is unscriptural.
2. We reject modern textual criticism because its theories are strange and unscriptural.
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.
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.

1. We reject modern textual criticism because its goal is unscriptural.

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 when Tischendorf lived.

The very title of Bruce Metzger’s popular 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 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.

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.

Introductory thoughts:

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

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 at various stages in its history.

Some of the chief principles of modern textual criticism examined:

Note: The theories of modern textual criticism are examined more thoroughly in *Faith vs. the Modern Bible Versions* and in *The Modern Bible Version Question-Answer Database*, available from Way of Life Literature.

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.

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).

COMMENT:

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.

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.

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.

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.

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. I am convinced that a wiser, more Scriptural position is that of Ian Paisley: "I WILL OPPOSE B THE VATICAN MS FIRST, FOREMOST, ALTOGETHER, SIMPLY BECAUSE IT IS THE VATICAN MS, BECAUSE I HAVE TO RECEIVE IT FROM ROME, BECAUSE I WILL HAVE NO BIBLE FROM ROME, NO HELP FROM ROME AND NO COMPLICITY WITH ROME; BECAUSE I BELIEVE ROME TO BE AN APOSTATE. A worshipper of Bread for God; a remover of the sovereign mediatorship of Christ; a destroyer of the true gospel, she teaches a system which, if any man believes or follows as she teaches it, he will infallibly be lost--he must be. ... I will not take my Bible--not the bulk of it--from her apostate, foul deceitful cruel hands, 'Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes'--I fear the Latins bearing presents in their hands" (Paisley, *My Plea for the Old Sword*, p. 66).

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:

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" (Terrance Brown, *What Is Wrong with the Modern Versions of the Holy Scriptures?* Trinitarian Bible Society, London, England, Article No. 41).

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, 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).

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).

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 "bishopsrics" 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 from 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 devices 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.

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.

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!

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 and, in their eyes, inauthentic 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).

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:

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.

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 was to copy not create, and a conscientious scribe would not exceed his duty.

Hort gave 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, could Westcott and Hort find only eight instances of this phenomenon? “Kenyon candidly admitted that he didn’t think that there were very many more” (Hills, p. 175).

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).

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).

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?

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.

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:

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).

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.

When heretics are tampering with the text, it is easier to get away with omissions than additions.

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.

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:

This is another theory that is backed by no evidence but was devised specifically to support the Alexandrian text.

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).

The Bible warns that it is the devil that corrupts the simplicity of God’s truth (2 Cor. 11:3).

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).

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.

Conclusion:

We see that the principles of modern textual criticism are strange and unscriptural.

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).

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>).

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).

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.

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. For more of these see *Faith vs. the Modern Bible Versions*.

“[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 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 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).

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 children 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.

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).

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 him 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.

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 one example:

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>).

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.

This is only one example 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.

MODERN TEXTUAL CRITICISM HAS LED MANY INTO THEOLOGICAL MODERNISM.

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*).

This is a loud warning to those who have ears to hear. 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).

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.

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).

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).

Since 1967, Cardinal Carlo Martini has been on the editorial committee for the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament.

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).

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 will 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 *The Modern Bible Version Hall of Shame*, available from Way of Life Literature.)

Conclusion of why we reject modern textual criticism

First, 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.

Second, modern textual criticism is an unsettled pseudo-science. It is a “science falsely so called” (1 Tim. 6:20).

Third, 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.

Fourth, modern textual criticism is complicated and is therefore suitable only for the scholarly elite.

Fifth, modern textual criticism has produced uncertainty, skepticism, a weakening of the authority of the Bible, and has encouraged the back to Rome movement.

Suggestions for further reading on this topic: (1) The Modern Bible Version Question-Answer Database goes into the issue of modern textual criticism in some detail. (2) 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?* (3) Another scholarly 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 the 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.) (4) Edward F. Hills’ *The King James Version Defended* contains a masterly refutation of modern textual criticism. (5) An excellent brief summary of the Westcott-Hort theory of textual criticism is contained in Jack Moorman’s *Modern Bibles--the Dark Secret*. This is available online at <http://>

www.wayoflife.org/fbns/fbcdarks.htm. All of these are available in print from Bible for Today, 900 Park Ave., Collingswood, NJ 08108.

III. WE HOLD TO THE KING JAMES BIBLE BECAUSE THE MODERN TEXTS AND VERSIONS ARE A PRODUCT OF END -TIME APOSTASY

Section Summary

1. Introduction
2. The association between apostasy and modern textual criticism stated.
3. A look at the apostate conditions that existed in Europe, England, and America when modern textual criticism was being formulated.
 - Theological liberalism was blossoming
 - Human Philosophy was exalting itself against God's Word
 - Unitarianism was making great gains
 - Communism was rising
 - Evolution was developing
 - Heretical Christian cults were blossoming
 - Feminism was rising
 - Roman Catholicism was making new advances
4. A look at the apostasy of some of the influential textual critics and modern version translators, from Richard Simon in the 18th century to the editors of the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament in the 20th.
5. Conclusion

INTRODUCTION

1. One of the reasons why we reject modern textual criticism is its affinity to and intimate association with end time apostasy. I don't see how this can be denied in light of the following documentation. The following portions of the Word of God should be read very carefully in this light, as they contain warnings about the believer's association with apostasy: Rom. 16:17-18; 2 Cor. 6:14; Col. 2:8; 1 Tim. 6:20; 2 Tim. 2:16-18; 3:5; 2 John 7-11; Rev. 18:4.

2. The following information is abbreviated from *The Modern Bible Version Hall of Shame*, which is available from Way of Life Literature.

3. This information is the fruit of 25 years of research. When I first began studying the Bible text-version issue in about 1979, I wanted to check my sources and base my research upon primary documents as much as possible, and I have pursued that goal over the past quarter century. Today my personal library contains a large percentage of the books that have been published in this field in English in the past 200 years. I have researched this issue at libraries such as Regent College in Vancouver, B.C., Westminster Seminary, the Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives in Nashville; the British Library; Heritage Baptist University's collection of rare Bibles; the Mack Library at BJU; the Museum of Waldensian History at Torre Pellice, Italy; the Moravian Museums in Pennsylvania and North Carolina; the Scriptorium Center for Biblical Studies in Orlando, Florida; the Cambridge University Library; the Spurgeon Library at William Jewell College in Liberty, Missouri; Wake-Forest University Library; the Waldensian Museum in Valdese, North Carolina; the William Tyndale Museum in Vilvoorde, Belgium; the Gutenberg Museum in Germany; the Erasmus House in Belgium.

4. Bible believers of the sixteenth, seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries were busy rejoicing in, preaching, and obeying the Scriptures. On the other hand, the textual critics were flying in the face of the doctrine of preservation. Rejecting the Traditional Text that had been handed down to them by Bible-believing Christians, they were groping around in dark monasteries and papal libraries trying to rediscover the supposed lost Word of God. Their ears were attuned to the vain philosophies emanating from Germany, and they were applying secular principles of textual criticism to the biblical text.

5. While not every adherent of modern textual criticism is a modernist or a Unitarian or a skeptic or a rationalist, most of its chief architects and proponents have been. Evangelicals such as the Baptist A.T. Robertson and the Presbyterian B.B. Warfield did not develop textual criticism but merely rehashed and passed along that which they received from the rationalistic fathers in this field. The same was true for Samuel Tregelles in England. Presbyterian scholar Robert Dabney in 1871 observed that evangelicals adopted the critical text "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).

THE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN APOSTASY AND MODERN TEXTUAL CRITICISM STATED BY MEN OF GOD

The following are only a few examples of such statements by discerning men of God. Many more can be found in the 460-page book *For Love of the Bible: The Battle for the King James Version and the Received Text from 1800 to Present*, available from Way of Life Literature.

The Testimony of John Burgon and Edward Miller: “That which distinguishes Sacred Science from every other Science which can be named is that it is Divine, and has to do with a Book which is inspired; that is, whose true Author is God. ... *It is chiefly from inattention to this circumstance that misconception prevails in that department of Sacred Science known as “Textual Criticism”*” (Burgon and Miller, *The Traditional Text*, p. 9).

The testimony of Robert L. Dabney (1820-1898), 19th century Presbyterian scholar. Dabney taught at Union Theological Seminary from 1853 to 1883 and pastored the College Church during most of those years. He contributed to a number of publications, including *the Central Presbyterian*, *the Presbyterian Critic*, and *the Southern Presbyterian*. His last years were spent with the Austin School of Theology in Texas, a university he co-founded. He boldly withstood the apostasy that was creeping in on every side in this day. Dabney said that evangelicals who were accepting modern textual criticism had adopted it “from the mint of infidel rationalism” (Dabney, *Southern Presbyterian Review*, April 1871). This would have applied to Charles Hodge, another Presbyterian leader of that day, but one who was promoting modern textual criticism instead of resisting it. Dabney published a perceptive article called “The Doctrinal Various Readings of the New Testament Greek.” He described the attempts of textual critics such as Griesbach and Tischendorf to reject the Greek Received Text and to replace it with the Alexandrian text. Dabney showed that the changes made in the text favored Unitarianism and he believed the 4th century Alexandrian text was a product of heretical corruption. Consider this excerpt from Dabney: “THE SIGNIFICANT FACT TO

WHICH WE WISH ESPECIALLY TO CALL ATTENTION IS THIS: THAT ALL THE VARIATIONS PROPOSED ON THE FAITH OF THESE MANUSCRIPTS WHICH HAVE ANY DOCTRINAL IMPORTANCE, SHOULD ATTACK THE ONE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY; nay, we may say even more specifically, the one doctrine of Christ's deity. ... Their admirers [of the favored manuscripts supporting the critical text] claim for them an origin in the fourth or fifth century. The Sabellian and Arian controversies raged in the third and fourth. Is there no coincidence here? Things do not happen again and again regularly without a cause. ... And when we remember the date of the great Trinitarian contest, and compare it with the supposed date of these exemplars of the sacred text, the ground of suspicion becomes violent. ... THESE VARIATIONS ARE TOO NUMEROUS, AND TOO SIGNIFICANT IN THEIR EFFECT UPON THE ONE DOCTRINE, TO BE ASCRIBED TO CHANCE. ... there are strong probable grounds to conclude, that the text of the Scriptures current in the East received a mischievous modification at the hands of the famous ORIGEN, which has not been usually appreciated."

The Testimony of George Perkins Marsh, who spoke out against the English Revision of 1881: "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" (George Marsh, *Lectures on the English Language*, New York: Charles Scribner, 1860, p. 630).

The testimony of George Samson, President, Columbian College and Rutgers Female College.* In 1882 Samson described the connection between rationalism and modern textual criticism. After examining the principles of textual critics such as Lachmann, Samson wrote: "STUDIED EFFORT TO UNDERMINE THE INTEGRITY OF THE 'TEXTUS RECEPTUS' BEGAN IN GERMANY, AMONG THE REJECTERS OF THE SUPERNATURAL INTERPOSITION CLEARLY MANIFEST IN THE OLD AND NEW

TESTAMENT RECORDS; whose verity was maintained by evangelical as distinct from rationalistic interpreters. IT WAS FOSTERED BY GERMAN SPECULATIVE TENDENCIES OF THOUGHT; and has unconsciously pervaded the minds not only of a large class in the State Churches of Germany and of England, but has stolen into the Scottish Presbyterian State and Free Churches, and has also influenced a large class of American Biblical students who have over-estimated the comparative value of German philological research. THE SPECULATIVE TENDENCY OF GERMAN INTELLECT ... has been manifest to the acutest and most comprehensive scholars in every department of research. ... Within the last twenty years Dornes in his exhaustive treatise, and Ritschl by his keen supplementary analysis, have shown, from their native point of view in German theology, how the 'subjective' tendency to individual speculation has overruled 'objective' devotion to the impartial interpretation of the teachings of Jesus and His apostles ... MEANWHILE THE QUIET WORK OF UNDERMINING THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE WHOLE FABRIC OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH, THE INTEGRITY OF THE TEXT OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, HAS GONE ON; and that through the 'subjective' rule of 'internal evidence' unconsciously accepted as legitimate by editors of the Greek New Testament, like Griesbach and Hahn; and as unconsciously received by American and English as well as German Bible students" (Samson, *The English Revisers' Greek Text*, 1882, pp. 97, 126-128). [* Columbian College began as a Baptist institution. It was approved at the second meeting of the Baptist General Convention in 1817, received a charter from Congress in 1821, and opened in 1822 (William Cathcart, *The Baptist Encyclopedia*, Vol. 1, 1883). Its first property was obtained through the efforts of Luther Rice, former missionary to Burma. The name was changed in 1873 to Columbian University and in 1904 to George Washington University. George Samson was president from 1858-71, at which time he accepted the presidency of Rutgers Female College of New York.]

The Testimony of the Trinitarian Bible Society of London, England, which was formed in 1831 in protest to the liberalism that had already taken root within the British & Foreign Bible Society. Consider this statement: "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” (Terence H. Brown, *God Was Manifest in the Flesh*, Trinitarian Bible Society, 1965). A similar charge was made in T.B.S. Article #14: “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*, T.B.S. Article No. 14, p. 13).

The Testimony of the Bible League of England, which was formed in Britain in 1892: “In the eighteenth century Religious Rationalism was begotten in Germany and began to spread in its Universities. It has influenced and debased the theological thought in almost the whole of Protestant Christendom. ... The Father of this new revolutionary attitude to the Word of the Lord and the Lord of the Word was J.S. Semler (1725-91), Professor of Theology at Halle. One of his pupils, J.J. Griesbach (1745-1812) was appointed Professor of the New Testament at Jena in 1775. ... It should not be surprising, nor should it be overlooked, that Griesbach, INFLUENCED FROM HIS UNDERGRADUATE DAYS BY THE RISING TIDE OF RATIONALISM SWEEPING OVER HIS COUNTRY, WAS A FOE OF ORTHODOX CHRISTIANITY. He abandoned the Textus Receptus, and constructed a new Greek New Testament text” (emphasis added) (D.A. Thompson, *The Controversy Concerning the Last Twelve Verses of the Gospel according to Mark*, Surrey: The Bible Christian Unity Fellowship, pp. 39-40; reprint of four articles which appeared in *The Bible League Quarterly*, London, 1973).

The Testimony of Zane Hodges, who was Professor of New

Testament Literature and Exegesis at Dallas Theological Seminary from 1959-87: Hodges associated modern textual criticism with theological rationalism in a 1971 article. "The acceptance of the newer critical editions of the New Testament does not rest on factual data which can be objectively verified, but rather upon a prevailing consensus of critical thought. IT WILL BE THE PURPOSE OF THIS DISCUSSION TO SHOW THAT CONTEMPORARY CRITICAL TEXTS ARE, IN FACT, THE FRUIT OF A RATIONALISTIC APPROACH TO NEW TESTAMENT TEXTUAL CRITICISM. ... 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" (Zane C. Hodges, "Rationalism and Contemporary New Testament Textual Criticism," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, January 1971, pp. 27-35).

The Testimony of Edward F. Hills, who had a doctorate in modern textual criticism from Harvard University:

"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. ... WEAKENED BY DEAD ORTHODOXY AND PIETISM, CONSERVATIVE PROTESTANTS OF THE LATE 17TH AND 18TH CENTURIES FAILED TO RESIST THE RISING NEUTRAL WORLD-VIEW AS VIGOROUSLY AS THEY SHOULD HAVE DONE. Instead of taking their stand upon God's revelation of Himself in holy Scripture and pointing out that the neutral world-view is not really neutral but antichristian and full of contradictions, they began to adopt it themselves, especially in those areas of thought not specifically covered by their Reformation creeds, namely, philosophy and biblical introduction and above all New Testament textual criticism" (Edward Hills, *The King James Bible Defended*, pp. 1, 44).

A LOOK AT THE APOSTATE CONDITIONS THAT EXISTED IN EUROPE, ENGLAND, AND (TO A LESSER DEGREE), AMERICA WHEN MODERN TEXTUAL CRITICISM WAS BEING FORMULATED

1. The time when modern textual criticism was devised was a time when THEOLOGICAL LIBERALISM was blossoming.

Nominal Christianity paved the way for apostasy both in Europe and in England.

In Germany the Lutheran state church was spiritually powerless. The citizens of the nation were members of the church by birth and by infant baptism, but they were not born again and the new birth was seldom preached. Though Pietist movements such as the Moravian sprouted from time to time, these did not bring about permanent change because they did not make a plain break with the heresy of infant baptism and sacramentalism and succeeding generations would quickly fall back into nominalism and ritualism.

A similar situation existed in England. The Church of England dominated the nation's religious life, and it largely represented a nominal Christianity. In the 18th century George Whitefield was referring to conditions in the Church of England when he observed, "In our days, to be a true Christian, is really to become a scandal" (*George Whitefield's Journals*, London; Banner of Truth, 1960, p. 32). Wesley and Whitefield found that there was no room

within the Church of England for preaching the new birth in a scriptural fashion. But in England, unlike Germany, there was a stronger evangelical movement within the state church and a much stronger evangelical church movement apart from the state church, as represented by Baptists, Methodists, Brethren, and others.

Biblical criticism had its origin among Roman Catholics who were opposed to the Protestant Reformation and its sole authority for faith and practice, the Bible. “So eager were the Jesuits to destroy the authority of the Bible--the paper Pope of the Protestants, as they contemptuously called it--that they even did not refrain from criticizing its genuineness and historical value” (Ernst von Dobschutz, *The Influence of the Bible on Civilization*, 1914, p. 136).

Richard Simon (1638-1712), a French Roman Catholic priest, questioned the Bible’s historical authority and was “the forerunner of modern biblical criticism” (*Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 4, p. 492).

Jean Astruc (1684-1766) was a French Roman Catholic medical doctor and theologian. He was the son of a Protestant pastor who had converted to Catholicism. In 1753, he published “Conjectures sur les mémoires originaux dont il paroît que Moÿse s'est servi pour composer le livre de la Génèse” (“Conjectures on the original documents that Moses appears to have used in composing the Book of Genesis”), in which he claimed that Genesis was composed from various sources. He conjectured that Moses used two documents, one that used the name Elohim and the other that used the name Jehovah. Astruc’s “work opened the modern era of critical Biblical inquiry” (*Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia*). Astruc’s documentary hypothesis was taken up by Eichorn in Germany.

By the mid-18th century, it was the age of “enlightenment” in which rationalism was positively encouraged by Frederick II, the “philosopher king,” who reigned over Prussia 46 years (1740-1786). The “age of enlightenment” should be called the “age of unbelief.” Frederick was “a thorough rationalist and patron of ‘free thought.’ The sight of a cross, it was said, was enough to make him blaspheme” (Iain Murray, *Evangelicalism Divided*, p. 5). The *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* of 1934 correctly defined “Enlightenment” as “shallow and pretentious intellectualism, unreasonable contempt for authority and tradition.”

Following are some of the prominent names in the development of theological modernism.

Johann Gottfried Eichhorn (1752-1827) developed and popularized Jean Astruc's documentary theory. It was Eichhorn who made the distinction between "lower criticism" and "higher criticism." *Lower criticism* is the examination of manuscripts to "recover" the best possible original text of a document, whereas *higher criticism* is the investigation of questions such as the authorship, date, and historicity of the Bible. (Both lower and higher criticism came from the same skeptical cauldron and both have greatly undermined faith in the Holy Scriptures because neither is predicated upon faith.) Eichhorn fearlessly engaged in biblical criticism, claiming that the Pentateuch was not written by Moses as taught by Jesus Christ and the apostles and as traditionally believed by God's people but was an edited composition of diverse documents and traditions. "This theory was later extended and developed into the Graf-Wellhausen thesis, which sees the whole of the Pentateuch the product of several layers of oral tradition, developed over time and written down long after the events it records are claimed to have occurred" (*Biblical Criticism*, http://www.christis.org.uk/archive/issue71/biblical_criticism.php).

H.E.G. Paulus (1761-1851) of Heidelberg, Germany, devised naturalistic explanations for Christ's miracles. He claimed, for example, that Jesus did not actually walk on the water but that He was walking on the shore and in the mist and fog it only *appeared* that he was walking on the water. He claimed that Christ did not die on the cross, but only swooned, and in the coolness of the tomb he revived; and after an earthquake moved the stone, he walked out and appeared to the disciples. Of course, that would have been as great a miracle as the resurrection!

Frederick Schleiermacher (1768-1834) of Halle, Germany, exalted experience and feeling over Bible doctrine. He used traditional Christian language but gave this language new and heretical meaning. He emphasized the necessity of knowing Christ through faith, but by this he did not mean believing the Bible as the historically true and infallible Word of God; he was referring merely to man's own intuition or consciousness. It was not faith in the Word of God but faith in faith. He did not consider historical biblical truth to be necessary to faith. Thus Schleiermacher could say, "With my intellect I am a philosopher, and with my feelings quite a devout man; ay, more than that, a Christian" (quoted by

Daniel Edward, "Schleiermacher Interpreted by Himself and the Men of His School," *British and Foreign Evangelical Review*, Vol. 25, 1876, p. 609). Schleiermacher barred doctrinal preaching from the pulpit (Iain Murray, *Evangelicalism Divided*, 2000, p. 11). "Schleiermacher is correctly viewed as the chief source of the massive change which has occurred in the historic Protestant denominations during the last two hundred years. ... In his separation of the intellectual content of Christianity (the objective biblical revelation) from Christian 'feeling', Schleiermacher seemed to provide a means whereby the essence of Christianity could remain unaffected, no matter how much of the Bible was rejected. Hostile criticism of Scripture need not therefore be seen as a threat to the 'faith' ... Christianity, it was concluded, could be successful irrespective of whether Scripture were preserved as the Word of God, and this thought was the more appealing as the theological scholarship of the nineteenth century became increasingly destructive" (Murray, p. 11). Schleiermacher paved the way for the New Evangelical view that men can be genuine Christians and "love the Lord," even though they reject biblical doctrine. For this reason, Billy Graham can have sweet fellowship with modernistic skeptics and Roman Catholic bishops and popes.

Ferdinand Christian Baur (1792-1860), founder of the Tuebingen (Germany) School of New Testament criticism, claimed that the Gospel of John was not written until 170 A.D. and that only four of Paul's Epistles were actually written by him. He argued that the New Testament was merely the natural record of the early churches. He taught that Paul preached a spiritual rather than a bodily resurrection and that only after Paul's day, during the controversy with the Docetists, did the preaching of the bodily resurrection begin. Baur also promoted the doctrine of "organic development," that "the church as the literal body of Christ on earth progressively apprehended higher truth but was always infallible and authoritative at any point in time" (James Sightler, *Tabernacle Essays on Bible Translation*, 1992, p. 9). This doctrine was promoted in America by Phillip Schaff, the chairman of the American Standard Version translation committee. The Tuebingen School was very influential in the spread of modernism.

David F. Strauss (1808-74), a pupil of F.C. Baur, "dismissed all the supernatural and messianic elements in the Gospels as myth." He boldly denied the divinity of Jesus Christ. His book *Das Leben Jesu*

(*The Life of Jesus*) (1835) was very influential. “Strauss’ thesis was that the entire Gospel was one grand parable; a great mass of legends drawn from many sources, even some which had pagan beginnings, applied from motives of hope and benevolence in his followers, to an obscure Galilean prophet who was himself swept up in the scheme unwittingly, all pointing not to the God of Moses and Elijah, cruel and vindictive and even immoral as Strauss and the transcendentalists felt Him to be, but to a higher, man-made, Platonic Deity, who was the beneficiary of the advanced ethics of the 19th century” (Sightler, *Tabernacle Essays on Bible Translation*, p. 9). Strauss spiritualized the resurrection. Strauss’ *The Life of Jesus* was translated into English in 1846 by Mary Ann Evans (who went by the pen name of George Eliott), author of *Silas Marner*, “who in the process gave up the evangelical faith in which she had been reared” (Sightler, p. 9).

John Stuart Mill (1806-73) published his *System of Logic* in 1843, with the claim that the only valid source of information is the physical senses and scientific investigation, thus denouncing faith. Mill had a large influence at Cambridge University and throughout England in the scholarly realm.

The Graf-Wellhausen theory was named for Julius Wellhausen (1844-1918) and Karl Heinrich Graf (1815-69). (Julius Wellhausen published the *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel* in 1878.) According to this theory, the Old Testament is not divine revelation but merely the record of the evolution of Israel’s religion. He held “that Hebrew religion had undergone a development from the primitive stories of nomadic times to the elaborate, institutionalized ritualism of the period of the centuries before the birth of Christ” (*The History of Christianity*, Lion Publishing, 1977, p. 554). Wellhausen denied the historicity of Abraham, Noah, and other Bible characters. He claimed that Israel did not know about Jehovah God until Moses taught them this at Mt. Sinai. He claimed that the laws and the priestly system were not given by Moses but were developed after Israel was in Canaan and, in some cases, after the Babylonian exile; that most of the Pentateuch was written during the days of Israel’s kings as a “pious fraud.” This theory has, in its ever-changing forms, wielded vast influence in theological education in most denominations. (It has also permeated evangelical biblical scholarship since the latter half of the 20th century. For documentation see *Faith vs. the Modern Bible Versions*,

Part VII, “We Hold to the King James Bible Because Evangelical Scholarship Is Unreliable.” See also “Fundamentalism, Modernism, and New Evangelicalism” -- <http://www.wayoflife.org/fbns/fundamen1.htm>).

The ninth edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, published in 1878, included essays that were critical of the Bible, making such criticism available generally to English-speaking people for the first time.

The Broad Church movement in the Church of England grew until it dominated the scene by the end of the 19th century.

The Broad Church movement made allowance for “new thinking,” particularly the German liberalism. It rejected the doctrine that the Bible is the sole revelation from God and was receptive to human wisdom and philosophy. Some of the characteristics of the movement are as follows:

The doctrine of original sin was denied.

The doctrine of Christ’s substitutional atonement was denied and atonement was either ignored or Christ’s incarnation stressed instead.

In Christology the Broad Church teaching varied from rarely held orthodoxy, to denial of the eternal Sonship, to subordinationism and Sabellianism, to outright Arianism and Socinianism.

The virgin birth was denied.

Heaven and Hell were not believed to be real places.

Christ’s resurrection ascension were spiritualized and made figurative.

The doctrine of verbal inspiration was denied.

Darwin’s theory of evolution was accepted.

A prominent name in this movement was the famous poet and author Samuel Taylor Coleridge, a Unitarian. D. C. Somervell said, “The whole of the Broad Church school of the next generation, in all its varieties, is derivable from Coleridge” (*English Thought in the Nineteenth Century*, 1929). Coleridge rejected the divine inspiration of Scripture, the virgin birth and deity of Jesus Christ, and filtered

the Bible's teaching through transcendental philosophy.

Another prominent name in the Broad Church movement was J.F.D. (Frederick Denison) Maurice, who was expelled from King's College in 1853 for heretical doctrines. Maurice believed that Christ's incarnation "effected a mystical union of Christ with all men, so that all are saved, and the mission of the church is then simply to tell them so" (Sightler, p. 17).

By 1853 the Broad Church had gained the allegiance of 3,500 Anglican priests (James Sightler, *Tabernacle Essays on Bible Translation*, 1992, p. 12).

In 1861, a volume entitled *Essays and Reviews* promoted higher criticism as held by Broad Church leaders and theologians. The seven authors, led by Benjamin Jowett, denied the virgin birth, deity, vicarious propitiatory atonement, and bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ, as well as the supernatural inspiration and miracles of the Bible. In 1864 the Privy Council of England permitted the seven Broad Church clergymen who attacked the Christian faith in *Essays and Reviews* to retain their position.

Many of the members of the English Revised Version translation committee were within the Broad Church movement, including Westcott and Hort, R.C. Trench, J.B. Lightfoot, Edward Henry Bickersteth, Benjamin Kennedy, A.P. Stanley, Charles Ellicott, William Moulton, George Milligan, Robert Payne Smith, William Humphrey, and Charles John Vaughan.

Consider some general descriptions of what was happening in Europe and England in the days when modern textual criticism was being devised:

The testimony of historian James Good: Rationalism was "a terrible tide" that "swept over Germany like a flood" (James Good, *History of the Reformed Church of Germany 1620-1890*).

The testimony of R.L. Dabney in 1881: "While German scholarship has been busy with its labors, it has suffered almost a whole nation to lapse into a semi-heathenish condition" ("The Influence of the German University System on Theological Education," *Discussions: Evangelical and Theological*).

The testimony of John Newton, who declared in 1801: "I am told there are about ten thousand parishes in England; I believe more

than nine thousand of these are destitute of the gospel” (*Letters and Conversational Remarks by John Newton During the Last Eighteen Years of His Life*, 1809, p. 146).

The testimony of L.W. Munhall: “The unspiritual condition of the churches ... and the alarmingly prevalent skepticism, infidelity, and atheism among the masses of the people in Germany, Switzerland, and Holland is, without doubt, almost wholly attributable to the advocacy of these criticisms by a large majority of the prominent pastors and theological professors in those lands. The same condition of affairs is measurably true in England, Scotland, New England, and in every community where this criticism is believed by any very considerable number of people and openly advocated” (L.W. Munhall, *The Highest Critics vs. the Higher Critics*, 1896).

The testimony of Charles Haddon Spurgeon, who spent the last years of his life fighting against the “downgrade” in theology that had undermined the Baptist Union. In 1887 Spurgeon wrote the following haunting words: “A CHASM IS OPENING BETWEEN THE MEN WHO BELIEVE THEIR BIBLES AND THE MEN WHO ARE PREPARED FOR AN ADVANCE UPON SCRIPTURE. ... Those who hold evangelical doctrine are in open alliance with those who call the fall a fable, who deny the personality of the Holy Ghost, who call justification by faith immoral, and hold that there is another probation after death. ... Attendance at places of worship is declining and reverence for holy things is vanishing. We solemnly believe this to be largely attributable to THE SCEPTICISM WHICH HAS FLASHED FROM THE PULPIT AND SPREAD AMONG THE PEOPLE” (*Sword and Trowel*, November 1887). Spurgeon thus describes for us the wretched spiritual condition that existed in Britain in his day. End-time apostasy was coming into blossom. Spurgeon’s battles against modernism within the Baptist Union occurred at precisely the same time that the English Revised Version was completed, and the same battle was being fought (and lost) in other denominations, including Anglican, Congregational, Presbyterian, and Methodist. (An excellent overview of this is found in *The Forgotten Spurgeon* by Iain Murray, Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust). Apostasy had effectively prepared the way for the modern text and versions. While there is no evidence that Spurgeon himself understood the association between the two, many other men did. (Spurgeon died in 1892, only a few years

after the publication of the English Revised Version.)

2. The time when modern textual criticism was devised was a time when HUMAN PHILOSOPHY was exalting itself against God's Word.

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) developed his “critical philosophy,” which taught that human reason is preeminent and which attempted to reconcile Scripture with “the holiest teaching of reason.” Kant denied the supernatural and taught that the Bible is largely mythical, that Satan represents the evil principle in human nature and Jesus represents the good principle in human nature. He saw a two-part world system, *Phenomena*, the realm of man's senses, and *Noumena*, the realm of the soul, God, and other things beyond human perception and reason. “The liberal theologians were to reason that if the Bible is a revelation from God and therefore part of the *Noumena*, it would not need to be reliable in the area of the *Phenomena*” (Daniel J. Ebert, *Will Our Sons Defend the Faith*, 3rd edition, 1994, p. 33). This was merely another way of denying the miraculous in the Bible.

Georg W.F. Hegel (1770-1831) led the German Idealist movement, turning his back on orthodox Christianity and holding to a type of pantheism. Hegel denied that there is such a thing as absolute truth. He said it is “narrow” and “dogmatic” to assume that of two opposite assertions the one must be true and the other false. Instead, he created a system called *Dialectics*. “In this process there is a merging of opposites to form a new idea or thought. Hegel called the position held the ‘Thesis,’ and the position opposed to it the ‘Antithesis.’ The two opposites, after a confrontation, must move toward each other, finally merging. This action of the merging of former opposites is called a ‘Dialectic.’ The new thought formed by the dialectic is called a ‘Synthesis.’ The resulting synthesis is not the end to Hegel's process. The new synthesis will then break down into another set of thesis and antithesis and the process will begin again. Hegel claimed to be looking for what he called ‘Absolute,’ which might be defined as the final or ultimate synthesis” (Ebert, *Will Our Sons Defend the Faith*, 3rd edition, 1994, p. 35).

In 1784 Ethan Allen published *Reason the Only Oracle of Man*, which rejected the authority of the Bible.

In 1795 Thomas Paine bitterly assaulted the Bible and Christianity

with his book *The Age of Reason*.

Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) popularized existentialism in contrast to biblical absolutes, exalting experience over truth. Though little known in his lifetime beyond the borders of his native Denmark, his writings later became influential through translations. Kierkegaard taught that one could experience Christianity as a subjective religion without believing in the infallible historical truth of the Bible. Robert Runcie, who was Archbishop of Canterbury from 1980 to 1990, said he was indebted to Kierkegaard's idea "that religion had nothing to do with the rational part of your mind." Runcie said this showed him "a way in which I could hold together a fundamental skepticism with religious devotion" (Humphrey Carpenter, *Robert Runcie: The Reluctant Archbishop*, 1977, p. 88).

Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) claimed that God is dead, meaning that God should cease to be reckoned as a force in people's lives, that they should live life apart from any concern about God. In his book *Thus Spake Zarathustra* (1883-85), Nietzsche attacked Christianity and democracy as something only for the "weak herd," calling for a race of supermen to celebrate life on earth by living as they pleased through "the creative use of passion," rather than entertaining a heavenly hope, and by forcing their will and values upon others. He said, "The most important of more recent events--that 'God is dead', that the belief in the Christian God has become unworthy of belief--already begins to cast its first shadows over Europe." In the 1930s and 40s, the Nazis took Nietzsche as their prophet and set out to be his supermen, brutally imposing their will upon Europe.

Robert Ingersoll attacked the Bible and mocked its miracles in lecture tours and in 1879 published *Some Mistakes of Moses*.

3. The time when modern textual criticism was devised was a time when UNITARIANISM was making great gains. The following is abbreviated from *The Modern Bible Version Hall of Shame*.

Unitarianism is the modern revival of the ancient heresy of Arianism, which denied the deity of Jesus Christ, claiming that He was a created Being and not the eternal Son of God. Unitarianism is a denial of the biblical doctrine of the Trinity, defined by Webster's 1828 *Dictionary of the English Language* as "the union of

three persons (the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit) in one Godhead, so that all the three are one God as to substance, but three persons as to individuality.”

In the late 18th century and into the 19th Unitarianism began to increase in England because of the “rationalistic atmosphere” and the spiritual weakness of the churches.

Book publisher Joseph Johnson (1758-1809) helped establish the foundation for Unitarianism and theological rationalism in England and America. He published the works of Joseph Priestly, William Wordsworth, William Beckford, Richard Price, Theophilus Lindsey, William Godwin, Thomas Paine, John Horne Tooke, Samuel T. Coleridge, and other Unitarians and “free thinkers.” In May 1788, Johnson began publication of the *Analytical Review*, edited by Unitarian Thomas Christie.

In 1756, a Unitarian named Newcome Cappel was appointed minister of the Presbyterian St. Saviourgate Chapel in York. The appointment was made by the trustees in opposition to at least part of the congregation. The chapel eventually became completely Unitarian. Charles Wellbeloved, principal of Manchester College (Oxford University), was minister of the chapel from 1801 to 1858. He had been Cappel’s assistant beginning in 1792. Another minister of this chapel, George Vance Smith, was on the English Revised Version translation committee.

High Street Chapel in Shrewsbury was one of the many British churches infected with unitarianism by the 18th century. This is the church where Charles Darwin (1809-1882) received his early religious training. By Darwin’s day the Chapel was a full-blown Unitarian congregation and George A. Case was the pastor (from 1797 to his death in 1831). Today the church is called Shrewsbury Unitarian Church, High Street, and a plaque inside the building says: “To the memory of Charles Robert Darwin, author of ‘The Origin of the Species,’ born in Shrewsbury, February 12, 1809, in early life a member of and a constant worshipper in this church.” Charles Darwin’s mother, Susannah, was a Unitarian, and Charles was educated for a short period at a school operated by the Unitarian minister George Case. Charles Darwin’s wife, Emma Wedgwood, was also a Unitarian. A biographer of Darwin speaks of “the vein of skepticism in the Darwin family” (John Wehler, *Charles Darwin: Growing up in Shewsbury 1809-25*). Thus, Darwinism was

a product of end-time theological apostasy.

Essex Chapel in London is called “the first self-styled Unitarian congregation” in England. It was founded in 1773 by Theophilus Lindsey, who had left the Church of England.

By 1831, only 22 years after its founding, the British & Foreign Bible Society (BFBS) was infected with Unitarianism. In that year a group of men within the BFBS attempted to have the Society adopt a Trinitarian policy “to ensure that Unitarians denying the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ could not be admitted to membership or hold office in the Society” (*TBS Quarterly Record*, No. 475, April-June 1981, p. 3). After a “prolonged and heated debate in Exeter Hall in the Strand, London, at the Annual Meeting, the motion was rejected by a large majority.” As a result, the Trinitarian Bible Society was formed on Dec. 7, 1831, by men who were concerned about doctrinal purity. This shows the dramatic progress that Unitarianism had made in gaining acceptance in Britain in the early part of the 19th century.

Large numbers of the English Presbyterian and General Baptist (non-Calvinistic) churches were infected with Unitarian heresy.

As the 19th century progressed many of the Unitarians in England adopted other heresies, denying the infallible inspiration of Scripture, denying the fallen nature of man, becoming more skeptical and more aligned with theological modernism and philosophy. “... in the 1830s James Martineau and some younger Unitarians led a revolt against biblical Unitarianism and its dogmas. ... They found religious authority in reason and conscience, rather than in a biased interpretation of Scripture. Henceforth the Unitarians were rather sharply divided into an older, ‘biblical’, and newer, ‘spiritual’, wing. The new group was well on the way to eclipsing the ‘biblical’ wing by 1850” (*Lion’s History of Christianity*, p. 505).

In America, Unitarianism arose in the late 18th century and spread in the early 19th.

The first Unitarian church in America was King’s Chapel in Boston, which had been the first Anglican congregation in America. Under the leadership of James Freeman in 1785 the church voted to

adopt Unitarianism.

By 1800, one-third of the Congregational churches in Boston had become Unitarian.

In 1805 Unitarians took control of Harvard College with the appointment of Henry Ware to the Chair of Divinity. The aforementioned James Freeman and William Bentley, who were graduates of Harvard, “played an important role in the movement of Harvard toward Unitarianism” (Sightler, p. 10). The divinity school was established at Harvard in 1816 and “became the centre of Unitarian thought.”

As in England, the American Unitarians became increasingly skeptical and anti-supernatural as the 19th century progressed. They preferred terms such as *transcendentalism* and *anti-supernaturalism*. In about 1819 William Channing “became the spokesman and the new leader of the Unitarians. In his sermons and writings he enunciated three principles of the greatest importance: God is all-loving and all pervading; the presence of this God in all men makes them divine, and the true worship of God is good will to all men” (*Unitarianism and Transcendentalism*, <http://lonestar.texas.net/~mseifert/unitarian.html>).

Some of them, such as Ralph Waldo Emerson, formed a religious philosophy that attempted to synthesize pagan religions such as Hinduism, Confucianism, and Zoroastrianism, with Christianity. Emerson was the Unitarian pastor of Second Baptist Church in Boston and following the death of his first wife he began an intense study of the aforementioned religions, “not in order to identify the superior credentials of one religion over another, but in order to develop their own religious thoughts and practices” (Christopher Walton, *Unitarianism and Early American Interest in Hinduism*, 1999, <http://www.philocrites.com/essays/hinduism.html>). In his message to the Phi Beta Kappa society at Harvard in 1837, entitled “The American Scholar,” Emerson exhorted scholars to free themselves of tradition (such as the Bible) and to maintain a “self-trust.”

Another influential Unitarian in America was Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862), author of *On Walden Pond*, who said in his *Journal*, “I am a mystic, a transcendentalist, and a natural philosopher to boot.” He denied the Fall and the New Birth and the Saviour and sought for “truth” instead through communion with nature, study

of eclectic philosophies, and reflection.

UNITARIANISM HAD A STRONG INFLUENCE ON MODERN TEXTUAL CRITICISM IN THE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURIES.

The Unitarians loved the critical Greek text from the days of German modernist Johann Griesbach onward. 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, a major objective was the translation of a new English version based on the Griesbach critical text. Abandoning this plan, it published in 1808 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). This publication "drew the fire of the orthodox by omitting as late interpolations several passages traditionally cited as pillars of Trinitarian doctrine," such as "God" in 1 Tim. 3:16 and the Trinitarian statement in 1 John 5:7.

In 1869 the American Unitarian Association of Boston published *The New Testament, translated from the Greek text of Tischendorf*, edited by George R. Noyes.

Many of the prominent early textual critics were Unitarians, including Daniel Mace (1685-1753), Johann Wettstein (1693-1754), Alexander Geddes (1737-1802), Edward Harwood (1729-94), George Vance Smith (1816-1902), Ezra Abbot (1819-84), Joseph Henry Thayer (1828-1901), and Caspar Rene Gregory (1846-1917).

Consider the testimony of the American Standard Version translation committee upon the death of committee member Ezra Abbot on March 21, 1884. The following excerpt from a memorial resolution issued by the committee is clear evidence of this Unitarian's influence on the Revision work on both sides of the ocean: "Always one of the first in his place at the table, and one of the last to quit it, he [Ezra Abbot] brought with him thither the

results of careful preparation. HIS SUGGESTIONS WERE SELDOM THE PROMPTINGS OF THE MOMENT. HENCE THEY ALWAYS COMMANDED CONSIDERATION; OFTEN SECURED INSTANT ADOPTION. ... BUT IT WAS IN QUESTIONS AFFECTING THE GREEK TEXT THAT DR. ABBOT'S EXCEPTIONAL GIFTS AND ATTAINMENTS WERE PRE-EMINENTLY HELPFUL. Several of his essays on debated passages, appended to the printed reports of our proceedings which were forwarded from time to time to the brethren in England, are among the most thorough discussions of the sort which are extant, won immediate respect for American scholarship in this department, and HAD NO SMALL INFLUENCE IN DETERMINING THAT FORM OF THE SACRED TEXT WHICH WILL ULTIMATELY, WE BELIEVE, FIND ACCEPTANCE WITH ALL CHRISTIAN SCHOLARS" (*Historical Account of the Work of the American Committee of Revision*, 1885, p. 68). Here is the plain admission that the critical Greek text owes much to Unitarians.

It is important to note that the eager acceptance of the critical text was limited in that day largely to theological modernists and Unitarians. Bible believers of that day did not accept the modern critical Greek text and many critiques were published to refute the theories of textual criticism. We have documented this extensively in the book *For Love of the Bible*, available from Way of Life Literature.

4. The time when modern textual criticism was devised was a time when EVOLUTION was developing.

Charles Darwin's (1809-1882) *The Origin of the Species*, in 1859, applied evolution to the creatures in the world.

In the first edition Darwin did not reject the concept of a Creator. At the end of the book, in fact, he wrote: "I believe that animals have descended ... into which life was first breathed by the Creator. ... The living power of God, in all the forces of Nature, is indispensable as ever. Without that the world stagnates in a moment, as the wide ocean would freeze to motionless ice were the sun to strike no more his rays upon the dancing wave" (quoted from David Daniell, *The Bible in English*, p. 661).

In the 1871 sequel, *The Descent of Man*, Darwin was more openly agnostic in relation to the God of the Bible. The Bible twice warns, "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" (1 Cor. 5:6; Gal. 5:9).

As we have seen, the church of which Darwin was a member in his youth developed Unitarian tendencies beginning with the appointment of Job Orton as minister in 1741.

Karl Marx declared that Darwinism was the biological basis for communism.

Thomas Huxley (1825-1893) joined his voice with Darwin in mocking biblical creation with *Zoological Evidences as to Man's Place in Nature* (1863) and *The Physical Basis of Life* (1868). It was Huxley who coined the term "agnostic" to describe the state of not knowing whether there is a God.

Great numbers of Anglicans looked with various degrees of favor upon the new thinking, including the Archbishop of Canterbury, Frederic Temple. Textual critics Westcott and Hort accepted evolutionary thought. One of Anglicanism's crown jewel universities, Cambridge, conferred an honorary doctorate upon Darwin.

When Charles Darwin died in 1882, he was honored by the Church of England by being buried in Westminster Abbey. The general committee members for his memorial fund included the archbishops of Canterbury and York and the bishop of London. The tomb is located only a few meters from the entrance to the Jerusalem Chamber, where Westcott and Hort had foisted their critical Greek New Testament upon the translation committee in the years just preceding Darwin's death.

5. The time when modern textual criticism was devised was an hour when heretical Christian CULTS were blossoming.

MORMONISM

Joseph Smith published *The Book of Mormon* in March 1830. This contained an alleged revelation from ancient "golden plates" that an angel named Moroni had shown to Smith and that he had translated with a pair of mystical glasses.

On April 6, 1830, Joseph Smith and five other men established the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormon).

Smith taught that God is an exalted man and that men can become gods; that Adam was God who came from heaven with one of his

heavenly wives; that Jesus and Satan are spirit brothers; that Jesus became God through obedience; that Jesus married and had children. Smith taught salvation by works; that there are three different heavens; and that only Mormons go to the highest heaven.

In spite of its strange doctrines and dubious history, the Mormon Church grew quickly; and following the death of Joseph Smith in 1844, it established its headquarters in Salt Lake City, Utah, and spread throughout the world under the direction of Brigham Young.

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISM

According to a prophecy by a man named William Miller, Christ was supposed to return to earth in October 1844.

When this did not happen, a 17-year-old girl named Ellen Harmon prophesied that God was raising up a special people to preach in the last days about sabbath keeping. She claimed that Christ had entered the holy of holies in Heaven in October 1844 and begun an “investigative judgment” of the records of professing believers, to determine if they would be saved or lost.

Ellen Harmon married James White in August 1846 and they became the leaders of the new movement, calling themselves Seventh-day Adventists. Ellen White, who was accepted as a prophetess of God, claimed to have received 2,000 visions and dreams between 1844 and 1915. These were published in fifty-four books.

Ellen White taught that Sunday worship is the mark of the antichrist and that God requires Christians to keep the sabbath. She taught the false doctrine of soul sleep, that the dead remain unconscious in the grave until the resurrection. She taught the false doctrine of annihilation, that the unsaved will be burned up and will not suffer eternal torment in the lake of fire.

JEHOVAH’S WITNESSES

In 1876 Charles Taze Russell (1852-1916) began publication of *Zion’s Watchtower*. In 1884 he organized the Zion’s Watch Tower Tract Society, the forerunner to the Jehovah’s Witnesses.

He gave many prophecies about the coming of Christ, but even

though the prophecies turned out to be false he had a large following.

The Jehovah's Witnesses deny the Trinity, claiming that God's only name is Jehovah and that Jesus is a created being. They claim that Jesus was Michael the Archangel before he came to earth. They deny that Jesus is God and also deny that he rose from the dead bodily. According to the Jehovah's Witnesses, salvation is by faith plus works. The Jehovah's Witnesses also deny eternal punishment in hell. According to Jehovah's Witness theology, only a few believers go to Heaven.

Prior to the publication of their own English translation in 1961, the Jehovah's Witnesses adopted the American Standard Version. It is a simple matter to find the reason for this. The Unitarians associated with the ASV project, such as Ezra Abbot and J. Henry Thayer (who was secretary of the New Testament Committee), held the same view of Christ as the Jehovah's Witnesses. And the critical Greek text underlying the ASV weakened key passages touching Christ's deity. A footnote at John 9:38, where the man worshipped Christ, says, "The Greek word denotes an act of reverence, whether paid to a creature (AS HERE) or to the Creator..." This is from an edition of the American Standard Version printed by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society in about 1929. The Jehovah's Witnesses also publish the Westcott-Hort Greek New Testament.

SPIRITUALISM

In 1848 Kate and Margaret Fox claimed the ability to communicate with the dead, "beginning a spiritualist séance craze in America." By 1861 there were an estimated 100 mediums in New York City alone. Séances were also in vogue in England and Europe. By the 1860s there were four successful periodicals dedicated to spiritualism in England.

In 1861 President Lincoln attended spiritualist séances in Georgetown and received advice from the famous medium Nettie Colburn Maynard in the White House.

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE

In 1875 Mary Baker Eddy (1821-1910) published *Science and Health* and in 1883 she published its sequel, *Key to the Scriptures*.

These were merged into her textbook *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, which she claimed was a revelation from God.

In 1879 she founded The Church of Christ, Scientist and it grew quickly until the first quarter of the 20th century. By the 1930s, it was estimated that the membership was 350,000 and that branches had extended to 50 countries.

Chronically ill, Mary Baker Eddy was powerfully influenced by mental healer Phineas P. Quimby (1802-1866). Quimby believed that illness and disease could be cured through positive thoughts. Mary Baker Eddy claimed that Quimby cured her. After his death in 1866 she even claimed that she was visited by his ghost.

Mary Baker Eddy took Quimby's teaching a step further by claiming that sickness and death are not real. Instead of doctors and medicine, Christian Scientists use "Practitioners." These are people trained in Christian Science teaching who help the sick person see through the "false reality of illness."

Mary Baker Eddy's "Scientific Statement of Being" is read every week in every Christian Science congregation. "There is no life, truth, intelligence, nor substance in matter. All is infinite Mind and its infinite manifestation, for God is All-in-all. Spirit is immortal Truth; matter is mortal error. Spirit is the real and eternal; matter is the unreal and temporal. Spirit is God, and man is His image and likeness. Therefore man is not material; he is spiritual."

Christian Science denies the fall of man, the incarnation and blood atonement of Jesus Christ, the bodily resurrection, the Trinity, Hell, and many other cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith. Christian Science claims that the Bible is full of mistakes and that it cannot be understood properly apart from Mary Baker Eddy's *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*.

THEOSOPHY

Some highlights of the Theosophical movement in the 19th century were as follows:

The Theosophical Society was founded in New York City in November 1875 by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (1831-1891), Henry S. Olcott, and William Q. Judge. Blavatsky has been called "the mother of the New Age."

Her first major work, *Isis Unveiled*, was published in 1877. Isis was an ancient pagan goddess.

The *Theosophist* magazine was launched in 1879.

In 1885 Blavatsky was forced to leave India “having been accused of faking materializations of teachings from her Masters.”

Blavatsky’s magazine *Lucifer* was established in 1887.

Blavatsky’s 1,500-page *The Secret Doctrine*, called her “master work,” was published in 1888.

During Blavatsky’s lifetime, Theosophy spread to America, India, Sri Lanka, England, and elsewhere.

Theosophy means “divine wisdom.”

It is an amalgamation of ancient pagan philosophy and Eastern religion that Blavatsky picked up on her travels to India, Tibet, Egypt, and elsewhere. She said, “The chief aim of the...Theosophical Society [is] to reconcile all religions, sects and nations under a common system of ethics, based on eternal verities.”

Blavatsky taught that man is God. “We assert that the divine spark in man being one and identical in its essence with the Universal Spirit, our ‘spiritual Self’ is practically omniscient, but that it cannot manifest its knowledge owing to the impediments of matter” (Blavatsky). Unitarians such as Ralph Waldo Emerson believed the same thing. Emerson called this the “Oversoul,” the unity of all human souls into God.

Blavatsky believed in karma, reincarnation, and other things that she picked up from Eastern religions.

One of the goals of Theosophy is to “form a nucleus of the universal brotherhood of humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste, or color.”

UNITY SCHOOL OF CHRISTIANITY

This movement was founded by Charles and Myrtle Fillmore in 1889 and originally was called Modern Thought. The Fillmores studied Spiritualism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Christian Science, New Thought, Rosicrucianism, Theosophy, and other religions and

philosophies, amalgamating these into their own cult.

In 1895 the name was changed to Unity and since 1914 it has been known as the Unity School of Christianity.

6. The time when modern textual criticism was devised was a time when ROMAN CATHOLICISM was making new advances.

In 1854 Pope Pius IX proclaimed the Dogma of Immaculate Conception, teaching that Mary was born sinless.

In 1870 Pope Pius IX summoned the first Vatican Council, which decreed that the Pope is infallible when he speaks *ex cathedra* (“from the throne”), referring to the blasphemous Roman claim that the Pope is a spiritual ruler who has the authority to define doctrine.

Romanism was sweeping through England on the back of **THE OXFORD MOVEMENT** (so called because its leaders were associated with Oxford University) in the 19th century.

The beginning of the Oxford Movement is dated July 14, 1833, with a sermon preached by John Keble at St. Mary the Virgin Church, the university church at Oxford.

John Keble, Richard Hurrell Froude, and John Henry Newman began writing *Tracts for These Times* in 1833 to promote a Catholicized Anglicanism. Thus the movement was also named **TRACTARIANISM**.

John Newman (1801-90) was Vicar of St. Mary the Virgin Church from 1828-43.

It is said that “undergraduates flocked to his sermons.” The poet Matthew Arnold described it 40 years later: “Who could resist the charm of that spiritual apparition, gliding in the dim afternoon light through the aisles of St. Mary’s, rising into the pulpit, and then, in the most entrancing of voices breaking the silence with words and thoughts which were a religious movement, subtle, sweet, mournful?” (*The University Church of St. Mary the Virgin*, A Pitkin Guide, 1992, p. 5). What Arnold did not say is that “the charm” of Newman’s preaching was its tantalizing heresy.

Newman eventually joined the Catholic Church and became a Cardinal.

The sentiment and goal of the Oxford Movement is evident from the following quotes from influential papers of those times:

A voice for the Tractarian Movement, the *Union Review*, stated: “The work going on in England is an earnest and carefully organized attempt on the part of a rapidly increasing body of priests and laymen, to bring our Church and country up to the full standard of Catholic faith and practice, and EVENTUALLY TO PLEAD FOR HER UNION WITH [ROME]” (*Union Review*, 1867, p. 412).

Another organ for this movement said: “Justification by faith, the most immoral of Protestant dogmas, has run its tether, and happily died of self-strangulation” (*Church News*, Nov. 1867).

Edward Bouverie Pusey joined the movement in 1841 and was so influential that its followers were called Puseyites.

Though the movement was resisted by many within the Church of England, its influence was widespread.

Several hundred Anglican clergy had joined the Roman Catholic Church by 1845, and a large number of those who remained were “Anglo-Catholics.”

In 1840 there were not 500 Roman priests in England; by 1890 there were 2,600 (H.G. Guinness, *Romanism and the Reformation*, 1891, pp. 2-3).

In 1840 there were only 16 Catholic convents; by 1890 there were over 400 convents with more than 15,000 nuns (Guinness).

In 1840 there were only two colleges in England for training Catholic priests; by 1890 there were 29 (Guinness).

The previous information is only the “tip of the iceberg.” We have merely touched on a few of the high points of the apostasy of the past 200 years, and it is in the midst of and in the context of this end-time apostasy that the unscriptural theories of modern textual criticism were developed and have gained favor and the modern English versions have appeared to challenge the King James Bible. The book *The Modern Bible Version Hall of Shame* features extensive documentation of the apostasy that blossomed in the 20th century as modern textual criticism won the field.

HAVING LOOKED AT THE APOSTASY OF THE TIMES IN GENERAL, WE WILL NOW LOOK AT THE APOSTASY OF SOME OF THE INFLUENTIAL TEXTUAL CRITICS AND MODERN VERSION TRANSLATORS.

Note: The following is a brief sample of the rationalism that has characterized the field of modern textual criticism and the modern versions. For a much more extensive look at this see the companion volume “The Modern Bible Version Hall of Shame.” In this book we examine men and versions that are not included in the following abbreviated study, including Richard Simon, John Mill, Daniel Mace, Richard Bentley, Johann Bengel, Johann Wettstein, Alexander Geddes, Edward Harwood, Johann Hug, Johannes Scholz, Alexander Campbell, Karl Lachmann, Connop Thirlwall, Samuel Tregelles, Bernhard Weiss, William Moulton, Charles Briggs, William Sanday, Francis Brown, Adolf von Harnack, James Rendel Harris, Henry Vedder, Frederick Conybeare, George Milligan, the Jehovah’s Witnesses and the critical text, Francis Burkitt, Ernst von Dobschutz, Henry Wheeler Robinson, Kirsopp Lake, Alexander Souter, Charles H. Dodd, the Revised Standard Version, Charles Hodge, B.B. Warfield, A.T. Robertson, Kenneth Clark, Ernest Colwell, Gunther Zuntz, J.B. Phillips. Charles Briggs, Francis Brown, William Barclay, Theodore Skeat, George Kilpatrick, F.F. Bruce, Rudolph and Gerhard Kittel, George Ladd, Robert Grant, Kenneth Taylor and the Living Bible, Reginald Fuller, James Keith Elliott, Sakae Kubo, Eldon Jay Epp, Robert Bratcher, Today’s English Version, Contemporary English Version, Inclusive Language NIV, Gordon Fee, Brevard Childs, Bert Ehrman, Wycliffe Bible Translators, United Bible Societies, the Roman Catholic Church and the critical text, New English Bible, David Black, Michael Holmes, Barclay Newman, Eugene Peterson and The Message.

JOHANN JAKOB GRIESBACH (1745-1812)

1. Griesbach, a German, was one of the most important names in the development of modern textual criticism. While some (particularly evangelicals and fundamentalists) have tried to downplay his role, he was, in fact, extremely influential.

Marvin R. Vincent says, “With Griesbach, really critical texts may be said to have begun” (Marvin Vincent, *A History of the Textual*

Criticism of the New Testament, 1899, p. 100).

Westcott and Hort said that in certain matters 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. A.T. Robertson states that Hort held Griesbach “to be the great man in textual criticism before his own day” (An Introduction to Textual Criticism, p. 30). In fact, Hort felt that “he was in reality taking up the work of Griesbach afresh” (Robertson, An Introduction, p. 29).

Bruce Metzger observes: “Griesbach laid foundations for all subsequent work on the Greek text of the New Testament ... The importance of Griesbach for New Testament textual criticism can scarcely be overestimated” (Metzger, The Text of the New Testament, pp. 119, 121). Metzger reminds us that Westcott and Hort did not collate any manuscripts or provide a critical apparatus; rather they “refined the critical methodology developed by Griesbach, Lachmann, and others, and applied it rigorously” (Metzger, The Text of the New Testament, p. 129).

Kurt and Barbara Aland, though claiming that Griesbach’s influence “is today in danger of being exaggerated,” admit that “his influence was extraordinary as a model for many subsequent editors” (Aland, The Text of the New Testament, p. 9).

2. Griesbach was influenced from his undergraduate days by the rising tide of Rationalism sweeping over Germany and “was a foe of orthodox Christianity” (D.A. Thompson, The Controversy Concerning the Last Twelve Verses of the Gospel According to Mark, p. 40). Griesbach was strongly influenced by his teacher at Halle, the modernist **JOHANN SEMLER** (1725-91).

Semler is “often regarded as the father of German rationalism” (Metzger, The Text of the New Testament, p. 115). He was greatly influenced by Roman Catholic Richard Simon’s 1689 book, Critical History.

Semler rejected the traditional view that the entire canon of Scripture is infallibly inspired. “He insisted that the Scriptural writings show on their face that they were not intended to be a norm of doctrine for all men” (McClintock & Strong Cyclopedia, “Johann Semler”). This is the view that has been held by most

prominent modern textual critics from its inception until this very day.

Semler taught that the writers of the New Testament accommodated the teachings of Christianity to the needs of various classes of people, “which explains the appeal to miracles.”

Semler looked upon the book of Revelation as “the production of an extravagant dreamer” and argued that it was not inspired or canonical.

Semler believed that the teaching of Jesus and the Apostles contained error.

3. Griesbach was associated with the modernist W.M.L. de Wette and wrote the preface to de Wette’s Contributions to Old Testament Introduction (1806-07). In this work de Wette, one of the fathers of liberal Old Testament criticism, denied the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch and claimed that the book of Deuteronomy was not written until the reign of King Josiah. This makes the Jews out to be idiots who do not even know their own history and is a blatant denial of the teaching of Jesus Christ and the apostles.

4. Griesbach adopted his textual principles primarily from Semler and Bengel.

Griesbach adopted Semler’s practice of grouping manuscripts into three families, Alexandrian, Western, and Byzantine (or “Asiatic”) and favoring the Alexandrian or Egyptian over the Byzantine. “... he constantly displays a very decided preference for the Alexandrian class, which he places far above the two others in the rank of authority, a few manuscripts of this recension being supposed to outweigh a multitude of such as belong to the Byzantine recension, which he regards as certainly the most untrustworthy of all” (McClintock & Strong Cyclopaedia).

Griesbach adopted Semler’s recension theory that claims the Traditional Text is an editorial revision created centuries after the apostles. This myth was later popularized by Westcott and Hort.

Griesbach also adopted from Semler the strange principle that textual readings favoring theological orthodoxy should be suspect. Griesbach said, “The most suspicious reading of all is the one that yields a sense favorable to the nourishment of piety (especially

monastic piety)”; and, “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.” Semler and Griesbach could adopt such a strange principle because they blatantly denied biblical preservation and falsely believed that the orthodox statements of the New Testament were created by textual editors during the early centuries. According to this principle, if there is a reading in the Received Text that plainly teaches the Godhead of Christ or some other foundational doctrine of the New Testament faith, that reading should be held suspect in favor of a variant in some old manuscript that lessens or does away with the doctrine. This, my friends, is topsy-turvy thinking! God is the author of truth not heresy. And Bible-believing people do not tamper with the Holy Scripture in order to further their beloved doctrines!

Griesbach adopted Bengel’s principle that “the hard reading is to be preferred to the easy reading” and claimed that orthodox Christians had corrupted their own New Testament.

Griesbach held that “the shorter reading (under most circumstances) is to be preferred to the more verbose.” It is not therefore surprising that the critical edition of the Greek New Testament is shorter than the Received Text by the equivalent of the entire books of 1 and 2 Peter. Griesbach was the first to declare Mark 16:9-20 spurious and to omit it from the Greek New Testament (in his 1796 edition).

Griesbach followed Semler in favoring the work of Origen. “... finding the coincidence of the numerous scriptural quotations of Origen of Alexandria with the celebrated Greek manuscript of the New Testament from that city to be very striking, he thence concludes that the passages now extant in this father’s writings, of the commencement of the 3d century, discover the earliest, and therefore the purest text of which we have any knowledge to be that of the Alexandrian manuscripts. His ultimate choice of readings is consequently determined by the testimony of Origen. ... The primary fact enforced by Griesbach [is] that the Alexandrian readings which are supported by the quotations of Origen possess the highest authority of all...” (McClintock & Strong Cyclopedica).

5. Griesbach made three textual changes that were roundly condemned by Bible believers. “Griesbach was long and severely

attacked by Trinitarian writers as an opposer of the doctrine of Christ's divinity, chiefly in consequence of his having rejected from his text the celebrated passage respecting the three that bare witness (1 John 5:7), and also for inserting 'os' (*which*) for 'theos' (*God*) in 1 Timothy 3:16, and 'kurios' (Lord) for 'theos' (*God*) in Acts 20:28" (Frederic Nolan, *An Inquiry into the Integrity of the Received Text*, 1815). Bible believers of that day understood that these textual changes were serious doctrinal issues. Nolan said they affected "the doctrinal integrity of the inspired text." Today we are amazed to hear evangelicals and fundamentalists claim that such textual changes are inconsequential and have no doctrinal significance.

6. Griesbach's theories were rejected by Bible believers of his day. Following are some examples. An example of those who boldly resisted Griesbach's textual theories and defended the Traditional Text is Frederick Nolan, who, in 1815, published *An Inquiry into the Integrity of the Received Text of the New Testament* (576 pages). Nolan said, "... it shall be my object to vindicate those important passages of the Received Text which have been rejected from the Scripture Canon, on the principles of the German method of classification" (p. 43). Among the several passages that he vindicated were 1 Timothy 3:16, Acts 20:28, and 1 John 5:7. Nolan warned: "Griesbach's theory is one of the most elaborate of *THOSE THAT HAVE UNSETTLED THE FOUNDATION ON WHICH RESTS THE ENTIRE CANON*. His corrected text can be received only as a proof of the general corruption of the sacred Scriptures, and of the faithlessness of the traditionary testimony by which it is supported, since he states that the two principal classes of text, the Alexandrian and the Western, have been interpolated in every part; that the authorized Greek version exhibits 150,000 various readings, and has remained 1400 years in its present state of corruption; that there appears, therefore, to be no reservation by which the doctrinal integrity of the sacred Scriptures can be saved; for if, in the apostolic and primitive ages, corruption was prevalent, whatever be the text gathered out of the immense number of various readings, it may be as well any other as that originally delivered by the inspired writers."

7. Though rejected by Bible believers, Griesbach's textual criticism was received with great eagerness by Christ-denying Unitarians, Modernists, and Cultists. For example, officials at Harvard College

in 1809 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 authority of the Bible.

8. Thus, at the beginning of the 19th century, Bible-believing Christians rejected the critical text as heretical, but the Unitarians and Modernists joyfully received it because it supported their doctrinal heresies pertaining to the Trinity and Christ's deity, and also because the multiplicity of texts weakened the authority of Scripture. By the end of the 19th century, apostasy had so leavened many of the denominations that the Westcott-Hort Greek, which was built upon the Griesbach text and which contained the same type of doctrinal corruptions (in fact, the Westcott-Hort text was more radical and farther removed from the Received Text), found wide acceptance. Those (such as James White) that are denying today that the critical Greek text is less doctrinally sound than the Received Text are flying in the face of the facts. The old Unitarians understood the doctrinal differences between the texts. They rejected the Received Text because it more effectively defeated their heresies. They made the translation of a new Bible based upon the critical text a top priority. For those who have ears to hear, this speaks volumes.

FRIEDRICH CONSTANTINE VON TISCHENDORF (1815-1874)

1. Tischendorf was a German textual critic who traveled extensively in search of ancient documents. He obtained a doctor of philosophy at the University at Leipsic. In 1841 he published the first of eight editions of his Greek New Testament.

2. Tischendorf was instrumental in bringing to light one of the manuscripts most influential in modern Bible translation work--Codex Sinaiticus, which he discovered at St. Catherine's Orthodox monastery at Mt. Sinai in 1859. Tischendorf was so blinded by his affection for Codex Sinaiticus that he modified the 8th edition of his Greek New Testament in 3,505 places in favor of it.

3. Tischendorf was committed to the textual theories of Griesbach

and Lachmann (Thompson, p. 42). His foundational error, like that of other 19th century textual critics, was in failing to recognize God's promise of preservation. He described his textual criticism as "the struggle to regain the original form of the New Testament" (Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 126). Had he believed the Bible's own testimony, he would have known by faith that the New Testament did not need to be recovered because it was not lost!

4. In 1842 Tischendorf edited an edition of the Greek New Testament for the Roman Catholic Church, conforming it to the Latin Vulgate (Jack Moorman, *Forever Settled*).

5. Tischendorf's work was loved and accepted by the Unitarians.

In 1869, the American Unitarian Association published a New Testament translated by George R. Noyes, based on Tischendorf's Greek New Testament.

Two Unitarians, Caspar Gregory and Ezra Abbot, reissued the eighth edition of Tischendorf's New Testament with critical notes after his death.

6. Tischendorf was widely praised and awarded. "Probably no theologian ever received so varied and so many signs of distinction, academic and civil. He was made a Russian noble, a Saxon privy-councilor, knight of any orders, doctor of all academic degrees, and 'member of an indefinite number of societies' (*McClintock & Strong*). The Lord Jesus Christ warned: "Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets" (Lk. 6:26).

GEORGE VANCE SMITH (1816-1902)

1. Smith was on the British committee that produced the English Revised Version New Testament (1870-81).

2. He was the Unitarian minister of St. Saviourgate Chapel, York, denying the deity and atonement of Jesus Christ, the personality of the Holy Spirit, and the divine inspiration of Scripture. Consider some of the heresies and blasphemies that came from the pen of this man. The following are from his book *The Bible and Popular Theology*, which appeared in 1871 and continued to be published until 1901. (For more documentation of Smith's heresies, see *The Modern Bible Version Hall of Shame*.)

He denied the full deity of Jesus Christ:

“Jesus of Nazareth is nowhere presented to us as God, but simply as the Christ... ‘There is one God, the Father,’ and ‘one Lord, Jesus Christ;’ but these are not in any sense one being or one nature” (Smith, *The Bible and Its Theology*, p. 299).

He denied the personality of the Holy Spirit and the Trinity:

“... what is really meant by the term in question [the Holy Spirit], is no other than God himself ... but this fact will not justify us in saying that it is ‘God the Holy Spirit,’ as though it were a distinct personality...” (Smith, *The Bible and Its Theology*, p. 215).

He denied the substitutionary atonement of Jesus Christ:

“[Salvation] was in no way purchased of him [God] or of his justice. It was not because his ‘wrath’ was appeased, or satisfied by the sufferings of an innocent substitute, but because of his own essential fatherly goodness and ‘great love.’ ‘It is the gift of God,’ not a thing bought from him with a price, except in so far as this might be FIGURATIVELY said in reference to that death of the Messiah...” (Smith, *The Bible and Its Theology*, p. 246).

He denied the infallible inspiration of Scripture:

“It is, that the Bible manifestly offers itself to us, the people of these later times, largely as a Book of History. It never professes or claims to be more: never, in truth, makes any profession or claim at all on that point; but stands before us there, simply as a collection of writings preserving for us the remaining literature, the traditions, and the history of the Hebrews. ... It nowhere, in truth, claims inspiration, or says anything definite about it. The biblical inspiration, whatever it is or was, would seem, like the genius of Shakespeare, to be unconsciously possessed. The phrase, ‘Thus saith the Lord,’ and its equivalents, are simply to be referred to the style of the prophet; or to be understood only as indicating his belief that what he was about to say was conformable to the Divine Will. ... It is scarcely allowable, in short, to think of inspiration as being or acting in THE DEAD WORDS OF ANY BOOK” (Smith, *The Bible and Its Theology*, pp. 269, 276, 277). [COMMENT: Thus we see how this Bible reviser looked upon the Bible: dead words!]

He denied the necessity of the new birth:

“Then again, are we not, all of us who seek to be so, spiritual Sons of God?” (Smith, *The Bible and Its Theology*, p. 298).

3. When an attempt was made to have Smith removed from the ERV translation committee, four other members of the committee (Westcott, Hort, Stanley, and Thirlwall) stood by him and threatened that they would resign if Smith were removed. The

sordid story is given by A.G. Hobbs in the foreword to the Centennial Edition of Burgon's *The Revision Revised*: "[Smith's participation in the communion service] led to a public protest signed by 'some thousands of the Clergy.' The Upper House passed a Resolution that 'no person who denies the Godhead of our Lord Jesus Christ ought to be invited to join either company to which was committed the Revision of the Authorized Version of Holy Scripture: and that it is further the judgment of this House that any person now on either Company should cease to act therewith.' This Resolution was also passed by the Lower House. And still they could not get this non-believer off the Committee. Here is a real shocker: Dean Stanley, Westcott, Hort, and Bishop Thirlwall all refused to serve if Smith were dismissed. Let us remember that the Bible teaches that those who uphold and bid a false teacher God speed are equally guilty. 'For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds' (2 John 9-11). No wonder that the Deity of Christ is played down in so many passages!" (A.G. Hobbs, foreword, *The Revision Revised Centennial Edition*).

4. Smith testified that the textual changes in the English Revised Version and the Westcott-Hort Greek New Testament reflected his own 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. This Bible Reviser admitted what modern version proponents today such as James White try to deny, that the critical Greek texts and versions weaken the doctrine of the deity of Jesus Christ! No man is blinder than he who WILL NOT see.

BROOKE FOSS WESTCOTT (1825-1901) and **FENTON JOHN ANTHONY HORT** (1828-1892)

1. B.F. Westcott was Canon of Peterborough, Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, and Bishop of Durham (consecrated 1890). F.J.A. Hort was Hulsean Professor of Divinity at Cambridge. These two men edited the critical Greek N.T. published in 1881 and were on the British committee that produced the English Revised Version (ERV). They secretly introduced their pre-publication critical Greek New Testament to the ERV committee, beginning in 1870.

2. Their apostasy is witnessed by their writings and affiliations.

Hort was the less evangelical and more outspoken of the two men as pertaining to 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. We must note that some fundamentalists who defend modern textual criticism are claiming that Westcott and Hort were staunch evangelicals. In fact, in the Introduction to *From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man*, authored by men associated with Bob Jones University, J.B. Williams says: “I challenge anyone to find one sentence that would be a departure from Fundamentalist doctrine” (p. 4). We take up that challenge in the following study.

Consider, first, the testimony of some 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” (Alfred Martin, “A Critical Examination of the Westcott-Hort Textual Theory.” Th.D. Thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, May 1951, p. 70).

The testimony of Donald Waite, who studied 1,291 pages of their writings and concluded that, among other things, Westcott and Hort did not affirm the infallibility of Scripture; they undermined the vicarious substitutionary atonement of Christ; they embraced the 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 orthodox doctrine with clever doubt and with subtle questioning. Dr. Waite's books on this subject (*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>.

Consider, also, 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, New Jersey.

The following are some samples from these biographies. For further quotes see *The Modern Bible Version Hall of Shame*.

"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; as we will see, Westcott also rejected this doctrine.]

"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 deluded minds such as Westcott's. 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 Lightfoot, another translator of the English Revised Version, on the issue of biblical inspiration, it was Hort's understanding that Lightfoot 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 there is no literal fall there is no literal salvation, and if the first chapters of Genesis are myth the rest of the Bible is nonsense.]

“I am inclined to think that no such state as ‘Eden’ (I mean the popular notion) ever existed, and that Adam’s fall in no degree differed from the fall of each of his descendants, as Coleridge justly argues” (Westcott, *Life and Letters of Brooke Foss Westcott*, Vol. I, p. 78). [COMMENT: This is a plain denial of the Bible and also of Jesus Christ and the Apostles, for they testified plainly to the historicity of the early chapters of Genesis and of the account of Adam’s fall. See Mat. 19:4-6; 23:35; Rom. 5:12, 14; 1 Cor. 15:22, 45; 2 Cor. 11:3; 1 Tim. 2:13-14; Jude 14.]

“... 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 one 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 literal 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. The heresy is on Hort’s side, and it is not merely heresy; it is “damnable heresy” (2 Pet. 2:1), meaning that those who hold it cannot be saved.]

Consider, next, 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 following are samples from Westcott and Hort’s writings. For

further quotes see *The Modern Bible Version Hall of Shame*.

[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 holy 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 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 of whom are 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 1:18 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 both heaven and hell. In fact, heaven is nowhere in Scripture described as a state but always as a place (John 14:1). It is called “paradise” (2 Cor. 12:2-4).]

[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: Like Westcott, Hort allegorized heaven.]

[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 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: Westcott denied the bodily resurrection by redefining terms.]

Westcott and Hort, together with their friend Stanley, were instrumental in getting the Unitarian Christ-rejecter George Vance Smith on the ERV translation committee, and when an outcry was made by Anglican ministers against the Unitarian’s presence on the committee, these men threatened to resign unless he remained.

Westcott was exceedingly clever in the statement of his heresies and ordinarily refused to state things plainly. He acknowledged that those of his party hid their views so as to avoid “persecution” (*Life and Letters of Westcott*, Vol. I, p. 229). After studying Westcott’s writings, Dr. Donald Waite observed: “Westcott’s attack on the bodily resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is not by any means a direct clash of out-and-and denial, but rather AN ADROIT, SKILLFUL, OBLIQUE UNDERMINING of the bodily resurrection of Christ BY MEANS OF A RE-DEFINITION OF TERMS” (Waite, *Westcott’s Denial of Bodily Resurrection*). Writing in 1922, modernistic textual critic Kirsopp Lake stated: “Bishop Westcott is really the author of the great change [in the doctrine of

the resurrection]. He entirely abandoned belief in the resurrection of the flesh as formulated in the creed; BUT HE NEVER SAID SO. On the contrary he used all HIS MATCHLESS POWERS OF SHADING LANGUAGE, so that the change from white to black appeared inevitable, natural, indeed, SCARCELY PERCEPTIBLE” (Lake, *Immortality and the Modern Mind*, pp. 38-40).

Finally, we have evidence from Hort’s own fear that his doctrinal views would be made public before they could publish their Greek Testament. The following statement, which Hort wrote to Westcott in 1861, speaks for itself: “This may sound cowardice--I have a craving that our Text [their critical New Testament] should be cast upon the world before we deal with MATTERS LIKELY TO BRAND US WITH SUSPICION. I mean a text issued by men who are already known for what WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BE TREATED AS DANGEROUS HERESY will have great difficulty in finding its way to regions which it might otherwise hope to reach and whence it would not be easily banished by subsequent alarms. ... If only we speak our minds, we shall not be able to avoid giving grave offence to the miscalled orthodoxy of the day” (Hort, *Life and Letters of Hort*, Vol. I, pp, 421, 445). [COMMENT: Hort understood perfectly well that his and Westcott’s doctrinal views were heretical and he feared that their heretical reputation would become well known and thus hinder the reception of their critical Greek text. Here we see why Westcott and Hort generally stated their heresies in obscure terminology. Hort also understood that if they could gain acceptance for their text, it would become very difficult for it to be banished at a later time, and this is exactly what has happened.]

PHILIP SCHAFF (1819-1893)

1. Schaff, a prominent textual critic and translator, was chairman of the American Standard Version translation committee.

2. Twice Schaff was brought to trial for heresy while teaching at the German Reformed Church Theological Seminary at Mercersburg, Pennsylvania, from 1844 to 1863. His first public address in America in 1844 “was so Romish, that, when it was translated into English and published, it produced a storm of criticism, and brought forth accusations of Romanizing and Tractarian tendencies” (George Coy, *The Inside Story of the Anglo American Revised New Testament*, 1973, p. 89). Schaff did not reject

the Roman Catholic Church as apostate but looked favorably upon it and believed it had a bright future. Schaff's liberal views eventually forced him to move to Union Seminary, which was a hotbed of theological heresy.

3. Consider some excerpts from *The Life of Philip Schaff* by his son, David S. Schaff:

[Schaff's description of his audience with Pope Gregory XVI in 1841] "Passing through a door we found ourselves in the beautiful but plain sitting room of HIS HOLINESS, who was clad in white. ... It was hard for me to KISS HIS RED SLIPPER. ... He is certainly a good man. He gave me his blessing and I went out quite satisfied from his presence" (pp. 53, 54). [COMMENT: Note that Philip Schaff addressed the Pope by his blasphemous title, kissed his slipper, and received his blessing with satisfaction. Beginning with a decree he passed in 1836, Pope Gregory XVI had railed against the Bible societies and the free distribution of Scripture. In fact, this Pope placed the Bible societies at the top of the list of "the enemies of Catholicism." One of Gregory's encyclicals eulogized Pope Innocent III, the father of the brutal inquisition, and ordered the Catholic hierarchy, "TO REMOVE FROM THE HANDS OF THE FAITHFUL ALIKE THE BIBLES IN THE VULGAR TONGUE WHICH MAY HAVE BEEN PRINTED CONTRARY TO THE DECREES ABOVE MENTIONED OF THE SOVEREIGN PONTIFFS, and every book proscribed and condemned..." (Encyclical against Bible societies, Gregory XVI, cited from D.B. Ray, *The Papal Controversy*, p. 481).]

"Over this confession and the confession 'I believe in one holy Catholic Apostolic Church' I GLADLY EXTEND TO YOU AND TO EVERY PIOUS CATHOLIC THE HAND. It may seem strange to you, if it does not appear to be an inexplicable inconsistency, that ONE CAN BE AT ONE AND THE SAME TIME A CHILD AND SERVANT OF PROTESTANTISM AND AN ADMIRER AND FRIEND OF CATHOLICISM. This is not, it is true, the Protestantism of the sixteenth century, but I hope it may yet become the Protestantism of the nineteenth. At the same time, I hope and pray that the Romanism which in the sixteenth century drove forth from its bosom thousands of its active and energetic children with the most terrible curses ... will approach Protestantism in the spirit of intercessory love and will go before it with a shining illustration of charity ... THEN THE HOUR FOR THE REUNION OF THE SUNDERED PARTS WILL STRIKE ... Then shall we be prepared for the coming of the Lord in His glory" (Schaff, writing to a Catholic editor, 1853, pp. 200, 201). [COMMENT: Schaff was a forerunner of the unscriptural ecumenical movement of the 20th century, and the false charity that he longed for was fulfilled in Vatican Council II. To be a friend of the truth and a friend of error at the same time is impossible, but this delusion is the ecumenical philosophy and dream. The New Testament tells us plainly that the coming of the Lord is preceded by general apostasy rather than revival. See Mat. 24:4, 24; Luke 18:8; 2 Thess. 2:6-12; 2 Tim. 3:1-13; 4:3-4.]

“The DOCTRINE OF THE REAL PRESENCE taught by Calvin and as set forth by Dr. Nevin, Dr. Schaff continued to defend in his later years” (p. 217). [COMMENT: Schaff accepted something very close to the Roman Catholic myth.]

4. Schaff worked closely with modernists and Unitarians. He was a forerunner of today’s ecumenical leaders. While not personally accepting the more extreme modernistic views, he refused to separate from those who did. Though he was not a Unitarian, he fellowshiped closely with Unitarians. Schaff was in charge of selecting the American revision committee that included at least two Unitarians who denied the Trinitarian God of the Bible. One was Ezra Abbot, who was a close friend of Schaff and was warmly mentioned in the introduction to Schaff’s church history.

5. Schaff participated in the Parliament of Religions at the Chicago World’s Fair, 1893, and “was so happy among the Buddhists, Confucians, Shintos and other world religions, that he said he would be willing to die among them” (Jack Moorman, *Forever Settled*).

EZRA ABBOT (1819-1884)

1. Abbot, a Harvard theology professor and one of the foremost textual critics in America, was on the American Standard Version (ASV) translation committee (1901).

2. Abbot was a Christ-denier.

He authored the footnotes in the ASV that say that Christ should not be worshipped and that question his deity. For example, at John 9:38, the wicked footnote states, “The Greek word denotes an act of reverence, whether paid to a creature (as here) or to the Creator.” I cite this from an edition of the 1901 ASV that I have in my library.

He argued that the last clause of Romans 9:5 was a doxology to God and does not refer to Christ.

In Acts 20:28 Abbot led the 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 and even Jehovah’s Witnesses alleged that Jesus is “the Lord” but they deny that He is actually God.

Abbot wrote a long article arguing for the omission of “God” in 1 Timothy 3:16.

JOSEPH HENRY THAYER (1828-1901)

1. Thayer was on the American Standard Version translation team (recording secretary of the New Testament committee) and was the translator and reviser of the Greek Lexicon by Carl Ludwig Grimm and Christian Gottlob Wilke that bears his name today.

2. Thayer was a Harvard professor of New Testament criticism. He was the assistant to Unitarian Ezra Abbot at Harvard and succeeded him in 1884 as Bussey professor of New Testament criticism and interpretation at the Harvard Divinity School

3. Like Abbot, Thayer was a Unitarian who denied the deity of Jesus Christ and the infallibility of Scripture.

The Publishers Introduction to the Thayer's Lexicon gave this warning: "A word of caution is necessary. Thayer was a Unitarian, and the errors of this sect occasionally come through in the explanatory notes. The reader should be alert for both subtle and blatant denials of such doctrines as the Trinity (Thayer regarded Christ as a mere man and the Holy Spirit as an impersonal force emanating from God), the inherent and total depravity of fallen human nature, the eternal punishment of the wicked, and Biblical inerrancy. When defining *metamelomai* [the Greek word for regret], Thayer refuses to draw a clear distinction between this word and *metanoeo* [the Greek word for repentance]. Underlying this refusal is the view that man is inherently good, needing Christ not as a Savior but only as an example" (Publishers Introduction, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, page vii, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House).

In his definition of "theos" ("God"), Thayer wrote: "Whether Christ is called God must be determined from Jn. i. 1; xx. 28; I Jn. v. 20; Ro. ix. 5; Tit. ii. 13; Heb. i. 8 sq., etc.; THE MATTER IS STILL IN DISPUTE AMONG THEOLOGIANS; cf. Grimm, *Institutio theologiae dogmaticae*, ed. 2, p. 228 sqq. [and the discussion (on Ro. ix. 5) by Professors Dwight and [Ezra] Abbot in *Journ. Soc. Bib. Lit.* etc. u. s., esp. pp. 42 sqq. 113 sqq.]." Here Thayer refers his readers to the writings of the Unitarian Ezra Abbot, who boldly denied the Godhood of Jesus Christ.

SAMUEL ROLLES DRIVER (1846-1914)

1. Driver was an influential Hebrew scholar and textual critic. He

was Regius Professor of Hebrew and Canon of Christ Church, Oxford. From 1876 to 1884 he was a member of the Old Testament translation committee for the English Revised Version. He authored *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (1891) and collaborated with Charles Briggs and Francis Brown in a revision of the Hebrew lexicon compiled by F.H.W. Gesenius. The *Brown, Driver, and Briggs Hebrew English Lexicon* (also called *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament: with an Appendix Containing the Biblical Aramaic*) is based on the lexicon of William Gesenius (known as “the father of modern Hebrew lexicography”) as translated by Edward Robinson. This lexicon has wielded vast influence in biblical studies in spite of the rank modernism of its authors.

2. Driver’s theological modernism was evident in his writings. The Briggs and Driver Hebrew lexicon is founded upon the unbelieving, Christ-denying J.E.D.P. theory of Old Testament interpretation. (Briggs was convicted of heresy and dismissed from the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.)

Driver used his pen to fight against men who defended the historicity and infallibility of Scripture, such as Professor James Robertson of Glasgow (McDonald, *Theories of Revelation: Historical Studies 1860-1960*, p. 120).

In 1911, Driver collaborated with A.F. Kirkpatrick on *The Higher Criticism*, concluding that the Old Testament was the product of natural rather than supernatural forces. In this book Driver “scorns the idea of verbal inspiration and contends that the process of inspiration did not assure freedom from ‘imperfection, error, and mistake in matters of fact’” (McDonald, *Theories of Revelation*, pp. 238, 239).

“The Bible is a ‘library,’ showing how men variously gifted by the Spirit of God cast the truth which they received into many different literary forms, as GENIUS PERMITTED or occasion demanded” (S.R. Driver, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, 1956, p. ix). *COMMENT*: This is a complete denial that the Bible writers wrote under divine inspiration.

“None of the historians of the Bible claim supernatural enlightenment for the materials of their narrative. ... in many parts of these books we have before us TRADITIONS, in which the

original representation has been insensibly MODIFIED, and sometimes (especially in the later books) COLOURED BY THE ASSOCIATIONS OF THE AGE IN WHICH THE AUTHOR RECORDING IT LIVED ... some freedom was used by ancient historians in placing speeches or discourses in the mouths of historical characters” (Driver, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, pp. x, xi). *COMMENT*: Thus Driver even claimed that the biblical writers doctored historical records.

“[CHRIST] ACCEPTED, AS THE BASIS OF HIS TEACHING, THE OPINIONS RESPECTING THE OLD TESTAMENT CURRENT AROUND HIM: He assumed, in His allusions to it, the premises which His opponents recognised, and which could not have been questioned (even had it been necessary to question them) without raising issues for which the time was not yet ripe, and which, had they been raised, would have interfered seriously with the paramount purpose of His life” (Driver, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, p. xii). *COMMENT*: Thus, according to Driver, the Lord Jesus Christ, Truth incarnate, stated things that He knew were wrong.

“The consensus of so many acute and able [critical] scholars, of different countries, of different communions, trained independently in different schools, and approaching the subject with different theological and intellectual prepossessions, cannot, as some would have us believe, rest upon illusion” (Driver, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, p. xvii). *COMMENT*: The deluded Bible scholar thought that the majority opinion in scholarship must be right and ignored the Scripture’s warnings about Satan’s activities and end-time apostasy (e.g., 2 Cor. 11:1-15; 1 Tim. 4:1-6; 2 Tim. 3:13; 4:3-4; 2 Pet. 3; Jude).

“The Book [of Job] cannot be the record of an actual history. ... it is reasonable to suppose that the poet built upon materials handed down to him by tradition, as other dramatists have often done, the Greek tragedians, for instance, and Shakespeare” (Driver, *The Book of Job in the Revised Version*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1908, pp. x, xi).

EBERHARD NESTLE (1851-1913)

1. Nestle was the editor of an influential Greek New Testament that has become a standard among those committed to the critical

text. He was an influential father of modern textual criticism and authored *Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the Greek New Testament* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1898, 1901).

The Nestle's text, which first appeared in 1895, was based on Tischendorf's 8th edition of 1869-72, Westcott and Hort's edition of 1881, and D. Bernhard Weiss' edition of 1902 (TBS Article No. 56). Tischendorf stayed close to the Sinaiticus, while Westcott and Hort preferred the Vaticanus. Thus the Nestle Text is founded largely upon the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus manuscripts.

The Nestle's Text has gone through 27 editions and has been widely used in Bible College and seminary classrooms and translation work.

Eberhard's son Erwin Nestle succeeded to the editorship of the Nestle Greek New Testament after Eberhard's death in 1913. Erwin was the editor beginning with the 10th edition of 1914.

In 1950 Kurt Aland became associated with the Nestle project and later editions of the Nestle's are called the *Nestle-Aland Text*.

The Bible Societies have adopted the modern critical Greek text since the beginning of the 20th century. In 1904 the British and Foreign Bible Society for the first time departed from its commitment to the Greek Received Text and issued an edition of the Nestle Text with critical apparatus. In 1966 the United Bible Societies (UBS) published a Greek New Testament that follows the Nestle Text, and it has gone into four editions.

2. Eberhard Nestle denied biblical infallibility.

In his *Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism* Nestle claimed that it is possible that the authors of the New Testament did not write what they "thought or intended to be read" (p. 23). This is a complete and bold denial of divine inspiration.

Nestle believed the writing of the New Testament was completely happenstance. "Their disappearance [that of the original manuscripts] is readily understood when we consider that the greater portion of the New Testament, viz. the epistles, are occasional writings never intended for publication, while others were meant to have only a limited circulation" (p. 156).

Like most other fathers of modern textual criticism, Nestle believed

the Bible was to be treated like any other book. One of his foundational principles was that "... the task and the method [of textual criticism] are the same for all literary productions."

HERMANN FREIHERR VON SODEN (1852-1914)

1. Von Soden was an influential textual scholar who published a widely used critical Greek apparatus. He believed that the original apostolic text had been corrupted by the fourth century into three recensions he called K, H, and I. K corresponded to the Koine text found in the majority of Greek manuscripts. H corresponded to the Westcott-Hort Alexandrian text. I corresponded to a mixed text that was difficult to identify but similar to Westcott-Hort's Western text. This is an open denial of divine preservation.

2. His theological modernism is evident from the following quotes from his writings:

He followed a false, philosophical, humanistic Christ, denying the true divinity of Jesus. "He [Christ] could only be, He only wished to be and to offer to others, what He was in Himself!--a personality complete and self-sufficing, whose creative energy proceeded from its God as its only source. His mission was thus defined for Him. He must call into life in the souls of others the treasure of His own soul. He must leave His own impress upon His immediate environment, and through them upon mankind by means of direct personal influence" (Von Soden, *Books of the New Testament*, 1907, pp. 2, 3).

He denied the divine inspiration and perfection of Holy Scripture. "To this body of scripture the Christians then assigned determining authority, supporting its claims by a peculiar THEORY as to the origin of these writings--THE SO-CALLED doctrine of Inspiration" (Von Soden, *Books of the New Testament*, p. 5). "The union of the primitive Christian literature in one book, and the transference to it of the truly MECHANICAL JEWISH DOGMA OF INSPIRATION, early blinded men's eyes and blunted their feelings for the great variety and distinct individuality of the separate works which were now united in one. Still less could there be perceived in these writings a living spirit in full development striving towards yet clearer expression" (Von Soden, *Books of the New Testament*, p. 7).

UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES GREEK NEW TESTAMENT

The final men we are using to illustrate the rank apostasy that permeates the field of modern textual criticism are the editors of the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament. Work began on the UBS Greek N.T. in 1955 and the first edition was published in 1966. It was “strongly influenced by the methodology of B.F. Westcott and F.J.A. Hort” (Kent D. Clark, “Textual Certainty in the United Bible Societies’ Greek New Testament,” *Novum Testamentum* XLIV, 2, 2002). It has gone through several editions, first in 1966, second in 1968, third in 1975, third corrected in 1983, and fourth in 1993. Beginning with the third edition, its text was merged with that of the Nestle-Aland; thus the 26th edition of the Nestle-Aland text and the 3rd UBS are the same. The original editors of the UBS Greek text were **Kurt Aland, Bruce Metzger, Matthew Black, and Allen Wikgren. Carlo M. Martini** joined the editorial committee in 1967 (until his retirement in 2002), and the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome became a partner in the project at the same time. **Johannes Karavidopoulos and Barbara Aland** are listed on the editorial committee beginning with the fourth edition (they joined the work in or before 1981).

Note: In the *Modern Bible Version Hall of Shame* we examine the beliefs of other men associated with the UBS Greek New Testament, including Eugene Nida, Allen Wikgren, Arthur Voobus, J. Harold Greenlee, and Jan de Waard.

CARLO MARIA MARTINI (1927-)

1. Martini was an editor of the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament from 1967 (beginning with the second edition) until his retirement in 2002.

2. He is a Jesuit priest and the Archbishop Emeritus of Milan. He entered the Jesuit order on February 25, 1944, at age 17, and was ordained on July 13, 1952, at age 25, “an exceptionally young age for a Jesuit.” He graduated *summa cum laude* from the Gregorian and the Pontifical Biblical Institute, the latter with a doctorate in theology. He was consecrated Archbishop of Milan by Pope John Paul II in January 1980 and proclaimed a Cardinal on February 2, 1983. His diocese in Europe is the largest in the world, with two thousand priests and five million “laity.” Martini speaks eleven languages and is “Italy’s best-selling author.” He was President of

the Council of European Bishop's Conferences from 1986 to April 1993. *Time* magazine, December 26, 1994, listed him as a possible candidate in line for the papacy. *The Sunday Telegraph*, London, England, Aug. 11, 1996, described Martini as "the new great hope of the struggling Catholic Church" and "the man many believe will be the next leader of the world's 800 million Catholics." That was before Pope John Paul II outlived everyone's expectations and Martini himself probably became too old to be pope. Martini retired as Archbishop of Milan in the summer of 2002.

3. Martini holds both traditional Catholic dogmas as well as "foreword looking" ones.

Following is a quote, for example, from Martini showing his commitment to the dogma of the traditional Catholic mass: "The ministry of reconciliation goes on throughout our lives, but especially at two moments. The first in intercession, that is in the Eucharist. We take on this ministry when we offer Christ's body and blood and show it to the people. This is the chief moment in which we are ministers of reconciliation. 'This is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world.' If only people could understand the extraordinariness of this action and these words" (Martini, *In the Thick of His Ministry*, p. 58.)

Martini also holds "progressive" views in regard to the priesthood and women's role in the church: "Celibacy is not necessarily linked to the priesthood. ... I am aware of the desire of women to have a greater role in the Catholic Church, and I accept that desire" (*Sunday Telegraph*, Aug. 11, 1996). I believe the views of Martini on these issues represent the future of the Catholic Church, that it will eventually relax its celibacy law and allow women priests; and this move will further its overarching ecumenical designs.

4. Martini was a professor at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome, which promotes the theory of evolution and the modernistic documentary views of biblical studies, etc.

5. Martini is a member of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences. At the Academy's annual meeting in October 1996, Pope John Paul II announced that the theory of evolution is "more than a hypothesis" and that the work done in the last half century by evolutionists "constitutes in itself a significant argument in favor of this theory" (Vatican Information Service, Oct. 23, 1996). The

Pontifical Academy of Sciences holds to theistic evolution, claiming that while the world was made by the process of evolution, the soul of man was “directly created by God.”

6. Carlo Martini is also committed to strange universalistic, New Age doctrine. Note the following quotes from his books:

“The risen Jesus is present to each one, as though the individual loved person were the only object of his love. The risen Christ is the love of God revealed in our hearts by the Spirit, in the heart of each and of all and in each of all. Jesus does not individualize this ‘each’; he gives himself to the church, the world, the angels, and the universe. Jesus exists for all. But he is for all in such a way that he is for each one, thus making each one become a part of the whole. Such is the power of the resurrection of the ‘abbreviated’ Word, which has made itself small. Whoever accepts the scandal of the Word-become-small will share in the glory of the universality of the cosmic Word which embraces and synthesizes everything, in which all things find their order and fullness, in which everything is resumed and established” (Carlo Martini, *Through Moses to Jesus*, p. 121).

“Along the way of the scandal of Jesus’ particularization until the funereal opacity of the cross, the glory of God totally fills every being. The more I think about it, the more truly grandiose and almost incredible this truth seems to me -- that God fills every being with himself. He gives himself, not merely a little but in full. This divine fullness transforms into a divinized totality the entire universe of the human will, which the Son has won for the Father. Though it is true that here we do not yet have the ‘all in all,’ that is the final perfection which we are to attain, nevertheless by lovingly contemplating God in all of us, we already obtain a glimpse of how the fullness of God is gradually actuating the ‘all in all,’ according to the measure in which each one is able to accept such a vision” (Martini, *Through Moses to Jesus*, p. 122).

“The deification which is the aim of all religious life takes place. During a recent trip to India I was struck by the yearning for the divine that pervades the whole of Hindu culture. It gives rise to extraordinary religious forms and extremely meaningful prayers. I wondered: What is authentic in this longing to fuse with the divine dominating the spirituality of hundreds of millions of human beings, so that they bear hardship, privation, exhausting pilgrimages, in search of this ecstasy?” (Martini, *In the Thick of His Ministry*, p. 42).

KURT ALAND (1915-1994)

1. Aland was co-editor of the Nestle-Aland Greek N.T. as well as one of the editors of the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament.

2. Aland rejected verbal inspiration, calling it merely an “idea.”

“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* with all of its errors, including textual modifications of an obviously secondary character (as we recognize them today)” (Aland, *The Problem of the New Testament Canon*, 1962, pp. 6, 7). As a contributor (with Allen Wikgren, Bruce Metzger, and Matthew Black) to the 1982 revised edition of Peake’s Commentary, Aland put his stamp of approval upon its modernistic theology, which claimed, for example, that the Old Testament contains myths and the Gospels were the product of uncertain naturalistic processes.

3. Aland even claimed that the canon of Scripture is yet unsettled. “The present state of affairs, of Christianity splintered into different churches and theological schools, is THE wound in the body. The variety in the actual Canon in its different forms is not only the standard symptom, but simultaneously also the real cause of its illness. This illness--which is in blatant conflict with the unity which is fundamental to its nature--cannot be tolerated. ... Along this road [of solving this supposed problem], at any rate, the question of the Canon will make its way to the centre of the theological and ecclesiastical debate. ... Only he who is ready to question himself and to take the other person seriously can find a way out of the *circuus vitiosus* in which the question of the Canon is moving today ... The first thing to be done, then, would be to examine critically one’s own selection from the formal Canon and its principles of interpretation, but all the time remaining completely alive to the selection and principles of others. ... This road will be long and laborious and painful. ... if we succeed in arriving at a Canon which is common and actual, this means the achievement of the unity of the faith, the unity of the Church” (Aland, *The Problem of the New Testament Canon*, 1962, pp. 30-33). Thus we see that Aland does not believe in a settled, authoritative canon of Scripture even today, 2000 years after the apostles! Everything is to be questioned; everything is open to change. He believes it is crucial that a new canon be created through ecumenical dialogue. He proposes tossing 2 Peter and Revelation out of the Bible for unity’s sake (McDonald and Sanders, *The Canon Debate*, 2000, p. 3).

BARBARA ALAND (1937-)

1. Barbara, the wife of the late Kurt Aland, is a professor of New Testament and Ecclesiastical History at the University of Munster, Germany, and (since 1983) Director of the Institute for New Testament Textual Research (Institut für neutestamentliche Textforschung), Munster. She was co-editor of the Nestle-Aland text with her husband beginning in 1979. She is listed as an editor of the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament beginning with the fourth edition and started work with that committee in about 1981.

2. That Barbara Aland shares her late husband's modernism is evident from her writings. Consider the pages of *The Text of the New Testament*, which the Barbara co-authored with Kurt. This was first published in German in 1981 and appeared in English in 1987. A second edition was published in 1989. The translator is Erroll F. Rhodes.

The section on "The Transmission of the Greek New Testament" is written strictly from a naturalistic, unbelieving perspective. There is no hint of a belief in divine inspiration or preservation. According to the authors, the New Testament books were written through a natural process and then rather haphazardly multiplied.

The authors question the Pauline authorship of Colossians, and they state dogmatically that 1 Peter and 2 Peter "were clearly written by two different authors" (p. 49). 1 Peter 1:1 says, "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia," and 2 Peter 1:1 says, "Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." Kurt and Barbara Aland believe one of these statements is a blatant lie.

They claim that the first New Testament was assembled from "manuscripts representing textual traditions of varying quality" (p. 50). Thus, in their view, there never was a pure apostolic New Testament.

They claim that the New Testament books were not regarded as canonical or sacred until sometime after the second century (p. 51). This is contrary to the teaching of the New Testament itself, which shows that the churches were led by the Holy Spirit to

receive the apostolic epistles as Scripture. See, for example, 1 Thess. 2:13.

They described the Alexandrian School under Clement and Origen as “most impressive” (p. 200), failing to explain to their readers that these men and their “school” were laden with heresies and even denied the eternity and Godhood of Jesus Christ.

MATTHEW BLACK (1908-1995)

1. Black is another of the editors of the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament. He was Professor of Divinity and Biblical Criticism and Principal of St. Mary's College in St. Andrews University. He was the author of *Scrolls & Christianity* (London: SPCK, 1969) and *An Aramaic Approach to the Gospels and Acts* (Hendrickson Publishers, 1998).

2. Black's modernistic theology was exposed in his co-editorship with H.H. Rowley of a revised edition of *Peake's Commentary* in 1982. Peake's was originally published in 1919 and boldly opposed fundamentalist doctrine. Contributors to the revised edition include Bruce Metzger, Allen Wikgren, and Kurt Aland. The editors openly and boldly reject the doctrine of the infallible inspiration and preservation of Holy Scripture.

Note the following excerpt: “It is well known that the primitive Christian Gospel was initially transmitted by word of mouth and that this oral tradition resulted in variant reporting of word and deed. It is equally true that when the Christian record was committed to writing it continued to be the subject of verbal variation, involuntary and intentional, at the hands of scribes and editors” (*Peake's Commentary on the Bible*, p. 633). This is typical modernistic gobbledygook that completely denies divine inspiration and preservation.

Commenting on the Great Commission in Matthew 28, *Peake's Commentary* casts doubt upon Trinitarian baptism: “This mission is described in the language of the church and most commentators doubt that the Trinitarian formula was original at this point in Matthew's Gospel, since the NT elsewhere does not know of such a formula and describes baptism as being performed in the name of the Lord Jesus (e.g. Acts 2:38, 8:16, etc.).”

JOHANNES KARAVIDOPOULOS (c. 1944-)

1. Karavidopoulos is a professor on the theology faculty of the University of Thessaloniki in Greece. He has been listed as an editor of the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament since the 4th edition (1993). It is interesting that a man representing the very heart of the old Byzantine Empire, which jealously preserved its Traditional Greek Text for so many centuries, is now sitting on the Alexandrian text committee.

2. Karavidopoulos is a member of the Greek Orthodox Church, and in 2003 he supervised the production of the new lectionary of the Orthodox Church for the Greek Bible Society. It is the first time a Greek lectionary has incorporated a modern translation (*UBS World Report*, June-July 2004, p. 23).

3. Karavidopoulos' liberalism is evident from the following information:

Karavidopoulos contributed to the ecumenical book *Orthodox Theology between East and West* (Lembeck, 2001-2004), essays in honor of Professor Theodor Nikolaou, director of the training facility for Orthodox theology at the University of Munich. Contributors include Protestants and Roman Catholics.

According to a report by Dr. Albert Rauch, Ostkirchliches Institute, Regensburg ("Discussion between representatives of the Deutschen Bischofskonferenz and the Russian Orthodox Church, in Minsk, May 13-17, 1998"), Karavidopoulos believes that the church is composed of "the whole creation" (<http://home.t-online.de/home/niko.wy/einheit.htm>).

In "The Interpretation of the New Testament in the Orthodox Church" (http://www.myriobiblos.gr/bible/studies/karavidopoulos_interpretation.asp), Karavidopoulos makes the following statements:

"Orthodox theology makes a distinction between the Truth as that which is God Himself, as it was revealed in Christ and 'dwelt among us' (John 1:14) and the record of the saving truth in the books of the Holy Scriptures. This distinction between record and truth carries, according to T. Stylianopoulos, the following important implications: 'First, it safeguards the mystery of God from being identified with the letter of Scripture. Secondly, it

permits the freedom to see in the Bible the experiences of many persons in their relationship with God written in their own language, their own time and circumstances, their own symbols and images, and their own ideas about the world. It permits, in other words, a dynamic relationship between the Word of God contained in Scripture which consists of the truth of the Bible, and the words of men, the human forms in which God's Word is communicated. Thirdly, it presupposes that the Orthodox Church highly esteems also other records of the experience of God, such as the writings of the Church Fathers, the liturgical forms and texts, and the decisions of the Ecumenical Councils. It rescues the Church from an exclusive focus on the Bible. Finally, THE ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF A DYNAMIC RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LETTER AND SPIRIT DESTROYS DOCTRINAIRE BIBLICAL FUNDAMENTALISM AS A THEOLOGICAL POSTURE (that is to say the idea that God dictated propositions which were then written down word for word by the sacred authors) and thus guards Orthodox Christian life from the error of idolatrous veneration of the text of Scripture (bibliolatry)...' (T. Stylianopoulos, *Bread for Life: Reading the Bible*, 1980, 13f.)" [COMMENT: We see that Karavidopoulos plainly denies the doctrine that the Scripture is infallibly and verbally inspired, the sole and final authority for faith and practice. He makes the modernistic distinction between the Biblical record and the truth. He makes room for human fallibility in the Scripture. He accepts church tradition as an authority equal to that of Scripture. He boldly rejects biblical fundamentalism. He commits the modernistic error of confusing reverence of the Bible as the infallible Word of God with idolatry.]

"...[Biblical] history -- without ceasing to be the solid ground of the interpreter -- is transmuted and transformed into theology since that which interests us most, finally, is not only the historical event in itself but mainly its value for people of its times and of our times, that is, its existential message." [COMMENT: This is the heretical Kierkegardian view that one can separate an experiential, existential message of the Bible from the Bible itself, that the Bible's history does not have to be history in the normal sense of the word, that it is merely a vehicle for theology. Karavidopoulos uses the term "existential" at least twice in this brief article.]

"None of these points however, can justify a museum-like inflexibility. The Spirit of God which set up and guides the Church

is a spirit of freedom and not of slavery. In the name of this spirit of freedom in Christ, we should consider the persistent attempt to preserve the letter, rather than the spirit of patristic interpretation as offering poor service to the people of God. What we need today is not the unthinking survival of the fathers but their creative revival within the framework of modern conditions.” [COMMENT: This is the heretical view that Christian liberty is freedom from the actual words and commands of Scripture. Note that Karavidopoulos, an editor of a Greek New Testament, boldly resists the “persistent attempt to preserve the letter” of Scripture. Thus we see that he fits in perfectly with modern textual criticism’s rejection of the doctrine of the preservation of Scripture.]

BRUCE METZGER (1914-2007)

1. Metzger was probably the most influential textual critic of this generation. Every book defending the modern versions lists his works. He is popular across all denominational lines, Catholic, liberal Protestant, you name it.

He is popular with evangelicals and, in fact, was considered an evangelical. Metzger was mentioned in *Christianity Today* as one of the “highly skilled, believing scholars” of our day (Michael Maudlin, “Inside CT,” *Christianity Today*, Feb. 8, 1999). The book *Bible Interpreters of the 20th Century: a Selection of Evangelical Voices*, edited by Walter Elwell and J.D. Weaver (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999), features a chapter on Bruce Metzger by James A. Brooks (pp. 260-71).

Metzger is even popular with fundamentalists who support modern textual criticism. He is often mentioned and recommended in books written by fundamentalists (e.g., *From Mind of God to Mind of Man* 1999; Central Baptist Seminary’s *The Bible Version Debate* 1997). In a letter to me in the 1980s evangelist Robert L. Sumner said that he trusts Metzger and he rebuked me for labeling Metzger a liberal. On a visit to the Bob Jones University bookstore in March 2005, I counted five of Metzger’s books for sale, and there was no warning of his theological liberalism.

2. Metzger was George L. Collord Professor of New Testament Language and Literature at Princeton Theological Seminary. He headed up the New Revised Standard Version translation committee, which is owned by the theologically radical National Council of Churches in America.

3. Metzger's 1997 autobiography, *Reminiscences of an Octogenarian*, omitted any reference to a personal salvation experience.

4. Metzger was a radical ecumenist. He was at the forefront of producing "the Ecumenical Edition" of the RSV in 1973 and personally presented a copy to Pope Paul VI. "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). Metzger also presented a Bible to Pope John Paul II.

5. Metzger denied the infallible inspiration of the Bible.

Metzger's theological liberalism in regard to biblical inspiration was evident in the *Reader's Digest Condensed Bible*. He was the chairman of the project and wrote the introductions to each book, in which he questioned the authorship, traditional date, and supernatural inspiration of books penned by Moses, Daniel, Paul, James, and Peter. Consider some examples:

Genesis: "Nearly all modern scholars agree that, like the other books of the Pentateuch, [Genesis] is a composite of several sources, embodying traditions that go back in some cases to Moses."

Exodus: "As with Genesis, several strands of literary tradition, some very ancient, some as late as the sixth century B.C., were combined in the make-up of the books."

Deuteronomy: "Its compilation is generally assigned to the seventh century B.C., though it rests upon much older tradition, some of it from Moses' time."

Daniel: "Most scholars hold that the book was compiled during the persecutions (168-165 B.C.) of the Jewish people by Antiochus Epiphanes."

John: "Whether the book was written directly by John, or indirectly (his teachings may have been edited by another), the church has accepted it as an authoritative supplement to the story of Jesus' ministry given by the other evangelists."

1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus: "Judging by differences in style and vocabulary from Paul's other letters, many modern scholars think that the Pastorals were not written by Paul."

James: "Tradition ascribes the letter to James, the Lord's brother, writing about A.D. 45, but modern opinion is uncertain, and differs widely on both origin and date."

2 Peter: "Because the author refers to the letters of Paul as 'scripture,' a term apparently not applied to them until long after Paul's death, most modern scholars think that this letter was drawn up in Peter's name sometime between A.D. 100 and 150."

Metzger's radical modernism in relation to the Scripture was also evident in the notes to the *New Oxford Annotated Bible RSV*, 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 the Roman Catholic Church. It was given an imprimatur in 1966 by Cardinal Cushing, Archbishop of Boston. Metzger and May claim the O.T. contains "a matrix of myth, legend, and history." They deny the worldwide flood, call Job an "ancient folktale," claim there are two authors of Isaiah, call Jonah a "popular legend," and otherwise attack the divine inspiration of Holy Scripture.

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*).

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*).

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*).

Note on Psalm 22:12-13: "the meaning of the third line [they have pierced my hands and feet] is obscure" *COMMENT*: In fact, it is not obscure; it is a prophecy of Christ's crucifixion!

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." *COMMENT*: The Lord Jesus Christ quoted from both major sections of Isaiah and said they were written by the same prophet (Jn. 12:38-41).

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*).

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" (Metzger and May, *New Oxford Annotated Bible*).

For more about Bruce Metzger's heresy see *The Modern Bible Version Hall of Shame*, which is available from Way of Life Literature.

Conclusion

1. 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 the Brethren Samuel Tregelles, the Presbyterian B.B. Warfield, and the Baptist A.T. Robinson in this arena?

ANSWER:

First, heresy and apostasy is the rule and not the exception in the field of modern textual criticism, and we do not hesitate to reject modern textual criticism because of the apostasy of its fathers and chief proponents.

Second, evangelicals did not invent and have not advanced modern textual criticism; they borrowed it from the skeptics. Robert Dabney warned that evangelicals who accept textual criticism have 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). Theologian Bernard Ramm observed: "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.

Third, the evangelicals in the field of modern textual criticism have demonstrated a frightful lack of spiritual discernment. The fact that a man is a believer does not mean that he cannot be deceived or that he can safely be followed in all matters.

Every evangelical scholar who adopts the canons of modern textual criticism does so even though they are not founded upon biblical precepts and principles and even though they are contrary to any reasonable view of biblical preservation. They were believers in regard to the doctrine of divine inspiration theoretically but rationalists in regard to the doctrine of divine preservation. John Burgon, Edward Hills, and many others have noted the inconsistency of this and have called upon believers to refuse to follow the modern textual critic’s principle of treating the Bible like another book. “That which distinguishes Sacred Science from every other Science which can be named is that it is Divine, and has to do with a Book which is inspired; that is, whose true Author is God. ... It is chiefly from inattention to this circumstance that misconception prevails in that department of Sacred Science known as ‘Textual Criticism’” (Burgon and Miller, *The Traditional Text*, p. 9). Edward Hills warned: “If you adopt one of these modern versions, you must adopt the naturalistic New Testament textual criticism upon which it rests. This naturalistic textual criticism requires us to study the New Testament text in the same way in which we study the texts of secular books which have not been preserved by God’s special providence” (Hills, *Believing Bible Study*, 1967, pp. 226, 27).

B.B. Warfield, for example, treated the Bible like any other book when it came to textual criticism. Dr. Edward Hills, who began his training in New Testament textual criticism at Westminster Theological Seminary, observed: “Dr. Warfield ignored the providential preservation of the Scriptures and treated the text of the New Testament as he would the text of any book or writing. ‘It matters not whether the writing before us be a letter from a friend, or an inscription from Carchemish, or a copy of a morning newspaper, or Shakespeare, or Homer, or the Bible.’”

2. 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 facts we have garnered in the previous study and in *The Modern Bible Version Hall of Shame* do 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). In his book *The Truth of the King James Only Controversy*, BJU professor Stewart Custer cites the following men in his "Select Bibliography" -- Bruce Metzger, Kurt Aland, Eberhard Nestle, Alexander Souter, B.F. Westcott, and F.J.A. Hort. He does not think it is important that his readers know the theological position of these individuals, that to a man they denied the infallible inspiration of Scripture.

ANSWER:

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).

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 use heretics and apostates to give His people the Word of God?

3. But wasn't Erasmus a "Roman Catholic humanist"?

ANSWER:

First, Erasmus was not a humanist as it is defined today. "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 of the Trinitarian Bible Society, Jan. 7, 1985).

Second, though Erasmus was not a strong man spiritually and

though he remained a Catholic at least most of his life, he was not a typical Catholic of that day.

Erasmus wanted the Bible to be translated into all languages and available to all classes of people, something that was in sharpest contrast with the position of the Roman Catholic Church of that day. He said: "I would have the weakest woman read the Gospels and the Epistles of St. Paul. ... I would have those words translated into all languages, so that not only Scots and Irishmen, but Turks and Saracens might read them."

Erasmus preached boldly against many of Rome's errors. Consider some excerpts from his writings:

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 Caesar. 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."

Third, Erasmus was much more doctrinally sound than the typical Catholic of his day. Erasmus' *Enchiridion* (Christian Soldier's

Manual) was so sound that William Tyndale translated it into English. 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."

Fourth, Erasmus' writings were banned by Rome and burned by the thousands.

The Roman Catholic Church said Erasmus laid the egg that Luther hatched.

In France, the Sorbonne burned French translations of Erasmus' work that had been made by Lewis de Berquin. On April 17, 1529, Berquin himself was burned at the stake.

In 1535, Emperor Charles V made it a capital offense to use Erasmus' Colloquies in the schools.

On July 1, 1523, the inquisitors burned two of Erasmus' acquaintances in Brussels.

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.

Fifth, it is important to understand that Erasmus did not create a text through principles of criticism; he merely passed on the commonly received text. 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).

Sixth, to raise the issue of Erasmus as a means of discounting the facts we have related in this report 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, that apostasy is the intimate companion of modern textual criticism.

4. Each child of God must face this issue for himself and look at the facts for himself (1 Thess. 5:21; 1 John 2:27). I did this in the early 1980s, and when I learned the facts related in this report, about the intimate association of modern textual criticism and the modern versions with apostasy, I had no doubt that this was a significant matter. If someone thinks it is insignificant, that is his prerogative, but I can't take that position and I feel duty bound to warn against it.

5. Thus, one of the many reasons why I stand by the King James Bible and its Greek Received Text is that the alternatives, the critical Greek text and the modern versions, is too intimately associated with end time apostasy.

IV. WE HOLD TO THE KING JAMES BIBLE BECAUSE OF ITS SUPERIOR DOCTRINE

Section Summary

1. The allegation by modern textual criticism that no doctrine is affected
2. The reply to this allegation
 - a. 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.
 - b. The allegation that the Bible version issue is not a doctrinal issue is a dangerous half-truth.
 - c. 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.
 - d. 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.
 - e. 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.
 - f. 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.
 - g. 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.
 - h. 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.
3. Conclusion

Further reading on this topic: (1) D.A. Waite, *Defending the King James Bible*. This book contains a chapter on the superior theology of the King James Bible. Waite organizes the doctrinal errors created by the modern critical text under the headings of theology proper, ecclesiology, angelology, satanology, bibliology, eschatology, soteriology, and christology. (2) Jack Moorman, *Early Manuscripts and The Authorized Version--A Closer Look*. This book looks at 356 passages in which doctrine is affected by the critical

Greek text. Both books are available from Bible for Today, 900 Park Ave., Collingswood, NJ 08108, <http://www.bibfortoday.org>. (3) *Bible Version Omissions of NT Scripture* by Leonard Spencer. P. O. Box 73266, Fairbanks, AK 99707. 907-457-6873. This volume shows the omissions in the critical Greek text in a particularly dramatic fashion by blocking out those portions in this special edition King James Bible. (4) *Evaluating Versions of the New Testament* by Everett Fowler (1906-1990). Fowler made a diligent comparative study of 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*, the chief feature of which is a series of charts showing the significant theological differences between the texts and versions. Available from Bible for Today, 900 Park Ave., Collingswood, NJ 08108, 800-564-6109, www.BibleForToday.org.

THE ALLEGATION BY MODERN TEXTUAL CRITICISM THAT NO DOCTRINE IS AFFECTED

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.

James White: "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" (White, *The King James Only Controversy*, p. 120).

Robert L. Sumner: "... the rare parts about which there is still uncertainty DO NOT AFFECT IN ANY WAY ANY DOCTRINE" (Sumner, *Bible Translations*, 1979).

THE REPLY TO THIS ALLEGATION:

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:

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).

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*.

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.

Moorman also examines 356 doctrinal passages that are significantly affected by these changes.

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 DANGEROUS HALF-TRUTH.*

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.

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.

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.

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.

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

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.

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.

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.

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.

3. 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.

First, 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.

Second, 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).***

Third, 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.

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?

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?

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).

Fourth, 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.”

Contrast this modern textual criticism attitude with the heart of the Psalmist: Psalm 12:6.

Contrast this modern textual criticism attitude with the writer of Proverbs: Prov. 30:5-6

Contrast this modern textual criticism attitude with the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ: Matthew 4:4; 5:18

Contrast this modern textual criticism attitude with the teaching of the Apostles: Revelation 22:18-19

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*).

Contrast this modern textual criticism attitude with that of the Protestant denominations of old. “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).

4. 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.

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 two examples:

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).

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).

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.

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.

5 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 two examples:

MARK 16:9-20

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.

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.

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 disputed 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.

6. 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. Consider one example

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.’”

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.

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*.

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).

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.

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.

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.”

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).

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).

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 1:27

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"

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.

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.”

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.

“... 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).

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 Manichaeian 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 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 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.”

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.

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).

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.”

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.”

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.

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).

A 13-fold defense of this important verse is given in *The Modern Bible Version Question-Answer Database*, which is available from Way of Life Literature.

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.’”

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.

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.

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 many 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. 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 White’s ‘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 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

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.”

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.

DOCTRINE IS WEAKENED IN THE MODERN VERSIONS THROUGH THE REMOVAL OF DIVINE REPETITION

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

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.

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.

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.

This is why Jesus often said “verily, verily” rather than “verily.”

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

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.

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.

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.** In *Faith vs. the Modern Bible Versions* and *The Bible Version Question -Answer Database* we examine other doctrines that are weakened in the modern versions, such as the Virgin Birth, the Atonement, and Separation.

7. 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.

8. 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.

MATTHEW 27:34

KJV: "They gave him VINEGAR to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink."

ASV: "they gave him wine to drink mingled with gall..."

RSV: "they offered him wine to drink, mingled with gall..."

NASV: "they gave Him wine to drink mixed with gall..."

NIV: "There they offered Jesus wine to drink, mixed with gall..."

CSV: "they gave Him wine mixed with gall to drink..."

The modern versions replace "vinegar" with "wine." This 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 *oinos*." a different word. 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."

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 principle of the sword.

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).

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.

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!

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?

V. WE HOLD TO THE KING JAMES BIBLE BECAUSE OF ITS UNMATCHED HERITAGE (FROM THE WYCLIFFE OF 1384 TO THE KJV OF 1611)

The King James Bible is not merely *another* translation. Its heritage and the manner in which it was created are unique in the history of Bible translation. The following overview traces this heritage, beginning with the Wycliffe Bible of the 14th century.

Section Summary

1. English Scriptures prior to the Wycliffe Bible
2. The Wycliffe Bible (1380, 1382)
3. The Tyndale New Testament (1526)
4. The Coverdale Bible (1535)
5. The Matthew's Bible (1537)
6. The Great Bible (1539)
7. The Geneva Bible 1557, 1560)
8. The Bishops Bible (1568)
9. The King James Bible (1611)

THE WYCLIFFE BIBLE (1380, 1382)

The history of the English Bible properly begins with John Wycliffe (1324-1384).

1. The Scripture portions most commonly found among English people before Wycliffe were Anglo Saxon and French, and the few English translations were only of portions of Scripture.
2. Some modern scholars have tried to make the case that Wycliffe did not do any of the actual translation himself. Older historians did not question Wycliffe's role in the work, and we believe the evidence supports this view. That Wycliffe had helpers and that the original translation went through revisions no one doubts, but I do not accept the view that John Wycliffe was not involved in the actual translation.

WYCLIFFE'S TIMES

In Wycliffe's day Rome ruled England and Europe with an iron fist. By the 7th century, Rome had brought England under almost

complete dominion. England was under subjugation to the Pope from then until the 16th century, roughly 900 years, a period that is called Britain's Dark Ages.

1. King John (who ruled from 1199-1216) tried to resist Pope Innocent III's authority in the early 13th century, but he was not successful.

The Pope excommunicated John and issued a decree declaring that he was no longer the king and releasing the people of England from obeying him.

The Pope ordered King Philip of France to organize an army and navy to overthrow John, which he began to do with great zeal, eager to conquer England for himself.

The Pope also called for a crusade against John, promising the participants remission of sins and a share of the spoils of war.

In the mean time, John submitted to the Pope, pledging complete allegiance to him in all things and resigning England and Ireland into the Pope's hands. The following is a quote from the oath that John signed on May 15, 1213: "I John, by the grace of God King of England and Lord of Ireland, in order to expiate my sins, from my own free will and the advice of my barons, give to the Church of Rome, to Pope Innocent and his successors, the kingdom of England and all other prerogatives of my crown. I will hereafter hold them as the pope's vassal. I will be faithful to God, to the Church of Rome, to the Pope my master, and to his successors legitimately elected."

2. The Roman Catholic authorities severely repressed the people and did not allow any form of religion other than Romanism. There was intense censorship of thought. Those who refused to follow Roman Catholicism were persecuted and killed or banished.

3. The bishops, parish priests, and even the monks in the monasteries lived in great opulence through the accumulation of property, the ingathering of tithes and offerings, the saying of masses for the dead, and the sale of indulgences. "To the office of the prelates were attached immense landed estates, princely revenues and high civil, as well as ecclesiastical powers; the lower clergy, residing on livings among the people, were supported chiefly by tithes levied on their respective parishes. ... The wealth

of the English monks at this period almost passes belief. During the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the endowment of monasteries was a mania in Christendom. Lands, buildings, precious stones, gold and silver, were lavished upon them with unsparing prodigality. Rich men, disgusted with the world, or conscience-stricken for their sins, not unfrequently entered the cloister and made over to it their whole property. During the crusading epidemic, many mortgaged their estates to the religious houses for ready money, who never returned, or were too much impoverished to redeem them. In this way vast riches accrued to their establishments. They understood, to perfection, all of the traditional machinery of the Church for extracting money from high and low. The exhibition of relics, the performance of miracles, and above all the sale of indulgences, and of masses for the dead, formed an open sluice through which a steady golden stream poured into the monastic treasury” (Conant, *Popular History of the Translation*, pp. 5, 8).

4. The clergy lived in debauchery.

The monasteries, which were supposed to be places of strict holiness, were more like brothels. “Their profligacy was equal to their luxury. Those hells of vice, uncovered in the monasteries by the commissioners of Henry VIII. in the sixteenth century, were not the growth of that age alone. Such as they were then they were two centuries before, and the cry that went up from them to the ear of heaven was like that of Sodom and Gomorrah” (Conant, p. 10).

The Augustinian begging friars carried this debauchery to every strata of society. They were responsible only to the Pope and could travel at will to every parish. “When the barefoot Friar, clad in his serge gown, and weary with toiling over the rough and miry ways, announced in some neglected hamlet that he had come to offer pardons, indulgences, the redemption of their deceased friends from purgatory, and all the precious wares of the Church, at a price within the reach of the poorest laborer or beggar, it seemed to the deluded people like good tidings of great joy. He could, moreover, by certain old rags, pigs’ bones, rusty nails, bits of rotten wood, and similar rubbish which he carried about with him under the name of relics, ensure them good crops, and fruitful herds, and faithful wives, all for a very reasonable consideration. His animated harangues, seasoned with marvellous stories, all to the honor and glory of his Order, took their ears captive. Then he was so affable,

so condescending! He was not too proud to sit down under the thatched roof and eat with his rustic hosts, washing down the plain fare with draughts from the pewter tankard, while his merry joke and tale were the best sauce of the feast. ... This was the most successful blow which had ever yet been struck for the Papacy. Hitherto, the relation between the clergy and people had been such as to allow of a wholesome dislike of the priesthood. ... But under this new form, it wormed itself into the very heart of the people. It fell in with all their prejudices, flattered their vanity, vulgarized religion to their tastes, cheapened it to their means, and bound them, heart and soul, to their spiritual teachers. Their special commission, held directly from the Pope, rendering them amenable to himself alone, gave the Friars a great advantage. Under this all-powerful sanction they ranged from parish to parish, from diocese to diocese, regardless of all prescriptive rights, literally underselling all competitors, and crowding them out of market. Crime of every sort, secure of absolution in the most private manner and at the cheapest rate, increased with fearful rapidity. One bishop complained that he had in his diocese some two thousand malefactors, of whom not fourteen had received absolution from parish priests, who yet defied punishment, and claimed their right to the sacraments on the pretence of having been absolved by the Frairs" (Conant, pp. 14-16).

5. Under these conditions, the people were steeped in ignorance and immorality and lawlessness was rampant. "Violence and bribery everywhere overawed or corrupted justice. 'There was not,' we are told, 'so much as one of the king's ministers and judges who did not receive bribes, and very few who did not extort them' [Henry, vol. viii, p. 384]. Perjury was a vice so universal, that the words of scripture might have found an almost literal application to the English people, from the king to the serf -- 'All men are liars.' Life and property were kept in perpetual insecurity, by the numerous and ferocious bands of robbers which roamed over the country, under the protection of powerful barons, who sheltered them in their castles, and shared with them their booty. Englishmen and Englishwomen were still sold like cattle at the great fairs. Grossness of manners characterized all ranks, and exhibited itself in the most revolting forms of licentiousness among the leading classes. 'Like priest, like people,' was never more fully verified than in this portion of English history" (Conant, pp. 22, 23).

6. The Roman Catholic Church was not interested in granting the people access to the Bible.

The Council of Toulouse (1229) and the Council of Tarragona (1234) had forbidden 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 in effect during Wycliffe’s day.

What Rome allowed were only small portions, usually from the Gospels but never from Paul’s Epistles. Catholic Scripture portions were published together with apocryphal and legendary stories and Mary was commonly exalted higher than Jesus Christ. Consider, for example, the rightly named *GOLDEN LEGEND*. This was published widely in Europe and England prior to the Reformation and it was alleged to be excerpts from the Bible, but it was filled with legends about the “saints” and “the Bible scraps are lost in a sea of fiction” (David Daniell, *The Bible in English*, p. 108). Consider also the 13th century *MIRROR OF THE BLESSED LIFE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST*. This Latin work was translated into English by Nicholas Love and went through eight editions from 1484 to 1530. Alleged to be an “expanded gospel harmony,” it was actually filled with legend and had little to do with the Bible. “The book is not long, but it is padded out with long meditations by and about the Blessed Virgin Mary, who has the overwhelming presence. Although half the book is on the Crucifixion, the Gospels’ narrative is only just visible, overtaken by the Virgin Mary’s long accounts of her own suffering at that event” (Daniell, p. 161). (It sounds like the original for Mel Gibson’s movie *The Passion of the Christ*!) This was the type of “Scripture” that Rome allowed the people to have. It is telling that with the publication of Tyndale’s New Testament in 1526, printing of Love’s *Mirror* suddenly ceased.

Theological studies ignored the Bible and were devoted instead to foolish questions. “The Universities could boast their subtle, sublime, profound, angelic, and seraphic doctors of theology, who could discuss through endless folios the questions: ‘Does the glorified body of Christ stand or sit in Heaven? Is the body of

Christ, which is eaten in the sacrament, dressed or undressed? Were the clothes in which Christ appeared to his disciples after his resurrection, real or only apparent? ...' ... Even a copy of the Latin Vulgate was scarcely to be found at the Universities. In 1353, three or four young Irish priests came over to England to study divinity; but were obliged to return home 'because not a copy of the Bible was to be found at Oxford'" (Conant, pp. 21, 22).

AN OVERVIEW OF WYCLIFFE'S LIFE

1. Wycliffe was born in Yorkshire in 1324 and educated at Oxford. He was a fellow of Merton College, and from 1361 to about 1366 was Master of Balliol College. In 1372 he received a doctorate in theology.

2. In the early part of his ministry, when he began preaching against the Friars who swarmed across the land and against the Pope, Wycliffe was popular both with the king and with the authorities at Oxford. The king shared a dislike for the Pope's interference in England's affairs, and the leaders at Oxford shared Wycliffe's animosity toward the Friars.

3. In 1374 Wycliffe became chaplain to King Edward III and was appointed to the rectory of Lutterworth in Leicestershire. Some parts of the ancient church remain from Wycliffe's times. There is a chair still there that he allegedly used and the "Wycliffe Door" on the side of the church away from the river was the door that he used. The existing pulpit is a copy of the one that he preached from.

4 Beginning in 1377, Wycliffe was fiercely persecuted by the Roman Catholic authorities in England at the instigation of the Pope in Rome because of his Bible doctrine.

5. In 1381 he was put out of Oxford for denying the Roman dogma of transubstantiation and he retired to Lutterworth. The next year a sermon was preached from St. Mary the Virgin Church, the Oxford university church, denouncing Wycliffe's followers as *Lollards*. He produced a voluminous amount of writing until his death in 1384. "Some 57 Latin works were written between 1380 and December 1384" (Daniell, *The Bible in English*, p. 73). It was during this time that the first English Bible was completed.

6. Wycliffe died on the last day of December 1384.

WYCLIFFE'S DOCTRINE

Wycliffe was a Catholic priest but began to preach against Rome's errors in his mid-30s.

1. He did not reject Rome all at once but gradually grew in his understanding of Scripture. There is a lot we do not know about his doctrine, as many of his writings have perished, but we do know that Wycliffe exposed many of Rome's errors.

2. Wycliffe's foundational doctrine was that the Bible is the sole authority for faith and practice and that men have the right to interpret Scripture for themselves before the Lord (and not be dependent upon Rome). He said, "Believers should ascertain for themselves what are the true matters of their faith, by having the Scriptures in a language which all may understand."

3. Wycliffe believed the Bible to be the Word of God without error from beginning to end. One of Wycliffe's major works was "On the Truth of Sacred Scripture," which was "a defence of the authority and inerrancy of the Bible."

He testified, "It is impossible for any part of the Holy Scriptures to be wrong. In Holy Scripture is all the truth; one part of Scripture explains another" (David Fountain, *John Wycliffe*, p. 48).

Wycliffe believed that the Scripture was "a divine exemplar conceived in the mind of God before creation, and before the material Scriptures were written down" (Malcolm Lambert, *Medieval Heresy: Popular Movements from the Gregorian Reform to the Reformation*, 1998, p. 230). This is the testimony of Psalm 119:89: "For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven."

4. He taught that the apostolic churches have only elders and deacons "and declared his conviction that all orders above these had been introduced by Caesarean pride" (Henry Shelton, *History of the Christian Church*, II, 1895, p. 415).

5. Wycliffe was very bold against the pope, contending that "it is blasphemy to call any head of the church, save Christ alone" (Thomas Crosby, *History of the English Baptists*, I, 1740, p. 7). Consider some other statements by Wycliffe on the subject of the papacy:

"It is supposed, and with much probability, that the Roman pontiff is

the great Antichrist.”

“How then shall any sinful wretch, who knows not whether he be damned or saved, constrain men to believe that he is head of holy Church?” (Shelton, II, p. 415).

“Antichrist puts many thousand lives in danger for his own wretched life. Why, is he not a fiend stained foul with homicide who, though a priest, fights in such a cause?” (John Eadie, *History of the English Bible*, I, pp. 46, 47).

6. Wycliffe taught that men have the right to have the Bible in their own languages and was willing to endure the wrath of the Catholic authorities by translating the Scriptures into English. When Wycliffe began the translation work, the Pope in Rome issued “bulls” against him. Wycliffe’s reply was as follows:

“You say it is heresy to speak of the Holy Scriptures in English. You call me a heretic because I have translated the Bible into the common tongue of the people. Do you know whom you blaspheme? Did not the Holy Ghost give the Word of God at first in the mother-tongue of the nations to whom it was addressed? Why do you speak against the Holy Ghost? You say that the Church of God is in danger from this book. How can that be? Is it not from the Bible only that we learn that God has set up such a society as a Church on the earth? Is it not the Bible that gives all her authority to the Church? Is it not from the Bible that we learn who is the Builder and Sovereign of the Church, what are the laws by which she is to be governed, and the rights and privileges of her members? Without the Bible, what charter has the Church to show for all these? It is you who place the Church in jeopardy by hiding the Divine warrant, the missive royal of her King, for the authority she wields and the faith she enjoins” (Fountain, *John Wycliffe*, pp. 45-47).

7. Wycliffe eventually rejected Rome’s key dogma of transubstantiation. He wrote: “May the thing made turn again and make him that made it? Thou then that art an earthly man, by what reason mayst thou say that thou makest thy Maker? Were this doctrine true, it would follow that the thing which is not God today shall be God tomorrow; yea, the thing that is without spirit of life, but groweth in the field by nature, shall another time be God. And yet we ought to believe that God is without beginning or

ending” (Wycliffe, *Wyckett*).

8. There is some evidence that Wycliffe rejected infant baptism, at least toward the end of his life.

There is evidence of this from his own writings. Wycliffe taught that “baptism doth not confer, but only signify grace, which was given before.” This principle undermines the doctrine of infant baptism, as the baptism of a baby cannot signify grace that was previously given as it does in believer’s baptism. The *Martyrs Mirror*, first published in Dutch in 1660, states that in 1370 Wycliffe issued an article “declared to militate against infant baptism” (p. 322).

There is also evidence of this from the Catholic authorities. Thomas Walden and Joseph Vicecomes claimed that Wycliffe rejected infant baptism and they charged him with Anabaptist views. Walden, who wrote against the Wycliffites or Hussites in the early part of the 1400s, called Wycliffe “one of the seven heads that came out of the bottomless pit, for denying infant baptism, that heresie of the Lollards, of whom he was so great a ringleader” (Danver’s *Treatise*; cited by Joseph Ivimey, *History of the English Baptists*, 1811, I, p. 72).

Even if Wycliffe did not entirely deny infant baptism, it is certain that many of his Lollard followers did. The term “Lollard,” like that of “Waldensian,” was a general term that encompassed a wide variety of doctrine and practice. While many of the Lollards retained infant baptism, it is certain that others did not. (For more about the Lollards, see the *Advanced Bible Studies Series* on Church History, available from Way of Life Literature.)

WYCLIFFE’S BATTLES WITH THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

For his translation efforts and his biblical views, Wycliffe was hounded by the Roman Catholic authorities.

1. Wycliffe was required to appear before the Catholic bishops in February 1377 to give an account of his doctrine.

This occurred at St. Paul’s Cathedral in London, where the Bishop of London, named Courtney, was the chief priest. It was just behind St. Paul’s that English Bibles were burned from the days

just following those of Wycliffe to those of William Tyndale.

John of Gaunt (Duke of Lancaster, fourth son of King Edward III), Percy, Earl Marshal of England, and other nobles accompanied Wycliffe to defend him, and the trial was broken up by a riot before a decision could be reached. "Forgetting all produce and propriety, he [Courtney, the Bishop of London] started angrily from his seat, and addressed the two noblemen in a tone of insolent rebuke, such as peers and soldiers are not wont to endure patiently. Their reply was in a spirit no less haughty; and the fierce colloquy ended in a tumult which broke up the meeting, and the innocent occasion of the uproar quietly withdrew, without having been asked a question, or having uttered a word" (Conant, *Popular History*, p. 34).

2. The bishops then appealed to Pope Gregory XI, who issued five papal bulls against Wycliffe in May 1377. At that time the Pope's headquarters was in Avignon, France. The bulls were addressed to the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of London, and to the University of Oxford. The Pope raged against Wycliffe, calling him "Master in Error." The authorities were ordered to put Wycliffe into prison and keep him there until "judgment be received from the Holy See." The death of King Edward III forced a brief delay in the clergy's attempt to enact the papal bulls, because Wycliffe's friend John of Gaunt assumed practical control of the throne since Edward's son Richard II was so young.

3. In April 1378 Wycliffe was again required to appear before the bishops to be investigated for the heresies he had been charged of by the Pope.

This was held at Lambeth Palace in London, which would later become the home of the infamous Lollard's Tower where so many dissenters were imprisoned.

Before Wycliffe could be charged, Joan of Kent, widow of the Black Prince and mother of King Richard II, intervened, demanding that the trial stop and that no judgment be made against the Reformer.

4. The Catholic authorities in England continued to hate Wycliffe but they were thwarted in their efforts to imprison and kill him. Their attitude toward him and toward his vernacular translation is evident from what Thomas Arundel, Archbishop of Canterbury, wrote to Pope John XXIII in 1411. "This pestilent and wretched

John Wyclif, of cursed memory, that son of the old serpent ... endeavoured by every means to attack the very faith and sacred doctrine of Holy Church, devising -- to fill up the measure of his malice -- the expedient of a new translation of the Scriptures into the mother tongue” (David Daniel, *The Bible in English*, p. 67).

5. In 1381 Wycliffe was condemned even by his own Oxford University because of his rejection of transubstantiation.

Wycliffe preached against Rome’s doctrine of the Mass with the same boldness that he had preached against the Friars and against the Papacy itself. “It is as if the Devil had been scheming to this effect, saying--‘If I can, by my vicar Antichrist, so far seduce believers as to bring them to deny that this sacrament is bread, and to believe in it as a contemptible quality without a substance, I may after that, and in the same manner, lead them to believe whatever I may wish; inasmuch as the opposite is plainly taught, both by the language of Scripture, and by the very senses of mankind.’ Doubtless, after a while, these simple-hearted believers may be brought to say, that however a prelate may live--be he effeminate, a homicide, a simonist, or stained with any other vice--this must never be believed concerning him by a people who would be regarded as duly obedient. But by the grace of Christ, I will keep clear of the hersy which teaches that if the Pope and Cardinals assert a certain thing to be the sense of Scripture, therefore so it is; for that were to set them above the Apostles” (Wycliffe, *Dialogus*).

In the spring of 1381, Wycliffe published 12 theses on this issue. He declared, “... the bread we see on the altar is not Christ, nor any part of him, but simply an effectual sign of him; and that the doctrines of transubstantion, identification, and impanation, have no basis in Scripture.” He challenged the University to a debate on the subject.

The Chancellor of the Oxford, Berton, assembled a secret council and condemned Wycliffe’s doctrine and issued this decree: “If any person, of whatever degree, state, or condition, shall in future publicly teach such doctrine in the University, or shall listen to one so teaching, he shall be suspended from all scholastic exercises, shall be liable to the greater excommunication, and shall be committed to prison.” Representatives were sent to announce this decree to Wycliffe while he was teaching a class. Wycliffe was forced to retire to Lutterworth.

In the summer of 1382, Wycliffe was condemned in a sermon preached at the Oxford University church, St. Mary the Virgin. It was in this sermon that his followers were denounced as Lollards for the first time.

THE PROTECTING HAND OF GOD UPON WYCLIFFE

Wycliffe would have been cut off by the Roman Catholic authorities had he not, by divine intervention, been protected by certain powerful individuals and unusual events.

1. One of these was JOHN OF GAUNT (spelled Ghent in his native Flanders) the Duke of Lancaster and the father of King Henry VI. He was the effective ruler of England for some time because King Edward III was very old and his son Richard II was only a child. John was a large man and a bold knight. His armor, which is displayed today in the Tower of London, is 6 foot 9 inches. He protected Wycliffe for many years until Wycliffe rejected Rome's doctrine of transubstantiation.

2. Another protector was QUEEN JOAN (1328-85). She was the wife of Edward III (1360-76), also known as the Black Prince because of his black armor. When Edward died in 1376, Joan became the Queen Mother to her son Richard II. In 1378, the enemies of Wycliffe called him to stand before a tribunal of bishops in Lambeth Palace. Wycliffe was accused of spreading heresies, but by the following means the bishops were frustrated in carrying out any sentence. "... Sir Richard Clifford entered with a message from the Queen Mother, the widow of the Black Prince, forbidding them to pass sentence upon Wycliffe" (Fountain, *John Wycliffe*, p. 33). The trial ceased.

3. QUEEN ANNE, the wife of Richard II (1367-1400), also assisted Wycliffe. She was daughter to the emperor Charles IV and sister of Wenceslaus, king of Bohemia, and thus held the position of Elizabeth of Prague. Anne was only a teenager when she was brought to England to wed Richard. She brought versions of Scriptures in German, Bohemian, and Latin with her into England. She loved Wycliffe's doctrine and sent copies of his books into Bohemia by her attendants (Joseph Ivimey, *History of the English Baptists*, 1811, I, p. 69). Many of Wycliffe's works that were completely destroyed in England survived in copies in Bohemia. Anne died in June 1394, at the age of twenty-seven.

4. Further, in 1378 Pope Gregory XI died, and THE GREAT PAPAL SCHISM began, during which there were two (Gregory XII and Benedict III) and then three popes, and these were too busy hurling curses at one another to worry much about Wycliffe in England!

WYCLIFFE'S MISSIONARY ENDEAVORS

Wycliffe not only translated the Bible but he carried out missionary endeavors.

1. He had a powerful influence through his extensive writings, which were widely distributed in England and even helped create a separatist revival movement in Europe.

2. Wycliffe had a missionary heart and he trained and sent out preachers to proclaim the Gospel of the grace of Jesus Christ. These were called "Bible men" and Lollards, and they were hounded and bitterly persecuted by the Catholic authorities. (The term "Lollard" predated Wycliffe. It might have been derived from a Waldensian preacher named Walter Lollardus, an Englishman who was burnt for heresy in Cologne. See William Canton, *The Bible and the Anglo-Saxon People*, 1914, p. 42; and Joseph Ivimey, *The History of the English Baptists*, 1811, I, p. 64.) "Like the seventy sent out by our Lord, they were sent on foot, clad in coarse garments, the pilgrim's staff in their hands--and ... with a Latin Bible hid in the bosom of their gowns. Wherever they found an audience--whether in a church or a church-yard, in the busy market-place, amid the noisy chaffering and boisterous amusements of the fair--there they proclaimed to the people 'all the words of this life.' To the venal sale of indulgences and priestly absolution, they opposed the unbought grace of the gospel; to the invocation of saints, the one Mediator between God and man; to the worship of pictures and images, the worship of the one living and true God; to the traditions of men and the authority of priests, the pure revelation of God's will in the Holy Scriptures. Their own blameless lives enforced their teachings. Asking nothing, they received thankfully what was required for their simple wants; and even from this were ever ready to spare something for the needy. ... Many country baronets of wealth and influence likewise espoused their cause; and sometimes, when danger was apprehended, a body-guard of gentlemen was seen around the pulpit, ready, if necessary, to defend with their good swords the right of Englishmen to speak

and to hear, according to the dictates of their own consciences. The intimidated sheriff, having served on the preacher a citation to appear before the bishop, would retire; and before adequate forces could be raised to execute the writ, the evangelist was proclaiming in some far-off hamlet the glad tidings of salvation to its neglected poor” (Conant, *Popular History*, pp. 42, 43).

3. Wycliffe also had copies of the hand-written Scriptures made and distributed not only in England but also abroad in Europe. That these multiplied widely is evident from the record that still exists of the many copies that were confiscated by the authorities: “By reference to the Bishop’s Registers it will appear that these little books were numerous, as they are often specified as being found upon the persons of those accused. Sometimes the Gospels are spoken of either separately, or together; or it is the book of Acts, or the Epistle of James, or the Apocalypse that is specified. It appears also from these Registers, that many of those who possessed these little volumes were either servants or tradesmen” (Blackford Condit, *The History of the English Bible*, 1886, p. 75).

THE END OF WYCLIFFE’S LIFE

1. John Wycliffe continued to take a stand for the truth and to progress in spiritual strength and wisdom even in his old age. In 1381, just three years before his death, Wycliffe boldly proclaimed that the Roman doctrine of transubstantiation was false. He taught that the bread and wine of the Lord’s Supper do not change substance and are merely symbolic of the body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. Wycliffe’s protector, John Gaunt, refused to accept Wycliffe’s denial of Rome’s foundational doctrine. He warned Wycliffe to be silent about this, but Wycliffe refused, though he knew by his stand he would probably lose his protection from an earthly perspective. Gaunt did withdraw his guardianship, but Wycliffe put his trust in One who is a more dependable and effective protector than a 6 foot 9 inch knight!

3. Wycliffe was expelled from his teaching position at Oxford and withdrew to his parish of Lutterworth where he lived until his death.

4. In May 1382, Wycliffe was called before yet another synod of ecclesiastical authorities.

This is called the Blackfriars' Synod, because it was held in the monastery of Blackfriars in London (so named because of the black robes worn by the Dominican friars or monks). The Dominicans had been at the forefront of the Inquisition since their appointment by Pope Gregory IX (1227-1241) in the early 13th century. Charles V, emperor of the Holy Roman Empire and a great persecutor, stayed at the monastery on his visit to London in 1522.

When the 47 bishops and monks and religious doctors took their seats, a powerful earthquake shook the city. Huge stones fell out of castle walls and pinnacles toppled. "Wycliffe called it a judgment of God and afterwards described the gathering as the 'Earthquake Council'" (Fountain, *John Wycliffe*, p. 39).

The synod condemned Wycliffe, charging him specifically with 10 heresies and 16 errors. His writings were forbidden and the king gave authority to imprison anyone who believed the condemned doctrines.

The monastery, which originally stretched from Shoe Lane off Fleet Street right down to the Thames at Puddle Dock, ceased to function as a religious order during the days of King Henry VIII. Later it was used as one of Shakespeare's playhouses. Though the monastery no longer exists and even the buildings are gone, with only a part of a wall left that can be seen from St. Anne's churchyard, that area of London is still called Blackfriars and the Blackfriars Bridge over the Thames originates there.

5. Wycliffe died on December 31, 1384. He was seized with paralysis on December 29 while performing his reinterpreted Mass at Lutterworth Church and was carried out the small side door that still bears his name. He remained unconscious for two days before his soul was given up to God. It was not only a year that ended, it was an era. The new year, 1385, marked the first entire year that the English people had their own Bible.

THE WYCLIFFE BIBLE

1. Wycliffe's greatest influence was through the Bible that he translated.

The New Testament was completed in 1380 and the Old Testament in 1382, just two years before Wycliffe died.

How much of the entire Bible was translated by Wycliffe himself and how much was accomplished by helpers, we cannot know. It is popular among contemporary historians to deny that Wycliffe had any part in the actual translation, but we do not accept this position. The ancient historians such as William Caxton (1482), John Foxe (1554), and Thomas Fuller (1662) were united in their opinion that Wycliffe did at least part of the translation; and in my estimation contemporary historians have not refuted this historical view.

Wycliffe's friend Nicholas Hereford was probably involved in the translation and possibly the revision. Hereford is named in some manuscripts.

The Wycliffe Bible had some fascinating renderings. Following are a couple of examples:

Psalm 91:5 said the child of God would not be afraid "of an arrow flying in the day, of a goblin going in darkneses." There are goblins in the sense of evil spirits and demonic powers that are alligned against the child of God, so this translation of the Hebrew word --- is interesting. In the King James Bible, this word is translated dread, dreadful, fear, fearful, great fear, terror, and great terror.

Matthew 3:4 says of John the Baptist "and his meat was honeysuckers and honey of the wood." While honey of the wood referred to wild honey, we aren't sure where honeysuckers comes from!

Luke 2:13 has an interesting description of the Lord's heavenly hosts: "And suddenly there was made with the angel a multitude of heavenly knighthood, herying [praising] God and saying." Wycliffe lived in a day when armies were led by bold knights in their impressive armor with their colorful standards waving, and this makes for an effectual translation of "hosts."

The Wycliffe Bible was not printed (until the 19th century). Tyndale's was the first printed English New Testament.

The Wycliffe Scriptures were often distributed in portions rather than as a complete Bible or even a complete New Testament,

because these were easier to copy and transport and conceal.

A copy of an entire handwritten Wycliffe Bible was very expensive. “Nicholas Belward suffered from popish cruelty in 1429, for having in his possession a copy of Wiclif’s New Testament. That copy cost him four marks and forty pence. This sum, so much greater was the value of money then than it is now, was considered as a sufficient annual salary for a curate. The same value at the present time would pay for many hundreds of copies of the Testament, well printed and bound” (Alexander McClure, *The Translators Revived*, 1855).

Surely many believers would be motivated to make their own copies of the Scripture, and doubtless this would have been the case with preachers. I have not seen this important point emphasized in other histories of the Bible, but it is only reasonable. I don’t believe it was only a matter purchasing a copy from a professional scribe. Though time consuming, it is not that difficult to make a copy of the New Testament. In the first few years of my Christian life, which was B.C. or *Before Computers* (I was converted in 1973 at age 23), I copied down copious portions of Scripture in my zeal for memorization and in the process of my studies. Had I lived in an earlier time when the Scriptures were not available in printed form, I have no doubt that I would have made my own copy from Genesis to Revelation, no matter how long it took, and I would also have made copies of portions to give away to other brethren and even to unbelievers. During the early months after I was saved I tediously made copies of my testimony by typing it repeatedly and using carbon paper to multiply my efforts, because I was too poor to afford to have it printed. I handed these out in my evangelistic work. I am confident that multitudes of early believers shared this zeal to make copies both of God’s Word and of evangelistic pamphlets. It is only natural, for the believer is born of the Word (Jam. 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:23), lives by the Word (Mat. 4:4), continues in the truth by the Word (John 8:31-32), is a doer of the Word (Jam. 1:22), grows by the Word (1 Pet. 2:2), operates by the faith that comes from the Word (Rom. 10:17), is cleansed by the Word (Eph. 5:26), and defends himself by the Word (Eph. 6:17).

2. The original Wycliffe Bible was revised and it is the revision that was widely distributed for more than a century. Today the original is called the Early Version (EV) and the revision the Later Version (LV). The Later Version first appeared in 1388, shortly after

Wycliffe's death, but it continued to be modified somewhat throughout the 15th century.

It was probably revised either by John Purvey or John Trevisa.

The reviser, whoever he was, knew that the fear of God and great care are necessary for an accurate translation. The following is from the introduction to the revision: "A translator hath great need to study well the sense both before and after, and then also he hath need to live a clean life and be full devout in prayers, and have not his wit occupied about worldly things, that the Holy Spirit, Author of all wisdom and cunning and truth, dress him for his work and suffer him not to err. God grant to us all grace to know well and to keep well Holy Writ, and to suffer joyfully some pain for it at the last."

3. Wycliffe's translation was based on the Latin Vulgate, and it contained most of the errors common to that version. Following are some examples:

MATTHEW 5:44 — "bless them that curse you" is omitted in the Wycliffe

----- 6:13 – "for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever" is omitted in the Wycliffe

----- 9:13 – "to repentance" is omitted in the Wycliffe

----- 15:8 – "draweth nigh unto me with their mouth" is omitted in the Wycliffe

----- 16:3 – "O ye hypocrites" is omitted in the Wycliffe

MARK 2:17 – "to repentance" is omitted in the Wycliffe

----- 6:11 – "more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrhah" is omitted in the Wycliffe

----- 10:21 – "take up the cross" is omitted in the Wycliffe

----- 13:14 – "spoken by Daniel the prophet" is omitted in the Wycliffe

LUKE 2:33 – "Joseph" is changed to "father" in the Wycliffe

----- 2:43 – "Joseph and his mother" is changed to "his parents" in the Wycliffe

----- 4:8 – "get thee behind me Satan" is omitted in the Wycliffe

----- 11:2-4 – "Our ... which art in heaven ... Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth ... but deliver us from evil" is omitted in the Wycliffe

JOHN 4:42 – "the Christ" is omitted in the Wycliffe

ACTS 2:30 – “according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ” is omitted in the Wycliffe

----- 7:30 – “of the Lord” is omitted in the Wycliffe

----- 16:7 – “Spirit of Jesus” is added in the Wycliffe

----- 17:26 – “blood” is omitted in the Wycliffe

ROMANS 1:16 – “of Christ” is omitted in the Wycliffe

1 CORINTHIANS 5:7 – “for us” is omitted in the Wycliffe

----- 7:5 – “fasting” is omitted in the Wycliffe

----- 15:47 – “the Lord” is omitted in the Wycliffe

EPHESIANS 3:9 – “by Jesus Christ” is omitted in the Wycliffe

COLOSSIANS 1:14 – “through his blood” is missing in the Wycliffe

1 THESSALONIANS 1:1 – “from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ” is omitted in the Wycliffe

1 TIMOTHY 3:16 – “God was manifest in the flesh” is changed to “which was manifest in the flesh” in the Wycliffe

----- 6:5 – “from such withdraw thyself” is omitted in the Wycliffe

HEBREWS 1:3 – “by himself” is omitted in the Wycliffe

1 PETER 1:22 – “through the Spirit” is omitted in the Wycliffe

----- 4:1 – “for us” is omitted in the Wycliffe

REVELATION 1:11 – “I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last” is omitted in the Wycliffe

----- 8:13 – “angel” is changed to “eagle” in the Wycliffe

4. The language of the Wycliffe version is simple and forceful and laid the foundation for other Bibles in English. In the following examples, only the spelling has been modernized.

Wycliffe Bible, John 11:8-12: “The disciples said to him, Master now the Jews soughten for to stone thee, and goest thou thither? Jesus answered whether there be not twelve hours of the day? If any man wander in the night he stomlish, for light is not in him. He saith these things and after these things he saith to him Lazarus our friend sleepeth but I go to raise him from sleep; therefore his disciples saiden: Lord, if he sleepeth, he shall be safe.”

Wycliffe Bible, Luke 2:8-14: “And shepherds were in the same country, waking and keeping the watches of the night on their flock. And lo, the angel of the Lord stood beside them, and the clearness of God shined about them, and they dreaded with great dread. And the angel said to them, Nil ye dread, for lo, I preach to you a great joy that shall be to all people. For a Saviour is born today to you that is Christ the Lord in the city of David. And this is a token to you, ye shall find a young child lapped in cloths and laid in a creche. And suddenly there was made

with the angel a multitude of heavenly knighthood, heryng God and saying, Glory be in the highest things to God, and in earth peace to men of good will."

5. Many phrases from our English Bible of 1611 can be traced back to Wycliffe with only the slightest modification, including the following:

"enter thou into the joy of the Lord"; "for many be called, but few be chosen"; "a prophet is not without honour, but in his own country"; "he that is not against us, is for us"; "suffer ye little children to come to me, and forbid ye them not, for of such is the kingdom of God"; "how hard it is for men that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God"; "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"; "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to each creature"; "and Mary said, Lo! the handmaid of the Lord"; "ask ye, and it shall be given to you; seek ye, and ye shall find; knock ye, and it shall be opened to you"; "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do"; "In the beginning was the word"; "he was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not"; "for God loved so the world, that he gave his one begotten Son"; "I am bread of life"; "I am the light of the world"; "ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"; "I and the Father be one"; "and Jesus wept"; "straight is the gate and narrow the way"; "and no man ascendeth [up] into heaven, but he that came down from heaven"; "I have overcome the world"; "my kingdom is not of this world"; "what is truth?"; "born again"; "a living sacrifice"; "the deep things of God"; "upbraideth not"; "whited sepulchres"; "for the wages of sin is death"; "ye be the temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you"; "when I was a little child, I spake as a little child, I understood as a little child, I thought as a little child"; "I have kept the faith"; "what fellowship hath light with darkness"; "we make known to you the grace of God"; "the world and all that dwell therein is the Lord's"; "be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only"; "for your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion goeth about, seeking whom he shall devour"; "Lo! I stand at the door, and knock"; "and he said to me, It is done; I am alpha and omega, the beginning and the end."

6. The Wycliffe Bible had a powerful effect upon the English nation and laid the foundation for the Reformation.

THE STRANGE TALE OF WYCLIFFE'S BONES

1. At the Roman Catholic Council of Constance, which met between 1415 and 1418, John Wycliffe was condemned and his bones were ordered dug up and burned. This is the same Catholic council that burned John Huss and Jerome of Prague, ignoring their promise of safe conduct. "As his Bible aroused the English conscience, the pope felt a chill; he heard unearthly sounds rattle through the empty caverns of his soul, and he mistook Wickliff's

bones for his Bible. The moldering skeleton of the sleeping translator polluted the consecrated ground where it slept. The Council of Constance condemned his Bible and his bones to be burnt together” (Thomas Armitage, *A History of the Baptists*, 1890, I, p. 315).

2. For some reason, another 13 years passed before the strange deed was actually performed.

It occurred during the reign of Pope Martin V (1417-1431).

In 1428, nearly 44 years after his death, Wycliffe’s bones were exhumed and burned and the ashes scattered. The strange ceremony was led by Archbishop Chichely, head of the Church of England. What sight could be more unscriptural, more pagan, more wicked, than these Catholic leaders disinterring old bones from their resting place under the chancel* so they can publicly desecrate the long-dead Bible translator and preacher of the Gospel of Grace? What other evidence do we need that the Roman Catholic Church is apostate? After the remains of Wycliffe were burned, the ashes were cast into the little river Swift, which flows near the Lutterworth church. The interesting old British historian Thomas Fuller saw in this a far grander vision than the one enjoyed that day by the Catholic authorities that carried out the dastardly deed: “To Lutterworth they come, Sumner, Commissarie, Official, Chancellour, Proctors, Doctors, and the Servants ... take, what was left, out of the grave, and burnt them to ashes, and cast them into Swift a Neighbouring Brook running hard by. Thus this Brook hath conveyed his ashes into Avon; Avon into Severn; Severn into the narrow Seas; they, into the main Ocean. And thus the Ashes of Wickliff are the Emblem of his Doctrine, which now, is dispersed all the World over.” [* H.C. Conant said Wycliffe had been buried under the chancel. *Popular History*, p. 64.]

THE INFLUENCE OF WYCLIFFE AND THE LOLLARDS AND THEIR PERSECUTION

The Word of God was preached in England in a dark day and many came to the light and were saved. The record of this is largely unwritten and that which was written was largely destroyed, but it can be found in Heaven’s libraries and God has left enough for our present edification. Some recent histories downplay the influence of the Lollard movement in England, but this is revisionism. In fact,

the movement was large and influential. Henry Hargreaves observes: “Reading them [Wycliffe Scriptures] together in small groups, as the evidence at trials shows that they did, they were in danger of prosecution and even death, but read them they did, and the small and secret Bible-readings and meetings that they conducted proved a fertile breeding-ground for that Puritanism or nonconformity that has never since died out” (Hargreaves, “The Wycliffite Versions,” in *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, edited by G.H. Lampe, vol. II, “The West from the Fathers to the Reformation,” 1969, pp. 414-15). David Daniell adds: “The heart of Lollardy was its English Bible, only now at the start of the twenty-first century, beginning to be understood in some quarters as the massive, careful, complex, always developing achievement that it was” (Daniell, *The Bible in English*, 2003, p. 90).

1. After Wycliffe’s death the Lollards and other dissident believers continued to preach the Word of God and congregate together in fellowships to the extent possible under those circumstances.

The term “Lollard,” like the terms “Waldensian” and “Albigensian” and “Paulician,” was a catchall word that encompassed a wide variety of Christians who were opposed to Roman Catholic doctrine.

While there were Lollards who were pedobaptists and still held to some of Rome’s errors, others progressed farther in their spiritual understanding and were immersionists. This fact is commonly overlooked or denied by Protestant (and even some Baptist) historians today, but the evidence is clear. Following are three witnesses to the baptistic Lollards:

Historian John Foxe says one of the articles of faith among the Lollards was “that faith ought to precede baptism.” It is impossible to fit infant baptism into this principle, as an infant is incapable of exercising faith.

In his history of the Puritans, Daniel Neal says, “That the denial of the right of infants to baptism was a principle generally maintained among Lollards, is abundantly confirmed by the historians of those times” (Neal, *The History of the Puritans*, II, 1837, p. 354).

In a letter dated October 10, 1519, Erasmus gave this description of the Lollards in Bohemia: “... they own no other authority than the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament; they believe or own

little or nothing of the sacraments of the church; such as come over to their sect, must every one be baptized anew in mere water..." (Thomas Crosby, *History of the English Baptists*, 1738, I, pp. 14, 15). Thus Erasmus described the Lollards as Anabaptists.

2. The authorities in England persecuted the readers of the Wycliffe Scriptures. "This Bible provoked bitter opposition, and it became necessary for the people to meet in secret to read it, as they often did. Persecution did not begin at once, but it finally became widespread and bitter. Many suffered and it has been said that some, for daring to read the Bible, WERE BURNED WITH COPIES OF IT ABOUT THEIR NECKS" (Paris Marion Simms, *The Bible from the Beginning*, p. 161).

Many laws were passed against Bible believers, such as the following:

In 1401 the statue *De Heretico comburendo* was passed. This was the first English statute for burning heretics alive (though Bible-believing Christians had been burned before this), and it was not repealed until 1677, or 276 years later.

The Constitutions of Arundel

Thomas Arundel, Archbishop of Canterbury and a great hater of Wycliffe and his English Bible, called a Council at Oxford in 1407 "aiming to control preachers, books and the universities" (Daniell, *The Bible in English*, p. 75).

In 1408 the Council passed a number of laws toward this end. Called the *Constitutions of Arundel*, they were ratified later at St. Paul's Cathedral in London.

Article 7 made it illegal to translate or read the Scriptures in the English language without express permission of the Catholic authorities. The *Constitutions of Arundel* made this brash demand: "WE THEREFORE DECREE AND ORDAIN THAT NO MAN SHALL, HEREAFTER, BY HIS OWN AUTHORITY, TRANSLATE ANY TEXT OF HOLY SCRIPTURE INTO THE ENGLISH OR OTHER LANGUAGE by way of a book, pamphlet or tract, and that no book, pamphlet or tract of this kind be read, either recently composed at the time of the said John Wyclif, or since then, or that in future may be composed, in part or in whole, publicly or privily, under pain of the greater excommunication, until the said translation be

allowed by the ordinary of the place, or, if the case so require, by the council provincial” (Alfred Pollard, *Records of the English Bible*, 1911, pp. 80-81)).

In effect this was a complete ban against the translation or reading of the translated Scripture on the part of all English citizens, because no approval by a bishop or council was ever known to have been given for this activity.

Articles 6, 9, 10, and 11 further (1) required that the views of theological students be examined on a monthly basis; (2) forbade any preaching without a license (which was granted only after finding that the preacher was orthodox in his Catholic views); (3) forbade preachers or schoolmasters to discuss the sins of the clergy or the sacraments; (4) forbade all arguments over matters of faith outside of the universities.

Arundel’s Constitutions remained in force for one hundred and twenty-one years, until 1529.

Under this law diligent search was made by the authorities for copies of forbidden literature and much of it was destroyed.

In 1414 the legislature under King Henry V (1413-22) joined in asking for harder measures against the Lollards.

“After a suspected rising of the Lollards, a law was passed, declaring that ALL WHO READ THE SCRIPTURES IN THE MOTHER TONGUE SHOULD ‘FORFEIT LAND, CATEL, LIF, AND GOODS, FROM THEYR HEYRES [THEIR HEIRS] FOR EVER” (John Eadie, *History of the English Bible*, I, p. 89).

The “English sheriffs were forced to take an oath to persecute the Lollards, and the justices must deliver a relapsed heretic to be burned within ten days of his accusation. ... No mercy was shown under any circumstances” (Thomas Armitage, *A History of the Baptists*, 1890, I, pp. 323, 325).

Many of the Lollards were burned alive for their faith in the 1400s. Following are a few examples. In our *Advanced Bible Studies Series* course on Church History we list about 40 that were burned in the 15th century, but there were probably many more. Much of the record has not survived. Following are some examples:

The first religious dissident burned after Wycliffe’s death was

William Sawtree (Sautre), who was martyred in 1400. He was condemned as a heretic by Archbishop Thomas Arundel and ordered to be burned by King Henry IV. Two of his “heresies” were these: “That every priest and deacon is more bound to preach the word of GOD, than to say the canonical hours” and “that after the pronouncing of the sacramental words, the bread remaineth of the same nature that it was before.”

In 1409 a tailor named John Badbe was burned alive in a barrel (John Eadie, *The English Bible*, 1876, I, p. 87; Cushing Hassell, *History of the Church of God*, pp. 465, 66). Badbe was convicted as a heretic for believing “that the sacrament of the body of Christ, consecrated by the priest upon the altar, is not the true body of Christ, by virtue of the words of the sacrament; but that after the sacramental words spoken by the priests, the material bread does remain upon the altar.” When questioned about his faith, Badbe replied, “That if every host, consecrated at the altar, were the Lord’s body, then there were 20,000 gods in England; but he believed in one God Omnipotent.” Badbe was taken to Smithfield in London and “there, being put into an empty barrel, was bound with iron chains fastened to a stake, having dry wood put about him. As he was standing thus, it happened that the prince, the king’s eldest son, was there present; who, to save his life, counseled him, that he should speedily deny these dangerous opinions. Also Courtney, at that time chan-cellar of Oxford, informed him of the faith of holy church. In the mean season the prior of St. Bartholomew’s, in Smithfield, with all solemnity, brought the sacrament, with twelve torches borne before it, and so showed it to the poor man at the stake. Then demanding of him, how he believed in it? He answered, ‘That he knew well it was hallowed bread, and not God’s body.’ Hereupon the fire was put to him. When he felt the fire, he cried, ‘Mercy!’ (calling upon the Lord,) and so the prince immediately commanded to take away the tun, and quench the fire. The prince (his commandment being done,) asked him, if he would forsake heresy, and turn to the faith of holy church? Which thing if he would do, he should have goods enough; promising him also a yearly stipend out of the king’s treasury. But this valiant champion of Christ, neglecting the prince’s fair words, refused the offer of worldly promises, being more vehemently inflamed with the Spirit of God, than with any earthly desire. Whereupon the prince commanded him straight to be put again into the fire, and that he should not afterward look for any grace or favor. But as he

could be allured by no rewards, so was he affrighted at no torments, but persevered invincible to the end” (Foxye).

Thomas Bagley was burned at Smithfield in 1430. He had stated that if a priest made the consecrated wafer into God, he made a God that can be eaten by rats and mice. For expressing such biblical common sense, he was put to death.

At Christmas time in 1417, Sir John Oldcastle was roasted alive for his faith in the Word of God and his rejection of Rome’s authority (under the false charge of treason). Oldcastle was the Lord of Cobham, a famous and fearless knight, and a favorite of King Henry IV. He loved John Wycliffe and the Wycliffe doctrine and often stood by Wycliffe or other Lollard preachers in his armor to protect them. Oldcastle used his position to shield Lollard preachers, and he used his wealth to have copies of the Wycliffe Scriptures made for distribution. In spite of his open rejection of Roman Catholicism, Oldcastle was shielded by King Henry IV until his death in 1413, at which time Oldcastle’s Romanist enemies connived to destroy him. They falsely charged Oldcastle with plotting a rebellion against the new king and had him arrested and condemned to die as a traitor and a heretic. Brought to the place of punishment a few days before Christmas 1417, “having a cheerful countenance,” it was evident that the old warrior still carried a burden for the souls of the people. Prior to his brutal execution, he warned the people to obey the Holy Bible and to beware of false teachers, whose lives are contrary to Christ. He refused to allow a Catholic priest to minister to him, boldly declaring, instead, that he would confess his sins “to God only.” Falling down on his knees, he prayed that God would forgive his persecutors. This man, who had loved the Word of God and had caused it to be distributed among the people, was hung in chains and suspended over the fire to be roasted alive. As this barbarous execution proceeded, the hateful priests and monks reviled and cursed the poor man and did their best to prevent the people from praying for him. It was to no avail. The people loved the godly knight and they wept and prayed with him and for him. The last words which were heard before his voice was drowned by the roaring flames were “Praise God!” John Oldcastle has been depicted in many church histories as a traitor because that was what he was charged with, but from what we read in the ancient records, including John Foxye, we salute him as a victorious soldier of Jesus Christ and look forward to meeting him in Glory.

John Goose was burned at Tower Hill in 1474. He had been arrested and had abjured ten years earlier, but he repented of his abjuration and continued in the truth, sealing his confession with his life's blood. After Goose's final arrest, a sheriff in London, Robert Billesdon, took the condemned man to his home to plead with him to repent of his "errors." The steadfast believer refused and requested something to eat, saying "I eat now a good and competent dinner, for I shall pass a little sharp shower ere I go to supper." Thus, he was planning to eat his supper in Heaven, but before that, he had to go through the fire, which he described as "a little sharp shower." After he finished his meal, John Goose asked to be taken to the execution.

In 1494, 80-year-old Joan Boughton was burned to death at Smithfield. She was charged with holding eight heretical opinions derived from Wycliffe. Joan's daughter, Lady Young, widow of Sir John Young, a mayor of London, was also burned at the stake. She had accepted Christ and apostolic doctrine, but her husband remained a Catholic.

Many others suffered imprisonment in the Lollard's Tower and other places.

The Tower was located in Lambeth Palace, the London headquarters of the Archbishop of Canterbury. It faces the River Thames, across from the Parliament and Westminster Abby.

It was made into a prison in the early 15th century by Archbishop Henry Chichele.

Those imprisoned in the Tower were shackled in chains. The rings for the shackles could still be seen in the early 20th century.

In one three-year period (1428-31) 120 persons were imprisoned for Lollardy.

The Lollard's Tower was bombed on May 10, 1941, during World War II, and was "completely gutted." It has been rebuilt and today it houses apartments. When we had a private tour of Lambeth Palace in March 2003, our guide told us that she did not know what, if anything, still remains of the prison room. There is a photo in the official Lambeth Palace guide book that appears possibly to have been taken after World War II and that shows a corner of the prison room with the rings in the walls (*Lambeth Palace*, Warners

Midlands PLC: 1998, p. 11).

Many Lollards were branded and otherwise marked.

Many were marked for life as “heretics” by branding on the cheeks. “Their necks were tied fast to a post with towels, and their hands holden, that they might not stir; and so the hot iron was put to their cheeks. It is not certain whether branded with L for Lollard, or H for heretic, or whether it was only a formless print of iron” (Thomas Fuller, *Church History*, I, p. 164).

Others were forced to wear special clothes. Some were forced to wear a depiction of a fiery torch on their clothes during the rest of their lives as a reminder “that they deserved burning” and as a continual warning to others of the potential price of standing upon the Bible and rejecting Roman Catholic authority. To go into the public without this garment or with it covered meant death. “And, indeed, to poor people it was true,--put it off, and be burned; keep it on, and be starved: seeing none generally would set them on work that carried that badge about them” (Benjamin Evans, *Early English Baptists*, 1862, I, p. 23, f1).

The Scriptures were confiscated and burned

In 1410 about 200 copies of Wycliffe’s writings were publicly burned at Oxford, and that was only one occasion.

So many of the Wycliffe Bibles were destroyed that only about 20 copies of the Old Testament and 90 of the New Testament have survived of the 1380s edition (Daniell, *The Bible in English*, p. 66). A total of about 250 Wycliffe manuscripts have survived altogether, in spite of the fact that they were reproduced widely over a period of more than 140 years prior to the printing of the Tyndale New Testament.

The Forbidden Book -- “The Bible was worth more than life itself to many of these ancient Christians, and so it is today to those who understand its true value. The forbidden book was often read by night, and those who had not been themselves educated listened with eagerness to the reading of others; but to read it, and to hear it read, were alike forbidden. Copies of the New Testament were also borrowed from hand to hand through a wide circle, and poor people gathered their pennies and formed copartneries for the purchase of the sacred volume. Those who could afford it gave five

marks for the coveted manuscript (a very large amount of money in that day), and others in their penury gave gladly for a few leaves of St. Peter and St. Paul a load of hay. ... Some committed portions to memory, that they might recite them to relatives and friends. Thus Alice Colins was commonly sent for to the meetings, 'to recite unto them the Ten Commandments and the Epistles of Peter and James.' ... In 1429 Margery Backster was indicted because she asked her maid Joan to 'come and hear her husband read the law of Christ out of a book he was wont to read by night.' ... The means employed to discover the readers and possessors of Scripture were truly execrable in character. Friends and relations were put on oath, and bound to say what they knew of their own kindred. The privacy of the household was violated through this espionage; and husband and wife, parent and child, were sworn against one another. The ties of blood were wronged, and the confidence of friendship was turned into a snare in this secret service. Universal suspicion must have been created; no one could tell who his accuser might be, for the friend to whom he had read of Christ's betrayal might soon be tempted to act the part of Judas towards himself, and for some paltry consideration sell his life to the ecclesiastical powers" (John Eadie, *History of the English Bible*, I, pp. 91, 92, 93).

The story of the Scots Bible is an example of how the Wycliffe Bible had to be read in secret and in fear.

Murdoch Nisbet was a farmer of Hardhill in Ayrshire, which was a center of Lollardy. He possessed a Wycliffe Bible and in 1520 determined to make his own translation into Scots. He dug a vault below his farmhouse so that he could accomplish this work in secret away from the prying eyes of the persecuting authorities.

His manuscript was carefully preserved by his descendants through vicious persecution by the Scottish government that lasted well into the 17th century.

In 1893 this Scots Bible was purchased by the British Museum and it resides today in the British Library.

"Scots, the language of Robert Burns, did not survive ... but the story of Nisbet's making his New Testament is a demonstration of the passionate dedication of communities to Wycliffite Bible translations" (Daniell, *The Bible in English*, p. 106).

The persecutions continued right up to William Tyndale's day in the 16th century. The Lollard believers continued to be imprisoned, persecuted, and burned. In the *Way of Life Advanced Bible Studies* course on Church History we list 99 Christians who were burned for their faith in England between 1500 and 1532, and many others were imprisoned, beaten, and otherwise tormented.

Because of the bitter persecution in England following Wycliffe's death, multitudes of Christians were forced into exile, fleeing to the wilds of Scotland, Wales, and Ireland, to Germany, France, Spain, Portugal, Bohemia. As they moved from place to place, they carried with them the precious words of eternal life and in this manner the outlawed Scriptures spread even in the face of bitter persecution.

3. The preaching of the Word of God prepared the way for the Reformation in England and elsewhere. The groups of Christians who established their faith and practice upon the Wycliffe Bible continued to exist until the formation of the Church of England. The doctrine of the Lollards was still being proclaimed in England in 1529. The royal proclamation that year called upon the authorities to "destroy all heresies and errors commonly called Lollardies." As late as 1546, well into the Protestant Reformation, another proclamation by the English authorities forbidding the possession of Scriptures also mentioned the writings of Wycliffe.

4. John Wycliffe has been called the "MORNINGSTAR OF THE REFORMATION," but it was actually his Bible that fulfilled that role.

THE TYNDALE NEW TESTAMENT

The Tyndale New Testament of 1525 was the first English translation based on Greek and the first English New Testament to be printed. The Wycliffe Bible was based on Latin and published only in hand-written manuscripts. The King James Bible is an edition of Tyndale's masterly translation.

William Tyndale (c. 1494-1536) is therefore the most important name in the history of the English Bible and one of most important names in the history of the English people. And yet on a trip to England in 2003, I found that practically no one there knows who the man is.

TYNDALE'S TIMES

1. Tyndale was born to a time of great change and turmoil. It was a time of international travel and discovery. When he was a boy Columbus discovered America and Vasco da Gama sailed around the Cape of Good Hope to India, and the great era of world exploration had begun.

2. It was also a time of great persecution.

Shortly before Tyndale was born the Spanish Inquisition was established, and by the time Tyndale was a teenager, 8,800 had been burned to death and 90,000 imprisoned under the pope's Inquisitor General in Spain, Thomas de Torquemada.

As Tyndale grew to manhood, terrible persecutions were being poured out upon the Christians in Bohemia and Moravia and against the Waldensians in Italy and France. For example, when Tyndale was four, an army of 18,000 Catholics made war against the Waldensian Christians of Piedmont in Northern Italy, destroying entire towns and villages.

3. It was a time for printing.

In 1453, a mere four decades before Tyndale was born, Constantinople was overrun by the Muslims and the Greek scholars had fled to Western Europe with their valuable manuscripts, including copies of the Byzantine Greek New Testament, which had been preserved for 1,000 years through the Dark Ages.

The first book on movable type, a Latin Bible, had been printed in 1456.

By Tyndale's birth printing presses had been set up in London and in more than 120 cities of Europe.

Bibles in the common languages of the people had begun to be printed in 1488 with the publication of the Bohemian Bible, just a few years before Tyndale was born.

4. It was a time when England was still greatly bowed down by Roman Catholicism.

Catholicism was the state religion, and in those days, England was heavily taxed by Rome. In 1376 the English Parliament noted that the taxes paid in England to Rome amounted to five times as much

as those levied by the king (Hassell, *History of the Church of God*, 1886, p. 457).

The citizens of England were largely given over to idolatry, honoring the mass wafer as god and worshipping Catholic images that were set up at famous pilgrimage sites such as Our Lady of Walsingham and St. Anne of Buxton. Another image, the Rood of Grace at Boxley in Kent, was cleverly rigged to impress the worshippers by bowing its head, rolling its eyes, smiling and frowning! The people journeyed to these sites, kissed the feet of the idols, burned candles before them, and made offerings of money.

The Catholic priests controlled the people's lives from cradle to grave, claiming the power to save infants through their baptism, to prepare souls for death through extreme unction, and to redeem souls from purgatory through their masses.

Salvation was a commodity to be bought and sold. "The people relied 'on the merit of their own works' toward their justification, such as pilgrimages to images, kneeling, kissing, and cursing of them, as well as many other hypocritical works in their store of religion; there being marts or markets of merits, full of holy relics, images, shrines, and works of superstition, ready to be sold; and all things they had were called holy: holy cowls, holy girdles, holy pardons, holy beads, holy shoes, holy rules" (Evans, *Early English Baptists*, I, 1862, p. 28).

The hypocrisy of the ecclesiastical leaders was great. "Decency was thrown aside, and morality unknown. Brothels were kept in London for the especial use of the priesthood. The confessional was abused, and profligacy was all but universal" (Evans, pp. 28, 29).

The intellectual and moral state of the people under such conditions was almost beyond conception. "Ignorance, vice, and immorality of the worst kind, reigned all but universally" (Evans, p. 33).

The Catholic authorities forbade the translation and distribution of the Bible in English and kept the people ignorant of Scripture.

The priests declared it to be heresy to speak of the Holy Scriptures in English (Eadie, *History of the English Bible*, I, p. 81). In Tyndale's day, it was still a crime to translate or read the Bible in one's

mother tongue. This dated from Arundel's *Constitution* which was passed in 1408. A Catholic authority, Knyghton, a canon of Leicester, complained that to translate the Scriptures into English and thus lay it "open to the laity and to women who could read" was casting the Gospel pearl under the feet of swine. This was what Rome thought of providing the common man with the Word of God.

Ordinary people could not read Latin and therefore had no access to the Latin Vulgate.

Even the priests were ignorant. During one test of a group of priests in the early 1500s, nine did not know how many commandments were written on stone at Sinai; 33 did not know where these commandments were located in the Bible; and 34 did not know the author of the Lord's Prayer!

What Rome did allow to be translated into English was filled with heresy. The "Mirror of the Life of Christ" by Nicholas Love, which was supposed to contain excerpts from the N.T., actually contained Catholic mythology and exalted Mary above Christ!

The Popes of Tyndale's day were very powerful and very wicked.

Sixtus IV (1471-1484) established houses of prostitution in Rome.

Innocent VIII (1484-1492) had seven illegitimate children, whom he enriched from the church treasures.

Alexander VI (1492-1503) lived with a Spanish lady and her daughter, and reveled in the grossest forms of debauchery. "The accounts of some of the indecent orgies that took place in the presence of the pope and [his daughter] Lucrezia are too bestial for repetition" (William Kerr, *A Handbook on the Papacy*, pp. 228, 29). This pope had five children, and his favorite son, Caesar Borgia, murdered his brother and his brother-in-law.

Just a few years before Tyndale's birth, work had begun on the fabulous St. Peter's Basilica and parts of the 1,000-room Vatican palace, under the reign of Pope Nicholas V. The Pope was selling indulgences to pay for the extravagant project. An indulgence was a promise of the "remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sins" and it is imparted by the Pope from "the treasure of Christ and the saints."

WILLIAM TYNDALE'S EARLY LIFE

1. William Tyndale was born sometime between 1484 to 1494, the exact date not being known. Many older histories have c. 1484, while most newer ones have c. 1494.

2. His family was well to do and was involved in the cloth or wool business. Some of the branches of the Tyndale family had adopted the name Hitchens or Hutchens or Hychyns, and William Tyndale was also known by this name. His Oxford records have William Hychyns.

William had three brothers, two older (Richard and Edward) and one younger (John). Edward was “a considerable figure in the country” and was the Crown Steward for the Berkeley estate (Daniell, pp. 140, 141).

Many Tyndale women were daughters and heirs of knights. Another William Tyndale married a niece to the King of Bohemia, and their son, also William, was invited to become the king of Bohemia (though he declined).

3. Tyndale was born in the Cotswold area of Gloucestershire in western England toward Wales, “probably in one of the villages near Dursley (possibly Stinchcombe)” (Daniell, *The Bible in English*, p. 140).

This is a lovely area of rolling hills covered with sheep pastures and forests, with bubbling streams and gentle flowing rivers. Even today the area is rural and quaint, and many of the houses are ancient, and it is not difficult to imagine what it was like in Tyndale's day.

This was a place filled with Lollard and Waldensian teaching, and it is probable that the Tyndales were influenced. We know that by the time William Tyndale arrived at college, or soon thereafter, he had faith in Christ.

The Severn River which runs through this area is the depository of the River Avon, which in turn is the depository of the little River Swift. The latter is the river that runs near the Lutterworth church into which the ashes of John Wycliffe's bones were thrown in 1431 after they were disinterred and burned by the Roman Catholic authorities.

TYNDALE’S EDUCATION AND LIFE’S GOAL

1. Tyndale had a good education.

He attended Magdalen College in 1506. Magdalen was one of the dozen colleges that made up Oxford University at that time.

Tyndale was a brilliant student and obtained a BA in July 1512 and an MA in July 1515. He mastered eight languages and had partial knowledge of others, including Welsh. He was so skilled in these languages, “that whichever he might be speaking, you would think it to be his native tongue.” “He was later praised by the German scholar Hermann Buschius for his mastery of eight languages: Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Italian, Spanish, English and French, as well as German, which he seems to have been speaking when he met him” (Daniell, *The Bible in English*, p. 142).

Oxford University was then steeped in paganism and Romanism. No theology was studied until after the MA. Tyndale later testified that “in the universities they have ordained that no man shall look in the Scripture until he be nursed in heathen learning eight or nine years and armed with false principles with which he is clean shut out of the understanding of Scripture.”

2. Tyndale was probably ordained to the priesthood at St. Bartholomew the Great Church which is entered from Smithfield in London. The arched west entrance into the church, called the Smithfield Gate (c. 1300) can be seen in drawings of ancient martyrdoms. The church was built in the 12th century and became Anglican under Queen Elizabeth I.

3. Tyndale was converted to Christ either before or during his student years. Foxe tells us that while there “he read privately to some of the students and fellows of Magdalen college, in divinity; instructing them in the knowledge and truth of the scriptures; and all that knew him reputed him to be a man of most virtuous disposition, and of unspotted life” (Foxe, abridged, 1830, p. 252).

4. The historian John Foxe tells us that Tyndale was “singularly addicted to the study of the Scriptures.”

He yearned to see the Scriptures translated into English directly from the original Hebrew and Greek and to see the English Bible printed and made available to the common man. He knew that this was the only spiritual hope for England.

The Greek New Testament had been printed in 1516 soon after Tyndale graduated from Oxford, and it was translated and published in German by Martin Luther in 1522, when Tyndale was living at Little Sodbury and starting work on his English translation.

5. Upon leaving school in about 1521, Tyndale got a job as a tutor to the children of Sir John Walsh and family chaplain at **LITTLE SODBURY MANOR** in the lovely Cotswold's region of western England. He resided there for almost two years. It is a beautiful rural area with grass- and tree-covered rolling hills. It is sheep country.

The wealthy, well-connected Walshes (John and Anne) were friends with Tyndale's influential brothers Edward and John.

John Walsh was twice High Sheriff and had spent time at the king's court.

King Henry VIII spent a night at Little Sodbury with his second wife, Anne Boleyn.

Tyndale did some translation work at Little Sodbury and it is probable that he started work on the translation of the English Bible here. Tyndale's students were very young and he doubtless had much time for study. It is thought that he lived in the attic room, which would have been a quiet retreat. (I saw this room on a visit to Little Sodbury Manor in March 2003. Some parts of the ancient manor are still in much the same condition as they were in Tyndale's day a half millennium earlier. The Great Room, for example, has the same ceiling and fireplace and the large wooden table might be the same one that was in the house when Tyndale lived there. The current owner of Little Sodbury Manor graciously allowed us to take photos of the Great Room. It is here that Tyndale had discussions over dinner with visiting Catholic priests and prelates. It is perhaps in this room that the famous discussion was carried on, in which a priest said, "We only need the pope's laws," and Tyndale replied that he defied the pope and all his laws and that he intended to make the plowboy to know the Scriptures.)

While at the Little Sodbury Manor, Tyndale preached the Word of God. We know of two places where he preached.

He preached in a common place "called Saint Austen's Green,"

which was in front of the Abbey of St. Augustine in Bristol. In 1542 Henry VIII converted the 400-year-old Abbey into the Cathedral Church of the Holy and Undivided Trinity, and it remains an Anglican cathedral today. The place where Tyndale preached is called College Green today.

He also preached in the St. Adeline's Church, which was originally located on the ridge above Little Sodbury Manor, with a great view of the land for miles around. The church building was moved a couple of miles away in the 1800s to its current location. On a visit there in March 2003 a church member showed us around the building. When I asked him if he was born again, he replied in the negative and said that the church does not preach that message today.

Tyndale also debated Catholic priests who visited Little Sodbury.

One thing that he debated was the translation of the Scriptures into English. Many years later Tyndale described the way the Roman Catholic authorities looked upon this work: "Some of the papists say it is impossible to translate the Scriptures into English, some that it is not lawful for the layfolk to have it in the mother-tongue, some that it would make them all heretics" (William Tyndale, preface to *The Five Books of Moses*, cited from Schaff, *Church History*, VI, p. 726).

One day a priest replied to Tyndale, "We are better without God's laws than the pope's." Hearing that, Tyndale exclaimed: "I defy the Pope and all his laws. If God spare my life, ere many years I will cause a boy that driveth a plough shall know more of the Scriptures than thou doest."

Because of his preaching and his conflicts with the Romanists, Tyndale was called before a tribunal in 1522 and threatened for preaching "heresy." Tyndale later described this scene: "All the priests of the country were present the same day. ... When I came before the Chancellor, he threatened me grievously, and reviled me, and rated me as though I had been a dog; and laid to my charge whereof there could be none accuser brought forth, as their manner is not to bring forth the accuser; and yet, all the Priests of the country were there the same day" (Tyndale's Prologue to *Genesis*, 1530).

Because of these experiences, Tyndale came to understand that the

people would never make progress in the truth unless they had the Bible in their language: “A thousand books had they rather to be put forth against their abominable doings and doctrine, than that the Scripture should come to light. For as long as they may keep that down, they will so darken the right way with the mist of their sophistry, and so tangle them that either rebuke or despise their abominations, with arguments of philosophy, and with worldly similitudes, and apparent reasons of natural wisdom; and with wresting the Scriptures unto their own purpose, clean contrary unto the process, order, and meaning of the text; and so delude them in descanting upon it with allegories . . . that though thou feel in thine heart, and art sure, how that all is false that they say, yet couldst thou not solve their subtile riddles. WHICH THING ONLY MOVED ME TO TRANSLATE THE NEW TESTAMENT, BECAUSE I HAD PERCEIVED BY EXPERIENCE, HOW THAT IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO ESTABLISH THE LAY PEOPLE IN ANY TRUTH, EXCEPT THE SCRIPTURE WERE PLAINLY LAID BEFORE THEIR EYES IN THEIR MOTHER TONGUE, THAT THEY MIGHT SEE THE PROCESS, ORDER, AND MEANING OF THE TEXT: for else, whatsoever truth is taught them, these enemies of all truth quench it again . . . that is with apparent reasons of sophistry, and traditions of their own making; and partly in juggling with the text, expounding it in such a sense as is impossible to gather of the text itself” (Tyndale, preface to *The Five Books of Moses*). We see that Tyndale’s first rule of Bible interpretation was context.

Thus as a young man Tyndale dedicated his life to the fulfillment of the noble goal of producing an English Bible based on the Hebrew and Greek. To this end he suffered great privations, surrendered up to God the blessing of marriage and a settled family life, wandered from place to place in Europe to avoid the persecuting Roman authorities, all for the objective of endowing the English-speaking people with the eternal Word of God.

TYNDALE’S DOCTRINE

Though there is no evidence that William Tyndale was a Baptist at any point in his life, he was Protestant in doctrine and went even beyond this in some areas. Baptist historian John Christian summarizes these as taken from the 1831 edition of Tyndale’s *Works*:

1. What Tyndale believed about the church

He always translated the word *ecclesia* by the word congregation and held to a local conception of a church (Tyndale, *Works*, London, 1831, II, p. 13).

He taught that there are only two offices in the church, pastor and deacon.

He taught that elders should be married men (Tyndale, *Works*, 1831, I, p. 265).

He taught that true churches consist of believers.

He taught that there are no popes or priests in the church but a priesthood of believers. “Peter in the Greek signifieth a stone in English. This confession is the rock. Now is Simon ... called Peter, because of his confession. Whosoever then thiswise confesseth of Christ, the same is called Peter. Now is this confession come to all that are true Christians. Then is every Christian man and woman Peter” (Tyndale’s note on Matt. 16:18 in the first printed edition of Matthew).

2. What Tyndale believed about baptism and the Lord’s Supper

Baptism does not wash away sin. “It is impossible that the waters of the river should wash our hearts” (Tyndale, *Works*, London, 1831, I, p. 30).

Baptism is “a plunging into the water” (Tyndale, *Works*, I, p. 25).

Baptism, to avail, must be preceded by repentance, faith and confession (Tyndale, *Works*, III, p. 179). This is a denial of infant baptism, as it is impossible for a baby to repent and exercise faith and confession.

Baptism is a memorial that signifies the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. “The plunging into the water SIGNIFIETH that we die and are buried with Christ as concerning the old life of sin which is dead. And the pulling out again SIGNIFIETH that we rise again with Christ in a new life full of the Holy Ghost which shall teach us, and guide us, and work the will of God in us; as thou seest Rom. 6” (Tyndale, “The Obedience of All Degrees Proved by God’s Worde,” imprinted by Wyllyam Copland at London 1561; cited from Joseph Ivimey, *History of the English Baptists*, I).

The bread and wine of the Lord’s Supper are memorials only.

TYNDALE'S LIFE AND CHARACTER

1. We have only one description of Tyndale's daily habits, and that is what John Foxe wrote about his last years in Antwerp.

"First, he was a man very frugal, and spare of body, a great student, and earnest labourer in the setting forth of the Scriptures of God. He reserved or hallowed to himself two days in the week, which he named his pastime, Monday and Saturday. On Monday he visited all such poor men and women as were fled out of England, by reason of persecution, into Antwerp, and these, once well understanding their good exercises and qualities, he did very liberally comfort and relieve; and in like manner provided for the sick and diseased persons. On the Saturday, he walked round about the town, seeking every corner and hole, where he suspected any poor person to dwell; and where he found any to be well occupied, and yet over-burdened with children, or else were aged and weak, those also he plentifully relieved. And thus he spent his two days of pastime, as he called them. And truly his alms were very large, and so they might well be; for his exhibition that he had yearly, of the English merchants at Antwerp, when living there, was considerable, and that for the most part he bestowed upon the poor. The rest of the days of the week, he gave wholly to his book, wherein he most diligently travailed. When the Sunday came, then went he to some one merchant's chamber, or other, whither came many other merchants, and unto them would he read some one parcel of Scripture; the which proceeded so fruitfully, sweetly and gently from him, much like to the writing of John the Evangelist, that it was a heavenly comfort and joy to the audience, to hear him read the Scriptures: likewise, after dinner, he spent an hour in the same manner" (Foxe).

2. As a further testimony to Tyndale's life and character we will quote from a letter by his friend John Frith, which he wrote in 1534 to Sir Thomas More: "And Tyndale, I trust, liveth, well content with such a poor Apostle's life, as God gave His Son Christ, and His faithful ministers in this world, which is not sure of so many mites as ye be yearly of pounds; although I am sure that, for his learning and judgment in Scripture, he were more worthy to be promoted than all the Bishops in England. ... And as for his behaviour, it is such, that I am sure no man can reprove him of any sin; howbeit, no man is innocent before God, which beholdeth the heart" (Anderson, *Annals of the English Bible*, I).

3. As to his fear of God and zeal for the Scriptures and his fear of corrupting them in translation, Tyndale testified in his communication with Sir Thomas More: "For I call God to record against the day we shall appear before our Lord Jesus, to give a reckoning of our doings, that I never altered one syllable of God's

Word against my conscience; nor would this day, if all that is in the earth, whether it be pleasure, honor, or riches, might be given me.”

TYNDALE’S TRANSLATION WORK

1. Tyndale first attempted to do the Bible translation work in England.

He left Gloucestershire in 1523 and traveled to London to seek the help of Cuthbert Tunstall, bishop of the city. He had a letter of introduction from Sir John Walsh to Sir Henry Guildford, Controller and Master of the Horse for King Henry VIII (Daniell, *The Bible in English*, p. 142).

As we have seen, the *Constitutions* of 1408 forbade translation of the Scriptures into English. Tyndale was hoping to find protection for the work under the wing of the highest authorities.

As Tunstall had helped Erasmus with the first edition of Greek N.T., having consulted manuscripts for him, it appears that Tyndale was under the impression that the man might be receptive to the translation of the Bible into English.

Tyndale would have met Tunstall in Fulham Palace, the residence of the bishop of London in those days. Today Fulham Palace is a museum located in Bishop’s Park by the River Thames. I took photos of it on a research trip in April 2005.

Tyndale quickly learned that it was not possible to complete the translation work in England.

The authorities were not supportive. Tyndale said, “I understood that not only was there no room in my lord of London’s palace to translate the New Testament, but also there was no place to do it in all England.”

Further, no English printer would dare print a forbidden vernacular Bible.

King Henry VIII, who sat on the throne, had been awarded the title *Fidei Defensor* (“Defender of the Faith”) by Pope Leo X in 1521 for his rigorous defense of the papacy against Luther and others. (This title is still held by British monarchs, with “F.D.” still on all British coins.) Though Henry later broke from the Pope and founded the Church of England in 1534, he held to Catholic doctrine all his life.

“Henry continued to defend the principal teachings of the Roman Catholic Church, required all people in England and Wales to adhere to the Roman creed, and was quite willing to put to death men and women who opposed his will by embracing Protestant doctrine” (Sidney Houghton, *Sketches from Church History*, p. 113).

In London, a wealthy businessman, **HUMPHRIE MUNMOUTH**, a dealer in cloth draperies, befriended Tyndale.

He invited Tyndale to live with him, and Tyndale stayed there for about a year studying and preaching, supported by Munmouth.

He helped pay Tyndale’s way to Europe in about January 1524. Tyndale could not have known then that he would never see his beloved England again.

Munmouth continued to support Tyndale in Europe as he worked on the translation.

During the few months that Tyndale was in London before going to Europe, he preached at St. Dunstan’s in the West on Fleet Street. “St. Dunstan’s apparently had connections with the growing reform movement, with the Poyntz family and with merchants in the cloth trade, particularly Humphrey Monmouth...” (Daniell, *The Bible in English*, p. 142).

2. In early 1524 Tyndale left England and settled in Hamburg, Germany, to complete the translation. In May 1525 he traveled to Cologne to carry out the printing.

A Catholic spy named Cochlaeus learned about Tyndale’s efforts to contract a first printing of his New Testament in Cologne. Cochlaeus had heard certain whisperings that led him to believe that such a printing in English was ongoing, but he did not know the details. While visiting a printing establishment with the goal of printing something of his own, Cochlaeus heard some of the printers boast about a revolution that might shortly be coming to England. Inviting some of these printers to his lodging, Cochlaeus loosened their tongues with liquor and learned where the 3,000 copies of Tyndale’s first edition were being printed and made ready for clandestine transport to England.

Cochlaeus quickly reported this information to the authorities, and they forbade the printers to proceed with the work.

Tyndale was forewarned of this matter and was able to get away with most of the completed sheets of Matthew and escaped by boat up the Rhine River to the city of Worms, where the printing was completed. “A single set of printed sheets to Matthew 22, bound in the nineteenth century, is in the British Library” (Daniell, p. 143).

3. The first edition of the Tyndale New Testament was printed in late 1525 or early 1526 and began to be distributed in England in early 1526. It is probable that 6,000 copies of the first edition were printed in Worms. Martin Luther’s friend Spalatin says in his diary: “Buschius told me, that, at Worms, six thousand copies of the New Testament had been printed in English. The work was translated by an Englishman.”

The Tyndale New Testament was small, fitting easily into the hand of a grown man, so that it could be concealed. I have examined several copies of the Tyndale New Testament at various libraries. All of the small Scriptures that were copied or printed in the centuries when Rome ruled Europe are readily identifiable as missionary Bibles. The Waldensian and Anabaptist Bibles were also small, allowing preachers to transport them more clandestinely in those dark days when Rome sought to destroy all dissident missionary work. I examined a fascinating little 14th century Waldensian New Testament at Cambridge University Library in April 2005. It was deposited there in the 17th century by Samuel Morland, Oliver Cromwell’s ambassador to the Waldenses.

The first Tyndale New Testament contained cross-references and was intended for study.

The original prologue printed at Cologne was not included with the completed New Testament, but was printed later as a doctrinal tract, “The Pathway to Holy Scripture.” It had three parts: (1) an explanation of why the Bible should be translated into common languages, (2) an explanation of the law and the gospel, faith and works, (3) and teaching on the sinful nature of man. Following are some excerpts from this tract:

The Bible should be translated into the common tongues of the people:
“... for who is so blind to ask, why light should be showed to them that walk in darkness, where they cannot but stumble, and where to stumble, is the danger of eternal damnation; either so despiteful that he would envy any man (I speak not his brother) so necessary a thing...”

Men are sinful and condemned: “Yet are we full of the natural poison ... our nature is to do sin, as is the nature of a serpent to sting...”

Salvation is through God’s grace and the blood of Christ: “...when the gospel is preached to us, he openeth our hearts, and giveth us grace to believe and putteth the spirit of Christ in us, and we know him as our father most merciful ... the blood of Christ hath obtained all things for us of God.”

Salvation by grace results in self-condemnation and all glory to God: “With the law he condemneth himself and all his deeds, and giveth all the praise to God.”

4. Almost immediately, copies of Tyndale’s small treasure began to be smuggled into England from the European continent, hidden in bales of merchandise, and then distributed clandestinely.

The first copies arrived in England in January 1526. It was the dead of winter but this volume was destined to warm many hearts. Condit tells us that the way having been prepared by the Wycliffe Scriptures, “the people received these newly printed Testaments joyfully, but, from necessity, secretly” (Condit, *The History of the English Bible*, p. 104).

The New Testaments were smuggled inside of bales of cloth, in barrels or casks of wine or oil, in containers of grain, in flour sacks, in the false sides or bottoms of chests, and in other ingenious ways.

5. The Catholic authorities were quick to label Tyndale’s translation heretical and ordered all copies confiscated and burned.

Cardinal Wolsey demanded that a diligent search be made for copies of it in London, Cambridge, and Oxford. Those who were found to have copies were arrested.

On February 11, 1526, the first pile of Scriptures was burned in London, under the approving eye of Cardinal Wolsey. A description of this scene reminds us of the seventeenth chapter of Revelation: “The Cardinal had a scaffold made on the top of the stairs for himself, with six and thirty Abbots, mitred Priors, and Bishops, and he, in his whole pomp, mitred, which [Robert] Barnes [in a sermon] had denounced, sat there enthroned! His Chaplains and Spiritual Doctors, in gowns of damask [SCARLET-colored silk or linen] and satin, and he himself in PURPLE [See Rev. 17:4]! And

there was a new pulpit erected on the top of the stairs, for Fisher, the Bishop of Rochester, to preach against Luther and Dr. Barnes; and great baskets full of books, standing before them within the rails, which were commanded, after the great fire was made before the Rood of Northern, (or large crucifix at the north gate of St. Paul's), there to be burned; and these heretics after the sermon, to go three times round the fire, and cast in their faggots" (Anderson, *Annals of the English Bible*, I, p. 106).

The Bishop of London, Cuthbert Tunstall, was very zealous against Tyndale and his English New Testament. In a proclamation issued on October 24, 1526, he said that this New Testament was created by "many children of iniquity" who were "blinded through extreme wickedness," and he predicted that if the spread of the New Testament among the people were not stopped "without doubt" it would "contaminate and infect the flock committed unto us, with most deadly poison and heresy." Tunstall oversaw the burning of Tyndale's New Testaments on October 27, 1526, at St. Paul's Cathedral.

Diligent search was made from house to house for copies of the source of this "deadly poison and heresy." Writing in January 1527, the ambassador of King Henry VIII to the Netherlands said that copies of the Tyndale N.T. were being burned "daily" in England (Anderson, *Annals of the English Bible*, I, p. 122). Tunstall's chaplain wrote of "many hundreth burned both here and beyond the sea" (Daniell, p. 144).

Thousands of copies of Tyndale's work were burned. So thorough and fierce were these persecutions, that only two complete copies of the first edition of the Tyndale New Testament exist today of the 3,000-6,000 that were printed. One is at the British Library (lacking only the title page) and one is in the Stuttgart Landesbibliothek (the latter, discovered in 1996, is the only surviving copy containing the title page). Another copy at the St. Paul's Cathedral Library lacks the title page and 70 leaves.

By 1528, the prisons were filled with citizens whose only "crime" was that of reading the New Testament in English.

One of those who were arrested was Humphrie Munmouth, the man who had assisted Tyndale.

He was imprisoned in the London Tower "on suspicion of heresy"

and charged with assisting “those who are translating the Scriptures into English,” of “subscribing to the said New Testament,” and of “having said that faith alone is sufficient to save a man” (D’Aubigne, *History of the Reformation*, V, p. 386). From this it appears that Munmouth was still assisting Tyndale financially.

Munmouth was later released, and when he died in November 1537, he left a large gift for three gospel preachers, refused to leave any of his inheritance for the saying of Catholic masses, and commended his soul unto Christ Jesus, “my Maker and Redeemer, in whom, and by the merits of whose blessed passion, is all my whole trust of clean remission and forgiveness of my sins.”

Another of those arrested was Tyndale’s own brother, John. He was charged with distributing Tyndale’s Testaments and books in London and was fined heavily and forced to ride through the city sitting backwards on a horse, with pages from the New Testament pinned to his clothes.

In February 1529, the first religious dissident was burned for importing a copy of Tyndale’s New Testament. Thomas Hitton was captured in Kent and charged with preaching and with importing a copy of the Tyndale N.T. He was burned at the stake at Smithfield.

In those days, as the name suggests, Smithfield was a large field that was a popular gathering place for commerce and amusement. Many believers were burned here up unto the days of King James I.

Today a small park marks the place where the English government burned nonconformists. There is a plaque on a wall that mentions this. Smithfield was (and still is) bordered on one side by St. Bartholomew the Great church, where Tyndale was probably ordained. The arched entrance (c. 1300) called the Smithfield Gate, which still exists today, can be seen in ancient martyrologies in the background of some of the old drawings of the Smithfield burnings. In Tyndale’s day it was Catholic, but since Queen Elizabeth I’s day it has been Anglican.

Not being satisfied with the destruction of Tyndale’s New Testaments in England itself, Thomas Wolsey and others resolved to search for his books in Europe.

In February 1526, King Henry VIII and Wolsey addressed letters to

various authorities in Antwerp, urging them to pursue and destroy all copies of Tyndale's New Testament.

Printers were threatened, and at least one, Christopher Endhoven, was arrested in Antwerp. He died in a prison in London, his crime having been the printing and shipping of English Bibles.

About this time an attempt by the Catholic authorities in England to destroy Tyndale New Testaments backfired and resulted in the publication of even more copies. A plan was devised to purchase great quantities of the Tyndale New Testament in Europe and destroy them before they entered circulation. Bishop Cuthbert Tunstall, already mentioned, played a key role in this. Knowing how eagerly Tunstall yearned to destroy Tyndale's work, an enterprising merchant named Augustine Packington conceived of a plan that would allow Tyndale to pay off his debts while increasing the publication of more New Testaments. After gaining Tyndale's approval of the plan, Packington approached Bishop Tunstall when he was on a visit to Antwerp and offered to sell him an entire printing of Tyndale's New Testaments for a large sum of money. Tunstall fell right into the little "trap." Though that batch of unbound New Testament leaves was destroyed, the money paid by Tunstall ended up in Tyndale's hands so that he was able to pay off his debts and have enough left over to print even more copies than those that were burned! It was one step backwards, but two steps forward. When Tunstall later inquired as to where Tyndale got the money to print so many more New Testaments so quickly, he was told that it was from him!

6. Tyndale settled in Antwerp by 1528 and began work on the Old Testament. He was assisted now by his friend John Frith, who he had led to Christ during his student days at Cambridge. Frith had been forced to flee England in about 1527 because of the persecution.

7. In late 1528, Tyndale sailed to Hamburg and suffered shipwreck on the way. The only authority for this is the second edition of Foxe (1570), and it has often been doubted by historians and biographers; but I see no reason to doubt it. Foxe was writing only a short time after the events, and unless there is clear evidence that he was wrong in some point we see no reason to doubt him. Foxe says Tyndale lost all of his books and writings in the shipwreck. Tyndale lived in Hamburg through most of 1529 in the house of a

widow and completed the five books of Moses.

8. After this Tyndale returned to Antwerp, where he lived until his arrest.

TYNDALE'S OTHER WRITINGS

1. Tyndale wrote many profitable books, including “The Revelation of Antichrist,” “The Supplication of Beggars,” “The Obedience of a Christian Man,” “and “How Christian Rulers Ought to Govern.”

2. In May 1528 Tyndale published his masterly defense of justification by faith without works entitled A Treatise of Justification by Faith Only, otherwise called, The Parable of the Wicked Mammon. This was a direct assault upon Rome’s false gospel. Tyndale taught that good works, though important, must flow from true faith, as fruit comes from a vine. He showed how that an unscriptural Romanist emphasis upon works leads only to superstition.

3. In October 1528, Tyndale published The Obedience of a Christian Man. “Enemies were asserting that the reformers throughout Europe were encouraging sedition and teaching treason. Tyndale wrote to declare for the first time the two fundamental principles of the English reformers: the supreme authority of Scripture in the Church, and the supreme authority of the king in the state. ... Tyndale makes many pages of his book out of Scripture, and he is scalding about the corruptions and superstitions in the [Catholic] Church. ... Contrasted with the New Testament Church and faith, he describes the sufferings of the people at the hands, especially, of monks and friars, though the whole hierarchy, as he sees it, from the pope down, is guilty of ‘selling for money what God in Christ promiseth freely’” (Daniell, *The Bible in English*, p. 147).

4. In 1530 Tyndale published The Practice of Prelates: Whether the King’s grace may be separated from his queen because she was his brother’s wife, in which he boldly described the Pope as ivy, which climbs up a tree and gradually saps the strength of the tree and kills it. The tree was the English nation. “Practice” here refers to the older meaning of scheming and trickery. This tract shows Tyndale’s excellent understanding of church history.

TYNDALE'S IMPRISONMENT AND DEATH

1. Tyndale had been hunted the entire time he was in Europe.

These attempts were increased in 1531, at which time Henry VIII was fiercely desirous of capturing and destroying Tyndale. Various individuals were commissioned to seize the Translator, or to attempt to entice him back to England. "His anxiety to seize the man, or allure him into the kingdom, will be found to harmonise with the growing ferocity of his character" (Christopher Anderson, *Annals of the English Bible*, I, p. 267).

In spite of these diligent efforts to capture Tyndale, God continued to hide him from his persecutors. His work on earth was not finished, and nothing can destroy the child of God unless and until God allows it.

2. The last thing that Tyndale wrote and published prior to his imprisonment was his second address to the Christian reader that was appended to the new edition of his New Testament that was published in 1534:

"Moreover, I take God, which alone seeth the heart, to record to my conscience, beseeching Him that my part be not in the blood of Christ, if I wrote of all that I have written, throughout all my books, aught of an evil purpose, of envy or malice to any man, or to stir up any false doctrine or opinion in the Church of Christ; or to be author of any sect; or to draw disciples after me; or that I would be esteemed, or had in price, above the least child that is born; save only of pity and compassion I had, and yet have, on the blindness of my brethren, and to bring them into the knowledge of Christ; and to make every one of them, if it were possible, as perfect as an angel of heaven; and to weed out all that is not planted of our heavenly Father; and to bring down all that lifteth up itself against the knowledge of the salvation that is in the blood of Christ.

"Also, my part be not in Christ, if mine heart be not to follow and live according as I teach; and also, if mine heart weep not night and day for mine own sin, and other men's--beseeching God to convert us all, and to take His wrath from us, and to be merciful as well to all other men, as to mine own soul--caring for the wealth of the realm I was born in, for the King, and all that are thereof, as a tender-hearted mother would do for her only son.

"As concerning all I have translated, or otherwise written, I beseech all men to read it for that purpose I wrote it: even to bring them to the knowledge of the Scripture. And as far as the Scripture approveth it, so far to allow it; and if in any place the Word of God disallow it, then to refuse it, as I do before our Saviour Christ and His congregation.

And where they find faults, let them shew it me, if they be nigh, or write to me, if they be far off; or write openly against it and improve it; and I promise them, if I shall perceive that their reasons conclude, I will confess mine ignorance openly.”

3. Tyndale was arrested in May 1535 in Antwerp. By that time he had completed a large portion of the Old Testament (Genesis to 2 Chronicles and the book of Jonah).

For about a year prior to May 1535 Tyndale had been staying in the home of an English businessman named Thomas Poyntz, a friend of the Word of God. He was the son of Sir Robert Poyntz of Iron Acton, Gloucestershire, where Tyndale had grown up; and the Lady of Sir John Walsh at Little Sodbury Manor, where Tyndale had been tutor, was from another side of Poyntz family that resided in Essex.

A young Catholic man named Henry (also called Harry) Phillips was hired, probably by bishops in England, to snare Tyndale.

Phillips was a scoundrel. Having been entrusted with money by his father to give to someone in London, Phillips had gambled it away. After this he fled abroad and hired himself out to entrap Tyndale.

He had met and befriended the translator, pretending to be a friend of the Reformation and to have an interest in translation. A Catholic Cistercian monk named Gabriel Donne (or Dunne), of Stratford Abbey near London, was posing as Phillips' servant and was probably the actual leader of the little entrapment party. (Some biographers have claimed that Donne did not assume this position of servant to Phillips, but John Foxe, contemporary with those events, said Donne took this position, and Christopher Anderson's research on this, at least in the mind of this writer, is conclusive. Foxe got his information about Tyndale's betrayal directly from Thomas Poyntz, in whose house Tyndale had been staying prior to his arrest. Poyntz was Tyndale's true friend and got himself into deep trouble for trying to help Tyndale after his imprisonment.)

Tyndale's arrest happened after this fashion.

Just hours before the betrayal, the wicked Phillips borrowed forty shillings from Tyndale, knowing he would not have to repay it. Phillips lied to Tyndale, claiming that he had lost his purse during a journey.

Phillips invited Tyndale to be his guest for a meal, but the gracious and unsuspecting Bible translator protested that he, instead, would provide the meal at his expense and that Phillips should be his guest.

Phillips agreed and at the appointed time when he arrived to meet Tyndale, he had officers stationed outside the house awaiting his signal to arrest the man of God. Phillips met Tyndale at the door and pretended that he was ready to go to dinner. When they left the house, they had to walk down a little pathway to the road. The taller Phillips insisted on walking behind Tyndale, and as they reached the road Phillips pointed down to the Bible translator. This was the prearranged signal for Tyndale to be seized by the officers of Charles V, emperor of the Holy Roman Empire and a bitter opponent of the Reformation. (Charles V's aunt was the Catherine who had just been cruelly divorced by her husband, England's King Henry VIII!)

Tyndale was first held at Antwerp and then transported about 24 miles away to Vilvoorde, a few miles from Brussels, and imprisoned in the castle there. He was convicted of heresy and condemned to die under the laws of the inquisition.

The old castle is no longer in existence. It was torn down long ago and some of the stones were used to construct the (now abandoned) prison that stands in its place.

On a visit there in March 2003 I saw the site of the old castle. The River Seine, into which Tyndale's ashes were thrown following his execution, is a narrow and polluted body of water that flows in front of the prison. That this is the actual site of the old castle is witnessed by the fact that Castle Street ("Kasteel Straat") dead-ends at the river just across from the prison. The modern bridge over the river is a little ways from this street. There is a small museum in Vilvoorde attached to the oldest Protestant church in the town dedicated to the memory of Tyndale, and it contains a large model of the castle and a near life-size model of a prison room (located one floor beneath the museum and accessed by a small stairway at the back of the main museum room), as well as other treasures such as two old line drawings of the castle and portraits of the two chief persecutors who examined and tried Tyndale. There is also a memorial to Tyndale in Vilvoorde. It is about 12 feet tall and located in a park named Tyndale Park.

Carved into the stone monument are the words “To the memory of the Englishman William Tyndale.” The plaque on the monument says in four languages: “William Tyndale who suffered martyrdom under Spanish rule on Oct. 6th 1536, was strangled and burnt at Vilvorde; among his last words were these: ‘Lord, open the eyes of the king of England.’ This prayer was answered within a year by the issue under royal authority of the whole Bible in English. This memorial was erected by friends of the Trinitarian Bible Society of London and of the Belgian Bible Society, Oct. 1913.”

4. Tyndale was imprisoned in a lonely, inhospitable prison cell for 16 months, which encompassed a full winter.

The long winter was cold and difficult, and the translator was sick. He wrote the following pitiful letter from the prison (discovered in Belgian archives in the 19th century), beseeching an authority to allow him to have some warm clothes:

“I entreat your lordship, and that by the Lord Jesus, that if I am to remain here during the winter, you will request the Procureur to be kind enough to send me from my goods which he has in his possession, a warmer cap, for I suffer extremely from cold in the head, being afflicted with a perpetual catarrh, which is considerably increased in this cell. A warmer coat also, for that which I have is very thin: also a piece of cloth to patch my leggings. My overcoat is worn out, as also are my shirts. He has a woollen shirt of mine, if he will be kind enough to send it. I have also with him leggings of thicker cloth for putting on above; he also has warmer caps for wearing at night. I wish also his permission to have a lamp in the evening, for it is wearisome to sit alone in the dark.

“But above all, I entreat and beseech your clemency to be urgent with the Procureur that he may kindly permit me to have my Hebrew Bible, Hebrew Grammar, and Hebrew Dictionary, that I may spend my time with that study.

“And in return, may you obtain your dearest wish, provided always that it be consistent with the salvation of your soul. But if, before the end of the winter, a different decision be reached concerning me, I shall be patient, abiding the will of God to the glory of the grace of my Lord Jesus Christ, whose Spirit, I pray, may ever direct your heart. Amen” (Andrew Edgar, *The Bibles of England*, 1889, pp. 66-69).

During the first months of his imprisonment, Tyndale was challenged by the Catholic authorities and scholars at the University of Louvain, and an extensive discussion was conducted through meetings with Tyndale at the castle and by letter. Foxe says, “There was much writing, and great disputation to and fro,

between him and them of the University of Louvain; in such sort, that they all had enough to do, and more than they could well wield, to answer the authorities and testimonies of the Scripture, whereupon he, most pithily, grounded his doctrine.”

The main things disputed at Tyndale’s examination and trial were the sole authority of the Bible and justification by faith without works. In his account of the trial, which was published in 1550, Latomus said that Tyndale emphasized that “faith alone justifies before God.” Tyndale wrote a book by that title in his defense during the examination and trial.

Another thing that Tyndale emphasized was that “the key to the understanding of Scripture is salvation.” Thus Tyndale testified to his accusers that they did not understand the Scripture properly because they were not born again. It will be interesting in eternity to see what fruit that powerful testimony bore among his listeners.

Another subject disputed was the translation of the Scripture into the vernacular languages, to which Rome was bitterly opposed.

During his imprisonment, it is said that Tyndale converted the jail keeper, the keeper’s daughter, and other members of his household. The rest that were in the castle, and conversant with Tyndale, reported of him, “that if he were not a good Christian man, they could not tell whom to trust: and the Procurator-General, the Emperor’s attorney, being there, left this testimony of him, that he was ‘*Homo doctus, pius, et bonus*’—a learned, pious, and good man” (Christopher Anderson, *Annals of the English Bible*, I, pp. 517, 18).

7. On the morning of October 6, 1536, Tyndale was led forth to the place of execution.

He was taken outside the walls of the castle and across the river. “The gates of the prison rolled back, a procession crossed the foss and the bridge, under which slept the waters of the Senne, passed the outward walls, and halted without the fortifications. ... On arriving at the scene of punishment, the reformer found a numerous crowd assembled. The government had wished to show the people the punishment of a heretic, but they only witnessed the triumph of a martyr” (J.H. Merle d’Aubigne, *History of the Reformation*).

Tyndale was tied to a stake, strangled, and his body was burned. His suffering was over. For more than 460 years, he has been enjoying his reward in Glory in the presence of his Savior in the most complete comfort imaginable! And yet his earthly labors, sacrifice, and suffering continue to bear sweet fruit in this world.

Tyndale was condemned and burned on the authority of the Roman Catholic clergy. Hall's *Chronicle* of 1548 contained the following information (we have modernized the spelling): "This year in the month of September William Tyndale otherwise called Hitchens was *by the cruelty of the clergy of Louvain* condemned and burned in a town beside Brussels in Brabant called Vilvorde" (cited from Westcott, *History of the English Bible*, p. 172). After riding through Vilvorde in 1550, Roger Ascham, tutor to Princess Elizabeth, wrote that Tyndale was put to death "at the town's end in a notable solemn place of execution..." (David Daniell, *The Bible in English*, p. 156).

8. At his death, Tyndale prayed, "Lord, open the king of England's eyes." Though we have no evidence that Henry VIII was ever converted, we do know that soon after this the Tyndale Bible received official recognition under Henry, and Henry's successor, Edward VI, was a friend of the Reformation.

The king was convinced by his Vicar General, Thomas Cromwell, to authorize the printing of the Matthew's Bible just months after the death of Tyndale. The Matthew's Bible (edited anonymously by John Rogers, who, like Tyndale, was martyred for his faith) was at least two-thirds the work of Tyndale. The Matthew's Bible even featured a prologue to the book of Romans written by Tyndale. This Bible also featured the initials of Tyndale nearly two and a half inches high at the end of Malachi.

Tyndale's Bible also gained royal approval under the form of the Great Bible. It was ordered that a copy of the Great Bible be placed in every parish church in England.

Thus, by God's sovereign hand, the fickle king authorized the publication of the very Bible he had so hated and persecuted.

9. It is important to understand that Tyndale did not live to see most of the fruit from his labors. He lived and labored by faith. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1). The Scripture that he labored and

sacrificed so much to translate was the very source of his faith (Rom. 10:17). “Every one of the thousands of English versions round the world goes back to Tyndale’s fundamental work in Worms and Antwerp. His was a dazzling achievement. Of its success he knew nothing. He worked in faith, the existential faith which is the business of getting up and doing it. As he noted in the Prologue to *The Obedience of a Christian Man*, faith in the God of the Bible is huge in its effects” (Daniell, *The Bible in English*, p. 156).

TYNDALE’S INFLUENCE

1. William Tyndale’s translation was the basis for several revisions, chiefly, the Coverdale Bible, the Matthew’s Bible, the Great Bible, the Bishop’s Bible, and the Geneva Bible, culminating in the King James Bible of 1611.

2. A large percentage of Tyndale’s words remain in the KJV.

In the first epistle of John, nine-tenths of the King James Bible is from Tyndale. In the book of Ephesians, the percentage is five-sixths. “These proportions are maintained throughout the entire New Testament” (Ira Maurice Price, *The Ancestry of Our English Bible*, p. 251).

In 1998, a computer study was done on 18 carefully selected portions of the Bible, comparing the King James with the Tyndale. The authors of the study were Jon Nielson and Royal Skousen. They concluded that 83% of the King James Bible was contributed by Tyndale (Nielson and Skousen, “How Much of the King James Bible Is William Tyndale’s,” *Reformation*, 3, 1998, pp. 49-74).

Behind the statistics is that immeasurable feeling that KJV’s rhythm, vocabulary and cadence, which can be so exquisite and so direct, has a root in an essence of the English language. The cause of that is Tyndale’s genius” (David Daniell, *The Bible in English*, p. 448).

Thus, every person who has been blessed by a sound English Bible during the past four and a half centuries owes a large debt to the humble translator who was faithful unto death.

3. Tyndale gave the English people a Bible that is not only accurate but also beautiful. Tyndale was writing for God, first, and for the

ploughboy, second, and the result was wonderful. It still has a sweet, clear, powerful feel to it even almost half a millennium later! Much of the short, pithy, powerful language that characterizes the King James Bible can be traced back to William Tyndale. Consider the following example:

“And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me” (Gen. 22:12).

4. The miracle of what Tyndale accomplished is evident by considering the state of the English language in his day. “The work of Tyndale ... was done ... when the English language was a poor thing indeed, almost dead at the bottom of the pond. In 1526, a few local documents were beginning to be expressed in English. The language of government, the professions and religion was Latin: the new humanist Latin was a fine vehicle for any thoughts above the mundane. What English prose there was tried for an ornamented and heavily subordinated wandering line in vocabulary that was partly Saxon, heavily Norman-French, and strongly Latinized. ... Tyndale made for the Bible not only a strong direct short prose line, with Saxon vocabulary in a basic Saxon subject-verb-object syntax, but also showed a range of English styles which, coming out of the 1530s, astonishes the knowledgeable reader. NO ONE ELSE WAS WRITING ENGLISH LIKE THIS IN THE 1530s” (David Daniell, *The Bible in English*, p. 136).

5. Through his Bible translation, Tyndale standardized the English language and wielded a greater linguistic influence than Shakespeare. “Tyndale gave to English not only a Bible language, but a new prose. England was blessed as a nation in that the language of its principal book, as the Bible in English rapidly became, was the fountain from which flowed the lucidity, suppleness and expressive range of the greatest prose thereafter” (Daniell, *William Tyndale*, p. 116).

6. Countless expressions that are common to the English language were coined by Tyndale, such as “let there be light”; “fight the good fight”; “filthy lucre”; “eat, drink and be merry”; “a prophet has no honor in his own country”; “ye of little faith”; “signs of the times”; “a man after his own heart”; “am I my brother’s keeper”; “a law unto themselves”; “the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak”; “the powers that be”; “the salt of the earth”; to mention but a few.

7. The Tyndale Bible literally transformed the nation of England. Describing 17th century England, Christopher Hill wrote: “For most men and women the Bible was their point of reference in all their thinking. ... The Bible was the source of virtually all ideas; it supplied the idiom in which men and women discussed them” (*The English Bible and the Seventeenth-Century Revolution*, p. 34).

The Tyndale Bible was read widely. In 1537 or 1538, Thomas Swynnerton noted in his handbook of rhetoric (not a religious tract): “Every man hath a Testament in his hand.”

The excitement and change that was wrought in British society by the distribution of the first printed English Bible is described by John Foxe. “Everybody that could, bought the book or busily read it or got others to read it to them if they could not themselves, and divers more elderly people learned to read on purpose. And even little boys flocked among the rest to hear portions of the holy Scripture read.”

The Tyndale Bible was read aloud to groups large and small, in churches, homes, and even in public places. John Strype speaks of the interest excited by those old Bibles. “It was wonderful to see with what joy this book of God was received, not only among the learned sort, but generally all England, over, among all the vulgar and common people; and with what greediness the Word of God was read, and what resort to places where the reading of it was! Every body that could, bought the book, or busily read it, or got others to read it to them, if they could not themselves. Divers more elderly people learned to read on purpose; and even little boys flocked, among the Rest, to hear portions of the Holy Scripture read” (Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials*, 1816).

The services of the Church of England called for the New Testament to be read through, aloud and in English, three times a year, the Old Testament once, and the Psalms (read or sung) every month.

The Tyndale Bible was printed by the millions.

Between 1525 and 1640, printed English Bibles and parts numbered, “at a modest estimate, over two million. ... England had far more Bibles than Germany” (Daniell, *The Bible in English*, pp. 121, 129). This was for a population of only about six million. Just in Shakespeare’s lifetime, a mere 52 years, there were a whopping

211 editions of the English Bible or New Testament.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, more than 1,200 editions were printed, largely of the KJV.

These figures don't begin to describe the breath of the Bible's influence in past centuries, for it is impossible to give the statistics for the Bible's influence through preaching and reading, through quotations in newspapers and magazines and books, and through the publication of Scripture portions. The *Soldier's Pocket Bible*, for example, which was printed in large quantities in England and America up to the end of the American Civil War, contained 150 Bible verses.

Multitudes of commoners were motivated to learn to read and were thus lifted out of illiteracy by their enthusiasm to study the Bible in their own tongue.

Consider the story of William Maldon of Newington. He was a young man during the reign of Henry VIII when some men in his town bought a Tyndale New Testament and would read it on Sundays in the back of the church. Many gathered around to hear "the glad and sweet tidings of the gospel," and William joined them. His father, a staunch Roman Catholic, forbade him to do this and forced him to listen to the unintelligible Latin mass. William said, "This grieved me very much, and thus did he fetch me away divers times." William determined to learn to read English so that he could read the Bible for himself, which he did. He obtained an English primer and studied diligently and soon he pooled his money together with that of his father's apprentice Thomas Jeffary and purchased a Tyndale New Testament. They kept it hidden in the bedstraw and read from it as often as possible. When his father found that he was persisting in reading Scripture, he beat him often and finally tried to kill him by strangling him. Left for dead, William was rescued by his mother and sister, though he said that "I think six days after my neck grieved me with the pulling of the halter" (Alfred Pollard, *Records of the English Bible*, 1911, pp. 128-71).

Even people who could not read loved the Tyndale Bible and memorized large portions of it. Consider the following examples given by David Daniell: "There can be found, in John Foxe and elsewhere, accounts of the thoroughness of the Bible knowledge of often the humblest men and women: men and women who often

could not read. Rawlins White was a Cardiff fisherman burned in 1555. He was illiterate, but in Edward VI's reign he yearned to study the Bible. He sent one of his children to school to learn to read English (an indication that his native tongue was Welsh). The boy would read a portion of the Bible to his father every night, after supper. White would commit this to memory, so successfully that, as Foxe reports, when someone made a Scripture reference he could cite the book, the leaf and the very sentence. Similarly, John Maundrel, who was burned in Salisbury in Mary's reign, carried a Tyndale New Testament everywhere, though he could not read. When he met anyone that could read, his book was always ready. He could recite by heart most places of the New Testament. Joan Waste was a blind woman in Derby who earned her living making hose and sleeves. She saved her money and though she could not read, bought a New Testament, and had it read to her a chapter at a time. This she memorized, so that she could recite many chapters of the New Testament without the book. She was burned in 1558. A Mrs. Prest, burned in Exeter, also in 1558, was illiterate, but caused Sir Walter Raleigh's mother to comment that Mrs. Prest's Scripture knowledge was even greater than hers, though she could not read" (Daniell, *The Bible in English*, pp. 269, 270).

Thus was brought to pass that prophetic saying of Tyndale, "If God spare my life, ere many years I will cause a boy that driveth a plough shall know more of the Scriptures than thou doest."

8. The Tyndale Bible had a large role in the creation of the United States of America.

The Bible brought to America by its first settlers in the early 1600s, settlers seeking religious liberty, was the Geneva, an edition of the Tyndale.

And the Bible that had such a great influence upon America's unique founding political documents in the late 1700s was the King James, another edition of Tyndale.

The first English Bible printed in America, by Robert Aiken in 1782, was printed only eleven months after the British surrendered at Yorktown, thus ending the Revolutionary War. (A German Luther Bible had been printed in America in 1743.)

Americans loved the Tyndale Bible.

“In America, from the first printing of a Bible in 1777 until 1850, there were over fourteen hundred different editions of English Bible ... almost all of them KJV. For thirty years after 1850, the American Bible, by then an essential item in the furnishing of the American home, was in editions and numbers, a phenomenon beyond calculation. No one knows, or will know, how many Bibles the new presses across America, developed by then for newspapers and cheap books, were turning out” (Daniell, *The Bible in English*, pp. 162, 163).

The American Bible Society, founded in 1816, further flooded the land with inexpensive Bibles. By 1829, the Bible Society’s printer, Daniel Fanshaw in New York, “was operating sixteen Treadwell steam-powered presses exclusively for ABS Bibles” (Daniell, p. 736). With the use of the newly invented stereotyping and by printing in great volume, the Bible Society reduced the price of a New Testament to six cents and a whole Bible to 45 cents. By the 1860s the Bible Society was printing a million Bibles a year. (By 2004 the American Bible Society had distributed more than 6 *billion* Bibles.)

The relationship of America to the Bible was illustrated by the frontispiece of the 1792 American “Self-Interpreting Bible.” The drawing depicted three women. “The chief figure represents America. Her left elbow touches a column with thirteen names, headed ‘Washington’; her left hand holds a scroll labelled ‘Constitution’; her right hand is extended to receive from a kneeling woman an open copy of the ‘Holy Bible’” (Daniell, p. 602).

In America the Bible permeated society at every level. There was a Soldier’s Bible for every soldier and even a Bible for every Pony Express rider. The KJV family Bible was the most respected book in households. It was taken westward by pioneering families. The KJV was used as a textbook and reader in the schools. It even saturated the national dictionary. Noah Webster’s *An American Dictionary of the English Language* of 1828 was filled with quotations from the King James Bible. Consider his definition of *faith*: “Evangelical, justifying, or saving faith, is the assent of the mind to the truth of divine revelation, on the authority of God’s testimony, accompanied with a cordial assent of the will or approbation of the heart; an entire confidence or trust in God’s character and declarations, and in the character and doctrines of Christ, with an

unreserved surrender of the will to his guidance, and dependence on his merits for salvation. In other words, that firm belief of God's testimony, and of the truth of the gospel, which influences the will, and leads to an entire reliance on Christ for salvation." Webster concluded his definition of *faith* by quoting Romans 5:1; 10:10; and Heb. 11:6.

9. (As far as we know) William Tyndale was not able to complete the entire Old Testament before he was put to death by the Catholic Church in 1536. We do know that he completed at least Genesis through 2 Chronicles plus Jonah -- 15 of the 39 books. After his death the translation of the Old Testament was completed by other men and the entire Tyndale Bible was published in several editions, primarily the Coverdale Bible, the Matthew's Bible, the Bishops Bible, the Geneva Bible, the Great Bible, and the King James Bible of 1611.

THE COVERDALE BIBLE (1535)

COVERDALE'S LIFE

1. Miles Coverdale (1488-1569) was born in York and ordained a priest in the Augustinian order in 1514.

2. He was educated at Cambridge, and it was there that he was converted through reading the Scriptures. He fell in love with the Bible and later wrote, "Wherever the Scripture is known it reformeth all things. And why? Because it is given by the inspiration of God." Coverdale also believed that the Holy Spirit has preserved the Scripture is "in Hebrew, Greek, French, Dutch and in English, as in Latin" (Kristen Poole, *Radical Religion from Shakespeare to Milton: Figures of Nonconformity in Early Modern England*, 2000, p. 4; cited by David Daniell, *The Bible in English*, p. 13). This is a scriptural and wise view on preservation, as the Lord Jesus commanded that the Bible be preserved in the church age through the fulfillment of His Great Commission (Mat. 28:19-20), which involves the translation of the Scripture into the languages of the people.

3. By 1528, Coverdale left the Augustinians and was preaching against Catholic dogmas such as transubstantiation, the worship of images, and confession to the ear (auricular).

4. These were dangerous views in that day, and Coverdale was

exiled thrice from England because of persecution, the first time from 1528-35, the second from 1540-47, and the third from 1556-1559.

5. On September 26, 1546, at the end of the reign of Henry VIII, Coverdale's books, including his Bible, were burned at Paul's Cross. (Henry VIII died four months later.)

6. Coverdale was persecuted under Queen Mary. He was imprisoned for two and one half years at the beginning of Queen Mary's reign. "He was several times examined before his inquisitors, and was in extreme peril of his life" (McClure, *The Translators Revived*). Upon the intervention of the king of Denmark, Mary allowed Coverdale to depart for Europe for his third exile.

7. Coverdale died in 1569 and was buried at St. Bartholomew's Church. When that was demolished in 1840, his remains were removed to St. Magnus by London Bridge.

THE COVERDALE BIBLE

1. The Coverdale Bible first appeared in England in 1536, shortly after Tyndale's death.

It was the first entire printed English Bible.

It used Tyndale's New Testament and all of the Old Testament portions that Tyndale had completed. The rest of the Old Testament was translated from German and Latin by Coverdale. The title page said: "BIBLIA. THE BIBLE, that is the holy Scripture of the Olde and New Testament, faithfully and truly translated out of Douche and Latyn into Englishe, 1535."

2. It was first printed in Europe in late 1535 and shipped to England for distribution. Beginning in 1537 it was printed in London by James Nicholson. By then it had in the title the words "Set forth with the king's most gracious licence."

3. The Coverdale Bible was intended to be a study Bible.

The page layout was clear, with summaries at the head of each book and chapter. This was in sharp contrast with Bibles before Luther which "could all best be described as solid blocks of heavily printed paper, with no relief, and often no obvious indicators on

any page of which chapter of which book a reader might be on” (Daniell, p. 185). The chapter summary to Acts 27 in the Coverdale Bible said, “Paul’s shipping toward Rome, Julius the captain entreateth Paul courteously, at the last they suffer shipwreck.”

It had Luther’s prologue, Tyndale’s preface to Romans, marginal cross-references, and numerous comments on the text. For example, “proselyte” (Mat. 23:15; Acts 6:5) was defined in the margin as “a novice or convert.”

Coverdale taught his readers some of the important principles of Bible interpretation. He wrote in one section of his Bible: “But who so ever thou be that redest scripture, let the holy ghost be thy teacher, and let one text expound another unto thee: as for such dreams, visions, and dark sentences as be hid from thy understanding, commit them unto God, and make no articles of them: but let the plain text be thy guide, and the spirit of God (which is the author thereof) shall lead thee in all truth.”

Consider the important principles that are contained in this one paragraph:

The Bible can only rightly be interpreted by submission to the Holy Spirit.

The Bible must be interpreted by comparing Scripture with Scripture.

Difficult passages must not be interpreted in isolation but must be interpreted by those that are clear. It is dangerous to build doctrine on difficult passages.

The Bible student must not be discouraged because he cannot understand everything in Scripture. He must trust God with what he doesn’t understand and be patient as he seeks further understanding.

The Bible must be interpreted literally and its plainest meaning must be allowed to rule.

The Coverdale Bible had more than 150 pictures, such as Gideon laying out his fleece and Absalom caught in a tree by his hair.

4. The Psalms were newly translated by Coverdale (Tyndale did not get that far before his martyrdom).

Coverdale's Psalms were included in the 1549 Book of Common Prayer and were thus read as part of Anglican services from then until the 1960s.

Much of Coverdale's work in the Psalms was carried over into the King James Bible. Following are two examples:

"The heavens declare the glory of God: and the firmament sheweth his handiwork" (Psalm 19:1).

"Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands" (Psalm 100:1).

5. Some words in the King James Bible were brought in from the Coverdale, such as "winebibber," "tender mercies," "lovingkindness," and "saving health."

6. The Coverdale Bible contained the 14 apocryphal books, though they were not viewed as canonical.

They were assembled together between the Old and New Testaments instead of being scattered among the canonical books as in the Catholic Bibles.

Coverdale introduced the Apocrypha with these words: "These books (good reader) which are called Apocrypha, are not judged among the doctors to be of like reputation with the other scripture..."

The apocryphal books were printed in all early English Bibles (including the Geneva) and most later ones, including those printed in America, through the 19th century. 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).

The apocryphal books were also included in the early Protestant Bibles in other languages, including the Luther German and the Olivetan French.

THE MATTHEW'S BIBLE (1537)

1. The Matthew's Bible was so called because "Thomas Matthew" appears on the title page. This was a pen name for John Rogers (1500-1555). It is thought to stand for the apostles Thomas and Matthew (Mat. 10:3).

Christopher Anderson, in *Annals of the English Bible*, tells us that it was Tyndale who influenced Rogers to examine the Scriptures, which led to his conversion to Christ and his rejection of Roman dogma.

Cambridge educated, Rogers moved to Antwerp in 1534, while Tyndale was there, to become a chaplain to the English merchantmen. He arrived the year before Tyndale was arrested.

In about 1538 Rogers moved to Germany and became the pastor at Meldorf, in the Dietmarsh region in the northwest part of the country. He was associated with the Lutherans. Melanchthon had recommended him to the pastorate. In his recommendation letter, Melanchthon described Rogers as “a learned man ... gifted with great ability, which he sets off with a noble character ... he will be careful to live in concord with his colleagues ... his integrity, trustworthiness and constancy in every duty make him worthy of the love and support of all good men.”

In 1547 Rogers returned to England. King Henry VIII had died and his son Edward VI, who was sympathetic to the Reformation, was on the throne.

2. When Tyndale was imprisoned, John Rogers somehow got the manuscripts Tyndale had completed on the Old Testament books. After Tyndale’s martyrdom Rogers completed the translation.

3. For the Matthew’s Bible, Rogers used the Tyndale New Testament and those portions of the Old Testament that Tyndale had completed (Genesis to 2 Chronicles, plus Jonah). For the rest of the Old Testament he revised the Coverdale. In some places, such as the opening chapters of Job, he made a fresh translation.

4. The Matthew’s Bible was intended for serious study.

It had a collection of biblical passages constituting “An Exhortation to the Study of the Holy Scripture.” The initials “J.R.” appear at the end, indicating that this was the work of John Rogers.

It had a summary of Bible doctrine adapted from Jacques Lefevre’s French Bible of 1534.

It had an alphabetic concordance to Bible subjects, translated from Robert Olivetan’s French Bible of 1535.

It had more than 2,000 marginal explanatory notes and many cross

-references.

5. On February 4, 1555, John Rogers followed his friend Tyndale into the flames and gave his life for his testimony for Christ.

Rogers was imprisoned in Newgate on January 27, 1554, not long after the Roman Catholic Queen Mary ascended to the throne.

Rogers had a large family; at the time of his death he had ten or eleven children, including a nursing infant. His wife, a German, was named Adriance de Weyden. "She is sometimes called Prat, which is the English form of the same name, both meaning *meadow*" (Alexander McClure, *The Translators Revived*).

His request that his wife be allowed to visit him before his death was cruelly denied by the ecclesiastical authorities.

He did not see her or the children until he was on the way to his execution at Smithfield. Mrs. Rogers brought the children to the execution "to strengthen him against the ordeal." Not allowed even to stop and bid his family farewell, he walked calmly to the stake, repeating the 51st Psalm. Offered a pardon if he would recant, he refused. "An immense crowd lined the street, and filled every available spot in Smithfield. Up to that day men could not tell how English Reformers would behave in the face of death, and could hardly believe that Prebendaries and Dignitaries would actually give their bodies to be burned for their religion. But when they saw John Rogers, the first martyr, walking steadily and unflinchingly into a fiery grave, the enthusiasm of the crowd knew no bounds. They rent the air with thunders of applause. Even Noailles, the French Ambassador, wrote home a description of the scene, and said that Rogers went to death 'as if he was walking to his wedding.' By God's great mercy he died with comparative ease" (J.C. Ryle, *Why Were Our Reformers Burned?*).

The Bible translator John Rogers was the first of almost 300 burned to death during the reign of Queen Mary. (Many others died in prison.)

His widow took her fatherless flock back to Germany. "Daniel Rogers, probably the eldest child, lived to be Queen Elizabeth's ambassador to Belgium, Germany, and Denmark. Richard Rogers, the famous Puritan minister of Weathersfield, was, in all probability, another son of the martyr; and if so, then the

numerous families in New England which trace their descent from Richard, are descended from the illustrious Bible Translator and Protomartyr” (Alexander McClure, *The Translators Revived*).

THE GREAT BIBLE (1539)

1. The Great Bible, published in 1539, was an edition of the Matthew’s. Miles Coverdale oversaw the completion and printing of the first Great Bible, but there were several editions that were printed by other parties. Christopher Anderson in *Annals of the English Bible* mentions five or six editions that appeared by 1540 and four more in 1541.

2. It was called “great” because of its large size. It was published in six volumes, each page measuring 14 X 9 inches. (The Matthew’s Bible was not much smaller, with a page size of 12 X 9 inches.)

3. Copies were placed in all of the churches of England upon royal authority. Thomas Cromwell “ordered that ... a copy of the Great should be placed in every parish church in England. ... Thus it came about that Tyndale’s Bible was circulated extensively for many years in the name of others, and with the king’s formal authorization, and became the basis for subsequent translations” (Paris Simms, *Bible from the Beginning*, 1929, p. 178).

4. The Great Bible also attained the name The Chained Bible, because copies were often chained to reading desks that were attached to a pillar in the church. This was to discourage theft.

THE GENEVA BIBLE (1557, 1560)

1. The Geneva Bible was produced by English refugees that settled in Geneva to escape the persecutions of the Roman Catholic Queen Mary, who reigned in England from 1553-58.

2. Geneva was a bastion of Bible text and translation/printing activity.

Robert Olivet’s French translation was published in Geneva in 1556. Financial support for the printing had come from Waldensian churches in northern Italy (Daniel Lortch, *Histoire de la Bible Francaise [History of the French Bible]*, p. 105; from an English translation appearing in *Documentation on the Olivetan-Ostervald Bible* by Curtis Gibson, p. 2).

In 1556 a reprint of the Spanish New Testament translated by Juan Perez de Pineda was published in Geneva.

In 1562 a revised edition of the Diotati Italian Bible was prepared and printed in Geneva. Between then and 1665, five of the seven Italian Bibles came from Geneva.

Geneva was the home of Theodore Beza, one of the prominent Protestant scholars of the day and an editor of the Greek Received New Testament. Beza, who took John Calvin's place in Geneva in 1564, published editions of the Received Text in 1565, 1582, 1588-9, and 1598. Beza was the first rector of the Academy of Geneva, which was inaugurated on June 5, 1555.

3. The Geneva Bible in English was chiefly the work of **WILLIAM WHITTINGHAM**, with assistance from others.

Whittingham was a graduate of Oxford (Brasenose College, All Souls, and Christ Church) and had traveled widely in Europe. He moved to Geneva in 1555, a little over a year after Queen Mary took the throne, and he became the pastor of the English congregation of about 100 members.

He married Catharine Chauvin, the sister of John Calvin. (*Calvinus* is the Latin form of the French name *Chauvin*.)

Whittingham returned to England after the publication of the Geneva Bible and was the author of several metrical versions of the Psalms that are still sung in Anglican congregations. In 1563 he was appointed dean at Durham.

He was persecuted by "traditionalists" in the Church of England unto the time of his death. He was repeatedly tried in ecclesiastical courts for non-conformity.

He died in 1579 at age 65 and was buried in the cathedral at Durham (Cathedral Church of Christ and St. Mary the Virgin). "He was an eminently pious and powerful preacher, and an ornament to religion and learning, to which he greatly contributed by his publications, and chiefly by his agency in the revision of the English Bible" (Alexander McClure, *Translators Revived: Biographical Notes of the KJV Translators*, 1855).

4. Particularly in the Old Testament Whittingham was aided by other English exiles, including Miles Coverdale, Christopher

Goodman, Anthony Gilbey, Thomas Sampson, William Cole, William Kette (or Kethe), John Baron, John Pullain, and John Bodley. It is even possible that John Knox assisted in the project, as he was pastor of the English-speaking congregation in Geneva off and on from September 1556 until January 1559.

5. The New Testament was published in 1557; the entire Bible in 1560. It was funded by the English congregation in Geneva. A prominent member who provided substantial money was John Bodley, “whose son Thomas would later found the Bodleian Library at Oxford” (Daniell, *The Bible in English*, p. 294).

The Geneva Bible was often printed in small sizes that were convenient for missionary work. The Geneva New Testament was the same size (octavo) as the little Tyndale New Testament.

The page layout was uncluttered and attractive.

It was printed in clear Roman type instead of the heavy Gothic Black Letter that had been used commonly in Bibles before that.

The type was ruled off with red lines and surrounded by wide margins on the sides and at the bottom.

The headings across the top of each page told the reader at a glance what book he was reading.

Each chapter was preceded by a summary of its content.

It contained many notes, explaining the text, teaching Protestant doctrine, and, in some cases, condemning Roman Catholicism. There is an average of two notes per page.

Following are some of the notes from Revelation 17 in the 1560 edition:

“...Christ Jesus who will take vengeance on this Romish harlot.”

“The Beast signifies an ancient Rome; The woman that sits thereon, the New Rome which is the Papistry, whose cruelty and blood shedding is declared by scarlet and full of idolatries, superstitions and contempt for the true God.”

“This woman is the Antichrist, that is, the Pope with the whole body of his filthy creatures, as is expounded in verse 18.”

The 1560 Geneva was called the “Breeches Bible” because it said Adam and Eve made themselves “breeches” in Genesis 3:7. In fact,

the Geneva translators must have borrowed this from the Wycliffe Bible.

6. The Geneva Bible was a milestone in many important ways:

It was the first entire English Bible to contain verse divisions throughout. Before this, the English Bibles had been divided into chapters and paragraphs. In the verse divisions, the Geneva translators followed the Stephanus' Greek New Testament of 1551 and the Latin Bible of 1555, which was the first entire Bible in any language to contain verse divisions.

For the first time in English, words not in the Greek but thought necessary to carry the meaning in English are printed in ITALIC.

The Geneva contains, for the first time in an English Bible, the entire Old Testament translated from Hebrew. William Tyndale had completed Genesis through 2 Chronicles and Jonah (as far as we know) before his arrest and martyrdom. The rest of the Old Testament was translated in the Coverdale, Matthew's, and Bishops Bibles from Latin and German rather than Hebrew. Speaking of Christopher Goodman, Anthony Gilbey, and the others who produced the Geneva Old Testament, David Daniell says: "They were, it is now clear, exceptional Hebrew scholars. They were the first to use at first hand the Hebrew commentary of David Kimshi, followed in those readings in many places in KJV. They had also a remarkable, almost Tyndalian, grasp of English, the knowledge to use available helps in at least five languages (Aramaic, Latin, Greek, German and French); and the ability to work fast" (Daniell, *The Bible in English*, pp. 314, 15).

7. The Geneva quickly became the most popular English Bible and wielded a powerful influence for almost 100 years, until its popularity waned in favor of the King James Version.

During the reign of Queen Elizabeth, more than two-thirds of the 138 editions of the Bible printed in England were the Geneva.

The Geneva was the Bible carried to America by the first settlers from England in the early 17th century.

THE BISHOPS BIBLE (1568)

1. The Bishops Bible was produced in 1568 during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, who followed the Roman Catholic Mary and

established the Church of England on a Protestant footing.

2. Matthew Parker, the Archbishop of Canterbury, oversaw the production of the Bishops Bible. It was so called because most of those who worked on it were Anglican bishops.

3. The bishops wanted a Bible to compete with the popular Geneva Bible and one that could replace the Great Bible.

4. The Bishops Bible was translated by some men who were persecuted for their faith. Consider two examples:

Thomas Bentham, a Fellow of Magdalen College in Oxford, was ejected from his position during Queen Mary's reign and was forced to flee to Europe, where he became a preacher at Zurich and Basle.

Edmund Grindall was also educated at Magdalen College and was persecuted under the reign of Queen Mary.

5. The Bishops Bible was never popular with the people of England. Though it was promoted by the bishops and though Matthew Parker did not allow Geneva Bibles even to be printed in England, the Geneva continued to be the people's Bible until after the publication of the King James. It was simply imported from overseas. Between 1568 and 1611, during which 20 editions of the Bishops' were printed, there were 120 of the Geneva.

THE KING JAMES BIBLE (1611)

This is the most famous and influential of the English Reformation Bibles. It is called the *King James Bible* or the *King James Version* (KJV) because its production was authorized in 1604 by King James I, who ruled England from 1603 to 1625. In Britain it is more commonly called *The Authorized Version*.

THE PROPOSAL AND AUTHORIZATION

1. James Stuart (1566-1625) was king (James VI) of Scotland before he was king (James I) of England.

He ascended the throne of Scotland in July 1567, at age 13 months, when his Roman Catholic mother Mary Queen of Scots (1542-1587) was forced to abdicate.

James' father, Henry Stuart (Lord Darnley), died in mysterious

circumstances shortly after James was born. He was assassinated and it was rumored that Mary had a part in the crime. “The rift between Mary and her husband became public knowledge. She turned to a Scottish nobleman, a very powerful man, the Earl of Bothwell, for support. He and other Scottish noblemen proposed to do whatever they could to help the queen in her dilemma. This decision led to a failed explosion plot and to the strangulation death of Darnely. A few months later, Mary and the Earl married. This angered the populace who suspected Bothwell’s participation in the murder of their King. Mary’s subjects were outraged and turned against her” (“Mary Queen of Scots,” <http://home.earthlink.net/~zzz12/>).

Mary fled to England and sought help from her cousin Queen Elizabeth I. She was imprisoned, instead. Nineteen years later Mary was found guilty of participating in a plot to kill Elizabeth, and the 44-year-old former queen was beheaded at Fortheringhay Castle in 1587.

James became king of England in March 1603 upon the death of Elizabeth. He was the closest living relative of the unmarried childless queen, being the son of Elizabeth’s cousin. He united England and Scotland.

James married Anne of Denmark and they had eight children, of whom only three lived beyond infancy: Henry, Prince of Wales (1594-1612), Elizabeth Stuart (1596-1662), and King Charles I of England, Scotland and Ireland (1600-1649).

James was known as the most educated sovereign in Europe. “Among those justifiably attributed refinements was his reputation as a paragon of learning, crammed with Greek and Latin and other tongues. In spite of his physical disabilities, his mind was first rate. Already at the age of seven he ‘was able, extempore ... to read a chapter of the Bible out of Latin into French and next out of French into English as well as few men could have added anything to his translation.’ ... Before he was 20 ... he had translated 30 of the Psalms in metrical form and as a parallel venture had paraphrased the Revelation of St. John” (Olga Opfell, *The King James Translators*, pp. 1, 7). In 1604 he published *A Counterblast to Tobacco*, aimed against “this vile custom of tobacco taking.”

One of the major events in James’ reign was **the Gunpowder Plot**. An attempt was made by Roman Catholic agents to

assassinate the king, queen, and parliament by exploding barrels of gunpowder in a room underneath the House of Lords. The plan was “to kill the king, seize his children, sit up an open revolt with aid from Spaniards in Flanders, put Princess Elizabeth on the throne, and marry her to a papist” (Paine, *The Men Behind the KJV*, p. 89). On November 5, 1605, Guy Fawkes was caught in the act of attempting to carry out the deed. In May, Fawkes had taken a solemn oath with his co-conspirators, which oath “was then sanctified by the performing of mass and the administering of the sacraments by the Jesuit priest John Gerard in an adjoining room” (David Herber, “Guy Fawkes,” <http://www.britannia.com/history/g-fawkes.html>).

2. Soon after King James assumed the throne of England in 1603, following the reign of Elizabeth I, he was approached by a group of Puritans led by John Reynolds, president of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, and presented with **the Millennium Petition**. This called for spiritual reform in the Church of England along Presbyterian lines, and it got its name from the fact that it was signed by an estimated 1,000 ministers. The Puritans were encouraged to pursue their objective by the fact that James had been a Presbyterian in Scotland. His true colors were not yet fully known.

3. A three-day conference was held at **HAMPTON COURT** in January 1604 to discuss the petition, and it was here that the decision was made to make the King James Bible.

Hampton Court is a magnificent royal palace on the River Thames, not far from London. The first part of it was built for the Knights Hospitallers, a religious order founded in the early 12th century to protect the land of Israel from the Muslims. In the early 1500s, Thomas Wolsey, Cardinal and Lord Chancellor of England under King Henry VIII, obtained a 99-year lease on the property and expanded it into a royal palace. Wolsey built royal lodgings for Henry, and eventually all six of Henry’s wives spent time there, including two who were possibly believers, Anne Boleyn and Catherine Parr. Henry’s marriage to Catherine Parr took place in the Chapel Royal at Hampton Court, and his son Edward was baptized there. The royal barge would travel to and from London and would dock at the court. Henry’s Astronomical Clock in the tower near the entrance not only kept time but also kept track of the tide so the river trips could be planned more easily. Amazingly,

the clock has survived and still works today. In 1528, Wolsey was forced to relinquish Hampton Court to the King because he had been unable to secure the Pope's consent for Henry's divorce. Within ten years, Henry spent more than 62,000 British pounds, a sum in today's money that would be more than many tens of millions of dollars, on construction at Hampton Court. There were tennis courts, bowling alleys, vast pleasure gardens, an 1,100-acre hunting park, kitchens covering 36,000 feet of space for the feeding of 1,200 people daily, the great dining hall that could seat hundreds, an elaborate chapel, a massive lavatory that could seat 28 people at a time (known as the Great House of Easement), even a plumbing system that brought water by lead pipes from three miles away. Hampton Court is a museum today. As seen today the palace is largely that of the late 17th century reconstruction that was done by Christopher Wren for William III and Mary II.

The king's Hampton Court conference was announced as a sincere attempt to reconcile the differences between the Puritans and the traditionalists, but it was anything but this, causing the Puritans afterwards to call it a "mock conference." Only four Puritans were invited, as opposed to at least 22 traditionalists (with the king at their head). "It soon became manifest that the only object of the meeting was to give the king an opportunity to declare his bitter hostility to the Puritans, who were brow-beaten, insulted, and trampled upon by the tyrant and his ghostly minions. The Puritans were confuted ... 'with seven solid arguments, thus reckoned up, Authority, Violence, Craft, Fraud, Intimidation, Terror and Tyranny.' The monarch roundly declared that he would 'harry out of the land' all who would not conform their consciences to his dictation" (Alexander McClure, *Translators Revived*). Indeed, many did flee, including the Pilgrims who helped found America. McClure tells of a certain joke that had the king and his sycophant traditionalist clergymen in hysterics at the expense of the Puritans: "A Puritan is a Protestant frayed out of his wits!" This truly funny saying was told by "one Butler, a Cambridge man."

During the conference Reynolds suggested that a new translation of the English Bible be produced. The scene was described in the original preface to the King James Bible, written by Miles Smith, as follows: "For the very historical truth is, that upon the importunate petitions of the Puritans at his Majesty's coming to this crown, the conference at Hampton Court having been appointed for hearing

their complaints, when by force of reason they were put from all other grounds, they had recourse at the last to this shift, that they could not with good conscience subscribe to the Communion book, since it maintained the Bible as it was there translated, which was, as they said, a most corrupted translation. And though this was judged to be but a very poor and empty shift, yet even hereupon did his Majesty begin to bethink himself of the good that might ensue by a new translation, and presently after gave order for this translation which is now presented unto thee.”

4. The approval of the two-faced king of the translation of the masterly Bible that bears his name is a wonderful example of God’s sovereign rule in man’s affairs. While the king and the politically-motivated traditionalist bishops he invited to Hampton Court did not have the best interest of the English people in heart, they were overruled by One who did. We must view the history of the Bible through faith in the God of the Bible.

5. Within six months a list of 54 scholars was drawn up for the work. Deaths and withdrawals reduced the number and the surviving lists name 50 men, but we know that others were involved in the work. The work was divided among six companies of translators, two meeting at Cambridge, two at Oxford, and two at Westminster (London).

6. It has often been repeated in histories of the translation that the work did not begin until about 1607, but this is not true.

In November 1604 Lancelot Andrewes, director of one of the two companies at Westminster, mentioned the work in a letter to Mr. Hartwell, Secretary of Antiquaries (Daniell, *The Bible in English*, p. 438). He excused himself from attending a meeting of the Antiquaries Society because it would cause him to miss the regularly scheduled translator’s meeting. He also said that the work was proceeding slowly, indicating that not all of the scholars were yet fully involved.

The Oxford company that met at Merton College, which was responsible for the Gospels, Acts, and Revelation, began its work on February 13, 1605, according to the college register (Adam Nicholson, *God’s Secretaries*, p. 154).

THE SPIRITUAL CLIMATE FOR THE TRANSLATION

1. The King James Bible came out of a period of intense persecution and spiritual revival.

The Wycliffe Bible was persecuted and was a product of spiritual revival; it was the Bible of the Lollards. Laws were passed against it and its translator's bones were dug up and burned. Hundreds of the men and women who loved the Wycliffe Bible were imprisoned, tortured, and burned to death.

The Tyndale Bible was persecuted; thousands of copies were burned and otherwise destroyed by ecclesiastical authorities; laws were passed against it; and its translator was strangled and burned at the stake.

Miles Coverdale, translator of the Coverdale Bible, was thrice exiled for his faith and was imprisoned for two and a half years during the reign of Queen Mary. His books were burned at Pauls' Cross in September 1546 toward the end of the reign of Henry VIII.

The translator of the Matthew's Bible, John Rogers, was burned to death for his faith.

Some of the translators of the Bishops Bible had been persecuted for their faith by Queen Mary.

The Geneva Bible was also a product of persecution and spiritual revival, having been produced by men who were in exile for their faith, and even when translator William Whittingham returned to England he was persecuted by "traditionalists" in the Church of England, being repeatedly tried in ecclesiastical courts for non-conformity.

These Bibles had created a great spiritual awakening in England and beyond. It was a time when men accepted the Bible as the literal Word of God, when they had passion about their religion and were willing to pay any price for their faith, whether a turn on the rack, a dangerous journey across the seas, or even a fiery death.

2. In the early 17th century, church attendance was compulsory in England and knowledge of the Bible was pervasive. "The state ordained that every man, woman and child should attend morning service and evening prayer on Sundays and festival days, heads of

households being responsible for the attendance of their wives, children, servants, and apprentices. Neglectful parishioners could be fined” (Opfell, *The King James Bible Translators*, p. 35). Though we do not agree with compulsory church attendance after a state church fashion nor do we agree with everything that was taught in the Anglican churches that the people were required to attend in that day, this policy produced a biblically knowledgeable citizenry. It is doubtful that there has ever been a nation more steeped in basic Bible knowledge than 17th century England. The people were required to attend church, and at church they heard the entire Bible read and sung in the liturgy.

3. There was also a pervasive climate of earnestly contending for the Protestant Christian faith and a bold opposition to Romanism, atheism, and other enemies of the faith. It was not a day of spiritual neutrality and positivism. The sword of the Spirit was not sheathed. As we will see, many of the translators of the King James Bible were warriors for their Christian faith and stood earnestly against the Roman Catholic Church.

THE LITERARY CLIMATE FOR THE TRANSLATION

1. By the early 17th century the English Bible had been developing for more than two centuries. The wording of the King James Bible represents the labors of centuries of brilliant, believing, sacrificial, godly scholarship. Dozens of some of the best biblical linguists who have ever lived applied their minds and their prayers to translating into English precisely what the Hebrew and Greek text mean. “Thus it came to pass, that the English Bible received its present form, after a fivefold revision of the translation as it was left in 1537 by Tyndale and Rogers. During this interval of seventy-four years, it had been slowly ripening, till this last, most elaborate, and thorough revision under King James matured the work for coming centuries” (Alexander McClure, *The Translators Revived*, 1855, p. 59).

2. By the early 17th century the English language was at its apex. Alexander McClure observed: “The English language had passed through many and great changes, and had at last reached the very height of its purity and strength. The Bible has ever since been the grand English classic. It is still the noblest monument of the power of the English speech. It is the pattern and standard of excellence therein” (*The Translators Revived*).

THE SCHOLARLY CLIMATE FOR THE TRANSLATION

1. By the early 17th century knowledge of biblical languages was at an apex in some ways. Realizing that this view is contrary to that held by most contemporary scholars, we invite you to consider our reasons for making this statement.

Consider the following descriptions of that time, called “a period which was remarkable both in its wealth of eruditional effort and in the significance of its concentration of deepest learning on the Bible centre,” from *The Cambridge History of English and American Literature* (1907–21):

“LARGE PORTIONS OF THE SCRIPTURES WERE KNOWN BY HEART, NOT ONLY BY MINISTERS, BUT, ALSO, BY THE LAITY, AND EVEN BY CHILDREN, who were also well drilled in Foxe’s *Book of Martyrs* and other histories of persecutions. Whilst French Huguenot children were trained, Spartanlike, to look forward to dying for the faith, English children, from the earliest age, were disciplined in prayer, in reading books of devotion and in the close knowledge of Bible histories and Bible doctrine. ... Hence, we notice psychologically, THERE WERE DEVELOPED ENORMOUS INDUSTRY IN LEARNING, endurance in listening to preachers and teachers, tenacious memory and the power of visualising and concentrating the thoughts on Bible heroes, Bible stories, Bible language and Bible aspirations. Scripture students were indefatigable workers. Bishop Morton was at his studies before four o’clock in the morning, even after he was 80 years of age. Matthew Poole rose at three or four o’clock, ate a raw egg at eight or nine, another at twelve and continued his studies till late in the afternoon. Sir Matthew Hale, for many years, studied sixteen hours a day. For several years John Owen did not allow himself more than four hours’ sleep. FEATS OF MEMORY ARE AS REMARKABLE FOR THEIR FREQUENCY AS FOR THEIR COMPREHENSIVENESS, AND WERE PRACTISED FROM EARLY CHILDHOOD in the repeating of sermons, in the learning of Latin grammar and in almost every academic discipline. Moreover, the number of references to memory testifies to the conscious cultivation of the art. ... In short, the scholarship and learning of this period, by their direct bearing upon the Bible, permeated and transfigured the national life in a rare degree, giving it, in spite of all its excesses and deficiencies, A STRENUOUSNESS, SOBRIETY, AND, ON THE WHOLE, A SINCERITY, PROBABLY NEVER SO LARGELY SUSTAINED, BY BOOK LEARNING, IN ANY AGE, and rarely in any country” (*The Cambridge History of English and American Literature*, Vol. VII, *Cavalier and Puritan*, Part XIII, “Scholars and Scholarship, 1600–60”).

“From the time of the new Elizabethan and Stewart foundations of grammar schools, THE THREE ‘HOLY’ LANGUAGES--LATIN, GREEK AND HEBREW--HAD BEEN THE AIM OF PROTESTANT

WORKERS IN EDUCATION, not only for providing antagonists capable of meeting Catholic opponents in disputation, orally and in books, but, also, for coming 'nearer' to the primitive times of the Christian era. BOYS IN SCHOOL WERE TO LEARN THEIR CATECHISM IN A GREEK TEXT, READ THE NEW TESTAMENT IN GREEK, LEARN, IF MIGHT BE, TO SPEAK IN GREEK. The aim of school and university, in their Greek studies, was, in the long run, theological" (*The Cambridge History of English and American Literature*, Vol. VII, Cavalier and Puritan, Part XIII Scholars and Scholarship, 1600–60, "Hebrew scholarship").

Consider the testimony of J.W. Whittaker, two centuries after the completion of the KJV. In 1820 Whittaker, Fellow of St. John's, Cambridge, published *An Historical and Critical Enquiry into the Interpretation of the Hebrew Scriptures, with Remarks on Mr. Bellamy's New Translation*. It was a brilliant defense of the Authorized Version against John Bellamy's harsh criticisms. Bellamy had launched a vicious attack on the authenticity of the King James Bible and had made the accusation that the translators of the KJV and its predecessors were not skilled in Hebrew. Whittaker, a Hebrew scholar, refuted this claim:

"Under Queen Elisabeth and King James, who were not only the patrons of learning by their institutions, but examples of it in their own persons, Hebrew literature prospered to a very great extent, and under the last of these monarchs attained its greatest splendour. The Universities, and all public bodies for the promotion of learning, flourished in an extraordinary degree, and AT THIS HAPPY JUNCTURE OUR TRANSLATION WAS MADE. Every circumstance had been conspiring during the whole of the preceding century to extend the study of Hebrew. The attempts of the Papists to check the circulation of the translations, the zeal of the Protestants to expose the Vulgate errors, the novelty of theological speculations to society at large, and even the disputes of the Reformed Churches, GAVE AN ANIMATED VIGOUR TO THE STUDY OF THE ORIGINAL SCRIPTURES WHICH HAS NEVER SINCE BEEN WITNESSED (Whittaker, pp. 99-104).

Consider the testimony of Alexander McClure, author of *The Translators Revived* (1855):

"As to the capability of those men, we may say again, that, by the good providence of God, their work was undertaken in a fortunate time. Not only had the English language, that singular compound, then ripened to its full perfection, but THE STUDY OF GREEK, AND OF THE ORIENTAL TONGUES, AND OF RABBINICAL LORE, HAD THEN BEEN CARRIED TO A GREATER EXTENT IN ENGLAND THAN EVER BEFORE OR SINCE" (*The Translators Revived*, pp. 59, 61).

2. Biblical scholars of that day grew up with Latin, Greek, and Hebrew and were as at home in these languages as in their mother tongue. One of the KJV translators, as we will see, could read the Hebrew Bible at age five. In our day, scholars don't ordinarily even begin to learn the biblical tongues until adulthood, during their college days or later.

Consider the situation at Oxford and Cambridge:

At Oxford and Cambridge in the 1500s and early 1600s, all of the printed texts were in Latin. All of the compositions, lectures, and disputations were in Latin.

In 1605, of the 6,000 volumes in the library at Oxford, only 60 were in English (David Daniell, *Tyndale's New Testament*, p. 45)

Though Erasmus made five visits to England between 1499 and 1517 and taught at Cambridge for two years, he "neither wrote (nor it seems, spoke) a word of English" (Daniell, *The Bible in English*, p. 130). He was able to communicate and teach in Latin.

Note on becoming a "Fellow"* of a college at Cambridge or Oxford: There were a severely limited number of Fellow positions in a college and the competition was fierce. It was a much more prestigious and sought after position than it is today. Alexander McClure describes that as "A TIME WHEN THE STUDY OF SACRED LITERATURE WAS PURSUED BY THOUSANDS WITH A ZEAL AMOUNTING TO A PASSION." It attracted some of the nation's brightest men. Such an atmosphere in the field of theology exists nowhere in the world today. It could be compared today only to something like the field of sports, in which thousands of athletes compete earnestly from their youth to win a place on a professional team. [* A Fellow was a teacher and usually had a company of five or six students and was also involved in college administration -- Opfell, *The King James Bible Translators*, p. 45.]

The educational climate at Oxford and Cambridge in that day was serious in the extreme. At Emmanuel College, for example, "The recreational schedule consisted only of one hour after dinner at 11 a.m. and one hour after supper at 5 p.m. Undergraduates were expected to be at work 'in the college' at all other times" (Opfell, p. 48). For those familiar with conditions in colleges and seminaries today, it is obvious that the level of scholarship has deteriorated significantly; recreation takes up a *much* larger portion of the

average student's time today.

3. The fierce religious debates of that time resulted in zeal for biblical scholarship and caution about the details of biblical translation that has no comparison in our day.

“The time when our authorized version was completed was a time of awful contention between catholics and protestants; a contest in which whole nations were embarked to a man, arranged under their respective civil authorities. Every nerve was strained on both sides to obtain the ascendancy. Learning, talents, piety and zeal rushed forth to the conflict. AND THE MIGHTY FIELD ON WHICH THEY MET WAS, ‘THE TRANSLATION OF THE SACRED SCRIPTURES INTO THE VULGAR TONGUES.’ In this fearful combat England stood at the head of the Protestant union; and both sides were fully aware of the incalculable consequences connected with an authorized version of the sacred scriptures into the English tongue. The catholics watched every measure of our government, and put every verse of our translation to the severest scrutiny. The Catholics had already sanctioned the Vulgate, and were prepared to impugn every sentence wherein our version should differ from their authorized text. The mass of protestant learning was engaged on the one side to make our version as fair a copy as possible of the matchless originals; and the mass of popish erudition, on the other side, stood fully prepared to detect every mistake, and to expose without mercy every error of our public version” (James Lister, *The Excellence of the Authorized Version of the Sacred Scriptures Defended against the Socinian*, 1820, pp. 14, 15).

4. Further, it is crucial to understand that biblical scholarship has taken a dramatically rationalistic turn since the 19th century.

Most of the great names in this field have been affected by this spirit of unbelief, including the authors of many of the important lexicons and study aids, such as Joseph Thayer, Samuel Driver, Eberhard Nestle, Hermann von Soden, Gerhard Kittel, Eugene Nida, Kurt and Barbara Aland, and Bruce Metzger. We have documented this sad story in our book *The Modern Bible Version Hall of Shame*.

In the mid-1800s Charles Philpot, leader of the Gospel Standard Baptists and Fellow of Worcester College, Oxford, took up the question of “Who would undertake a revision of the Authorized Version today?” He said: “Of course they must be learned men, great critics, scholars, and divines. BUT THESE ARE NOTORIOUSLY EITHER TAINTED WITH POPYERY OR INFIDELITY. Where are the men, learned, yet sound in Truth, not to say alive unto God, who possess the necessary qualifications for so

important work? And can erroneous men, dead in trespasses and sins, carnal, worldly, ungodly persons, spiritually translate a Book written by the blessed Spirit? We have not the slightest ground for hope that they would be godly men, such as we have reason to believe translated the Scriptures into our present version.”

In the 20th century, even the “evangelical” scholars became infected with rationalistic views of the Bible, as has been documented in many books, such as Harold Lindsell’s *The Battle for the Bible* (1976) and *The Bible in the Balance* (1979), Richard Quebedeaux’s *The Worldly Evangelicals* (1978), Francis Schaeffer’s *The Great Evangelical Disaster* (1983), David Wells’s *No Place for Truth* (1993), and Iain Murray’s *Evangelicalism Divided: A Record of Crucial Change in the Years 1950 to 2000*. For documentation see *Faith vs. the Modern Bible Versions*, Part VII, “We Hold to the King James Bible Because Evangelical Scholarship Is Unreliable.”

The dramatic change that occurred between the 17th century and the 21st is even recognized by men who are not fundamentalists. “The churches and biblical scholarship have, by and large, abandoned the frame of mind which created this translation [the KJV]. The social structures which gave rise to it -- rigid hierarchies; a love of majesty; subservience; an association of power with glory -- have all gone. The belief in the historical and authentic truth of the scriptures, particularly the Gospels, has been largely abandoned, even by the religious. The ferocious intolerances of the pre-liberal world have been left behind ... and perhaps as a result of that change, perhaps as a symptom, religion, or at least the conventional religion of ordinary people, has been drained of its passion. There is no modern language that can encompass the realities which the Jacobean accepted as normal. Modern religious rhetoric is dilute and ineffectual, and where it isn’t, it seems mad and aberrational. ... These men, and their Bible, exist on the other side of a gulf, which can be labelled liberal, secular, democratic modernity. WE DO NOT LIVE IN THE SAME WORLD” (Adam Nicholson, *God’s Secretaries*, 2003, p. 239). Indeed.

THE TRANSLATION PROCESS

1. The translation began in late 1604 and early 1605 and the final draft from the committees was completed probably in late 1608. In 1609 the delegates from the committees met in Stationers’ Hall in London and reviewed the whole work for nine months. In 1610-11

Miles Smith and Thomas Bilson put the finishing touches to the translation, wrote the Translators Preface, and prepared the Bible for the press.

2. Though, according to the KJV Translators Rule # 1 the Bishops Bible was to be the basis for the revision, Rule #14 set the translators free to use other versions: “These translations to be used when they agree better with the Text than the Bishops: Tindoll’s, Matthews, Coverdale’s, Whitchurch’s [the Great Bible], Geneva.” “...the Bishops’ Bible is thought to have contributed no more than about 8 percent of its phraseology to the King James Version” (Adam Nicholson, *God’s Secretaries*, p. 73).

3. Each part of the Bible went through four major winnowing processes and was examined at least 14 times.

The translators were divided into six companies, and each group was assigned a portion of Scripture to translate.

The portion was first translated individually by each member of the company. “Every particular man of each company to take the same chapter or chapters; and having translated or amended them severally by himself, where he thinks good...” (rule # 8).

That translated portion was then considered by the company as a whole. “...all to meet together, to confer what they have done, and agree for their part what shall stand” (rule # 8).

If a special obscurity or difficulty was found, the companies were authorized to “send to any learned in the land for his judgment in such a place” (rule # 11). There is a hint from an extant letter dated Dec. 5, 1608, that this rule was followed. The letter is from William Eyre, Fellow of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, to a young James Ussher, who would become the famous scholar. “In my absence from Cambridge, there was an order taken from the Kings Mat by the Arch B. of Canterb. that the translation of the Bible shall be finished and printed as soon as may be. Hereupon I am earnestly requested to get again that copy of our part which I lent you for D. Daniel his use. For albeit there be two fair written copies out of it; yet there will be use of it because I noted in the margin ... the places which were doubted of. And this marking of places that want consideration is not in the others” (Adam Nicholson, *God’s Secretaries*, p. 150). Here we see three men mentioned in association with the work who were not a part of the official

translation committee, and two of them (Ussher and Daniel) were living in Dublin, Ireland, at the time. The volume that Eyre was requesting to be returned was a manuscript book containing the completed translation from one of the companies. We see, then, that copies were made of the manuscript so that it could be distributed to scholars in other places, and they, in turn, wrote their comments in the margin of the manuscript. No doubt this was the custom with each company in accordance with their instructions.

Learned men not on the translation committee were invited to submit their opinions even if not solicited by the translation committee (rule # 12).

When the companies completed a book, it was then sent to the other five companies for review. “As any one company hath dispatched any one book in this manner, they shall send it to the rest, to be considered of seriously and judiciously; for his Majesty is very careful in this point” (rule # 9). Thus, each book of the translation was reviewed by all of the companies.

The finished product from each company was then submitted to a 12-man committee (composed of two chief men from each company) for final review and preparation for the press. As the companies reviewed each book, they noted any questions or differences, and these matters were settled by the final committee. “If any company, upon the review of the books so sent, really doubt, or differ upon any place, to send them word thereof, note the place, and withal send their reasons; to which if they consent not, the difference to be compounded at the general meeting, which is to be of the chief persons of each company, at the end of the work” (rule # 10).

John Selden, the esteemed British jurist and parliamentarian, described the process: “The company of translators would meet together and as the newly translated book was read verse by verse, each one compared it to a Bible in some language in his hand. If any thing struck any of them as requiring alteration, he spoke, otherwise they read on” (“Historical Account of the English Versions of the Scriptures,” prologue to *The English Hexapla*, 1841, quoting *Table-Talk of John Selden*).

Note that they were testing the translation with their ears. Not only did they aim for accuracy but also for readability. And never has an

English Bible sounded lovelier.

They also aimed for majesty. In his notes John Bois describes a scene in which Andrew Downes suggests a different reading, because “if the words are arranged in this way, the statement will be more majestic.” Nicholson observes that Downes’ “remark is important in showing that majesty was a quality being consciously sought in the Stationers’ Hall. These men are interested not only in clarity and fidelity but in a grandeur of statement which colours the translation as a whole” (p. 212).

Thus, every part of the translation was examined at least 14 times. “As the number of companies was six, and the numbers in each company varied from seven to ten, it follows that every several part would be examined at the least fourteen times distinctly; many parts fifteen times, and some seventeen” (“Historical Account of the English Versions of the Scriptures,” *The English Hexapla*, 1841, p. 153).

The diligence with which the translation was made can be illustrated from an interesting scene that took place not long after it was published. This was recorded by Izaak Walton (author of *The Compleat Angler*) in *The Life of Dr. Robert Sanderson* (1678). One of the KJV translators, Richard Kilby, happened to visit a church and hear a sermon in which the young preacher showed the congregation three reasons why a certain translation in the King James was wrong. It also happened that both men were invited afterwards to the same house, and there Dr. Kilby informed the preacher that the translation committee had considered the three reasons that he had given *but they had found 13 more compelling reasons for overruling them!* Here is the account as given by Walton:

“I must here stop my reader, and tell him that this Dr. Kilby was a man of so great learning and wisdom, and so excellent a critic in the Hebrew tongue, that he was made professor of it in this University; and was also so perfect a Grecian, that he was by King James appointed to be one of the translators of the Bible; and that this Doctor and Mr. Sanderson had frequent discourses, and loved as father and son. The Doctor was to ride a journey into Derbyshire, and took Mr. Sanderson to bear him company; and they, resting on a Sunday with the Doctor’s friend, and going together to that parish church where they then were, found the young preacher to have no more discretion, than to waste a great part of the hour allotted for his sermon in exceptions against the late translation of several words, (not expecting such a hearer as Dr. Kilby,) and shewed three reasons why a

particular word should have been otherwise translated. When evening prayer was ended, the preacher was invited to the Doctor's friend's house, where, after some other conference, the Doctor told him, he might have preached more useful doctrine, and not have filled his auditors' ear with needless exceptions against the late translation; and for that word for which he offered to that poor congregation three reasons why it ought to have been translated as he said, he and others had considered all them and found thirteen more considerable reasons why it was translated as now printed; and told him, 'If his friend,' (then attending him,) 'should prove guilty of such indiscretion, he should forfeit his favor.' To which Mr. Sanderson said, 'He hoped he should not.' And the preacher was so ingenuous as to say, 'He would not justify himself.' And so I return to Oxford." Alexander McClure makes an important observation on this story: "It also furnishes an incidental proof of the considerate and patient care with which our venerable Translators studied the verbal accuracy of their work. WHEN WE HEAR YOUNG LICENTIATES, GREEN FROM THE SEMINARY, DISPLAYING THEIR SMATTERINGS OF HEBREW AND GREEK BY CAVILLING IN THEIR SERMONS AT THE COMMON VERSION, AND POMPOUSLY TELLING HOW IT OUGHT TO HAVE BEEN RENDERED, WE CANNOT BUT WISH THAT THE APPARITION OF DR. KILBY'S FROWNING GHOST MIGHT HAUNT THEM. Doubtless the translation is susceptible of improvement in certain places; but this is not a task for every new-fledged graduate; nor can it be very often attempted without shaking the confidence of the common people in our unsurpassed version, and without causing 'the trumpet to give an uncertain sound.'"

5. Lancelot Andrewes' Westminster company usually met in the Jerusalem Chamber at Westminster Abbey, where Andrewes was dean.

The Abbey is the church in which the kings of England have been crowned since William I in 1066. It was a Roman Catholic Benedictine Abbey until the Reformation. Since 1540 it has been associated with the Church of England. Many famous people are buried here, including some of England's kings and queens, such as James I, Elizabeth I, and her half sister "bloody Mary," and even secularists such as Charles Darwin, the father of the theory of evolution.

The Jerusalem Chamber was once part of the Abbot's House and was built in the late 14th century. King Henry IV died there. He had been told that he would die in Jerusalem, and while making preparations to travel there, he visited Westminster to pray. While doing so he became sick. His servants moved him to the Jerusalem Chamber and laid him down in front of the large fireplace. When he awakened and was told that he was in the Jerusalem Chamber,

he said, "Laud be to the Father of Heaven! for now I know that I shall die in this chamber, according to the prophecy made of me beforesaid, that I should die in Hierusalem."

The Jerusalem Chamber is not open to the public, but we were able to view it during a research trip in 2003. David L. Brown arranged for us to see it by private appointment. We were allowed to take some video and still shots of the Chamber as well as of the inside of the Abbey itself, including the Darwin grave marker on the floor, which is not usually allowed.

The room features a large white fireplace with an intricately carved cedar wood overmantel and tapestries of Bible scenes that go back, in some cases, to the 16th century. The original ornate ceiling still exists.

THE TRANSLATORS

1. The translators were divided into six companies, two at Oxford, two at Cambridge, and two in London at Westminster. (The exact number of translators is unknown. The following list contains 51 names. Gustavus Paine, author of *The Men Behind the King James Version*, said that he found the names of more than 54 translators if replacements are counted. Further, "the final version contains contributions from countless unknown linguists.")

2. The translators of the King James Bible were scholars of the highest caliber. Some were among the very top scholars of England and Europe.

The translators were masters of Greek, Hebrew, and Latin. That was a basic part of what was called a classical education in those days. These men grew up with the biblical languages and Latin. They learned these in their childhood and perfected the use of them throughout their lives. This is not true today. Ordinarily, even those who are scholars in the biblical languages don't begin to learn them until their adult years.

The KJV translators as a whole were masters not only of Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek, and Latin but also of the cognate or associate languages that are necessary for research into ancient documents relative to the Bible. These include Persian, Coptic, Syriac, Armenian, and Chaldee.

They further had the ability to read ancient unprinted manuscript versions of Greek, Latin, German, Italian, and Spanish. It is one thing to read modern German or modern Latin; it is far more difficult to read ancient versions of these language and much more difficult yet to read these in the handwritten manuscripts. These men were accustomed to such research inasmuch as in their day many scholarly resources had not yet been printed and it was common to have to use handwritten manuscripts in the pursuit of ordinary study. Since the invention of the typewriter scholars have had dramatically less familiarity with handwritten manuscripts. The common scholar of the 17th century had a level of expertise in such things that is found only in the rarest of cases today, if at all.

Following are some examples of the quality of the translators' scholarship and a few snippets from some of their lives. They are listed alphabetically rather than by company. Note that we have also included information that we have found on the memorials of the translators, such as burial places, surviving portraits, and published works.

LANCELOT ANDREWES (1568-1626) was Master of Pembroke Hall, Cambridge, chaplain to Queen Elizabeth, Dean of Westminster Abbey, bishop of Chichester (from 1605) and bishop of Ely (from 1609). A "formidable scholar," he was the master of 15 languages. "Scholars of the greatest eminence, such as Casaubon, Grotius, and Vossius, have eulogised his extensive attainments." Of Andrewes, it was said that "such was his skill in all languages, especially the Oriental, that, had he been present at the confusion of tongues at Babel, he might have served as Interpreter-General." "Once a year, at Easter, he used to pass a month with his parents. During this vacation, he would find a master, from whom he learned some language to which he was before a stranger. In this way after a few years, he acquired most of the modern languages of Europe" (McClure, *Translators Revived*). Further, "Young Andrewes eschewed 'games or ordinary recreations' and preferred walking by himself or with a selected companion 'with whom he might confer and argue and recount their studies'" (Opfell, *The King James Bible Translators*, p. 28). Is this how the average contemporary Bible scholar spends his teenage years? Is it not, rather, spent on rock & roll, video games, television, Hollywood movies, dating, and other carnal activities, perhaps glossed over with a veneer of churchianity? Andrewes' friends included many famous men of literature, including Francis Bacon, Isaac Casaubon, and John Chamberlain. On trips to

northern England, sponsored by the Earl of Huntingdon, he saw many converted to the Word of God through his preaching. McClure says he was called the “star of preachers.” Thomas Fuller says that he was “an inimitable preacher in his way.” There was music in his preaching and doubtless some of Andrewes’ lyrical music passed into the King James Bible. Here is an excerpt from a sermon on Christmas 1609: “Men may talk what they will, but sure there is no joy in the world to the joy of a man saved: no joy so great, no news so welcome, as to one ready to perish, in case of a lost man, to hear of one that will save him. In danger of perishing by sickness, to hear of one will make him well again; by sentence of the law, of one with a pardon to save his life; by enemies, of one that will rescue and set him in safety. Tell any of these, assure them but of a Saviour. It is the best news he ever heard in his life.” He spent many hours each day in private prayer and devotion and family worship and was “given to hospitality.” In 1610 Andrewes, apparently at the urging of King James, published *Responsio ad Apologiam Cardinalis Bellarmine*, which was a reply to the Roman Catholic Jesuit apologist. Andrewes died in 1626 at age 61 and was buried at Southwark Cathedral (Church of St. Saviour and St. Mary Overie), London, where William Shakespeare is buried. John Milton of *Paradise Lost* fame eulogized Andrewes in a Latin poem. There is a portrait of Andrewes in the chapel at Ely House, London (<http://ely.anglican.org/history/talk19990209/andrewes.html>).

WILLIAM BEDWELL (1562-1632), educated at St. John’s College, Cambridge, and Vicar of Tottenham High Cross, London, was an eminent Arabic scholar. “His fame for Arabic learning was so great, that when Erpenius, a most renowned Orientalist, resided in England, in 1606, he was much indebted to Bedwell for direction in his studies. To Bedwell, rather than to Erpenius, who commonly enjoys it, belongs the honor of being the first who considerably promoted and revived the study of the Arabic language and literature in Europe. He was also tutor to another Orientalist of renown, Dr. Pococke” (McClure, *Translators Revived*). “He spent many years in preparing an Arabic lexicon; and the commencement of a Persian dictionary and an Arabic Translation of the Catholic Epistles of St. John, by the same scholar, are still preserved among the Laud MSS in the Bodleian Library.”

JOHN BOIS (Boys) (1561-1643), Fellow of Clare Hall College, Cambridge, had a good spiritual heritage. His father William was

converted under the ministry of the Lutheran reformer Martin Bucer when he was exiled from Strasbourg, Germany, and was teaching at Cambridge; and William had subsequently hid out in the countryside during the reign of Mary. During those days he met and married Mirable Poolye, “a pious woman, and a great reader of the Bible in the older translations,” and they had several children, all of which died young except John. When John was at Cambridge he would often walk the 20 miles to his mother’s house for dinner and return again in the evening. The respect that he had for his mother is evident in what he wrote in the flyleaf to her Book of Common Prayer: “This is my mother’s book; my good mother’s book. Her name was first Mirable Poolye; and then afterwards Mirable Bois; being so called by the name of her husband, my father, William Bois. ... She had read the Bible over twelve times, and the Book of Martyrs twice; besides other books, not a few.” Taught by his father, John could read the whole Bible in Hebrew at age five. Within six months of admission to St. John’s College, Cambridge, the 14-year-old Bois was writing letters in Greek to the Master and Senior Fellows of the school. “It was a common practice with the young enthusiast to go to the University Library at four o’clock in the morning, and stay without intermission till eight in the evening” (McClure, *Translators Revived*). Bois was an exact grammarian who had read sixty grammars (Paine, *The Men Behind the KJV*, p. 67). Bois was a Greek lecturer at St. John’s College for 10 years, and “during that time, he voluntarily lectured, in his own chamber, at four o’clock in the morning, most of the Fellows being in attendance! It may be doubted, whether, at the present day, a teacher and class so zealous could be found at old Cambridge, new Cambridge, or any where else,—not excluding laborious Germany.” At one point he determined to study medicine, but finding that “whatever disease he read of, he was troubled with the same himself,” he gave it up! When Bois was 35 years old, the Rector of Boxworth, Mr. Holt, left in his will an unusual request. He wanted Bois to succeed him as vicar of Boxworth on the condition that he would marry his daughter. The scholar drove his buggy over to meet the girl and after some visits and “taking liking each of other” he agreed to the arrangement. In 1596 Bois became Rector of Boxworth, and two years later the now thirty-seven- or thirty-eight-year-old bookworm married the late Rector’s daughter. “While thus absorbed in studious pursuits he left his domestic affairs to the management of his wife, whose want of skill in a few years reduced him to bankruptcy. He was forced to

part with his chief treasure, and to sell his library, which contained one of the most complete and costly collections of Greek literature that had ever been made. This cruel loss so disheartened him, as almost to drive the poor man from his family and his native country. He was, however, sincerely attached to his wife, with whom he lived in great happiness and affection for five and forty years." Even with the late start, the Bois's were not slack in producing children. They had four sons and two daughters. Bois told them "funny and delightful stories after supper" and prayed with each of them every day. One died in infancy; two in their teens; another at age 30. Only two survived their father. Robert and Mirabel (named for his mother) died in 1623 within a month of each other, of smallpox. The heartbroken father wrote, "Never has there been a more bitter night for me than that in which my Mirabel died." Bois made almost daily trips from Boxworth to Cambridge, and allowing his horse to find his own way he would use the occasion to study! Bois was charitable to the poor, but wise in his charity. "He 'chode the lazy,' knowing that charity's eyes should be open, as well as her hands." Bois participated in both companies at Cambridge, the one assigned the Apocryphal books and the one assigned Chronicles to Song of Solomon. Even in his old age, Bois spent eight hours in daily study. Though a great scholar, he aimed for simplicity in his preaching, desiring to make himself easily understood by the humblest of his hearers. "Up to his death, his brow was unwrinkled, his sight clear, his hearing quick, his countenance fresh, and head not bald." Asked the secret of his longevity, the octogenarian ascribed it to the observance of three rules, given him by one of his college tutors, Dr. Whitaker: First, always to study standing; secondly, never to study in a draft of air; and thirdly, never to go to bed with his feet cold! He also ate only two meals a day, dinner at midday and supper in the evening, and didn't take any food and little drink between meals, except on occasion, "upon trouble of wind a small quantity of *aqua-vitae* [a brandy-like spirit] and sugar." We are not told how often he had wind trouble.

LAWRENCE CHADERTON (1537-1640) grew up in a staunch Catholic home and his wealthy father wanted him to be a lawyer. Upon being converted to Christ in 1564, Lawrence abandoned his law studies to attend Christ's College, Cambridge. When he wrote to his father to request some assistance, the "old papist" wrote, "Son Lawrence, if you will renounce the new sect which you have

joined, you may expect all the happiness which the care of an indulgent father can assure you; otherwise, I enclose a shilling to buy a wallet. Go and beg.” When Lawrence replied that he could not give up his faith in the Word of God, his father disinherited him of the large estate; but by God’s grace he never had to beg (Ps. 37:25). He was thoroughly skilled in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, French, Spanish, and Italian, and was thoroughly acquainted with the writings of the Jewish rabbis. He was a Puritan and the first Master of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, which was founded in 1584 and was established with the intent that students would not only study but would “go out and spread knowledge in all parts of the country” (Paine, *The Men Behind the KJV*, p. 28). McClure says: “Having reached his three score years and ten, his knowledge was fully digested, and his experience matured, while ‘his natural force was not abated,’ and his faculties burned with unabated fire. Even to the close of his long life, ‘his eye was not dim,’ and his sight required no artificial aid. ... He was greatly venerated. All his habits were such as inspired confidence in his piety. During the fifty-three years of his married life, he never suffered any of his servants to be detained from public worship by the preparation of food, or other household cares. He used to say, ‘I desire as much to have my servants to know the Lord, as myself’” (McClure, *Translators Revived*). As a young man Chaderton began a series of afternoon sermons at the church of St. Clement’s, Cambridge, that continued for 50 years. “Sermons were timed by an hour glass, which stood beside the pulpit. Chaderton’s biographer tells how once having preached for two hours, he feared he had worn out his listeners’ patience and stopped. But the entire congregation cried, ‘For God’s sake, go on! We beg you, go on!’ Chaderton continued for another hour” (Opfell, *The King James Bible Translators*, p. 47). When he announced that he was retiring from these lectures, forty of the clergy, who said they owed their conversion to his preaching, begged him to reconsider. Two of Chaderton’s brothers-in-law, Samuel and Ezekiel Culverwell, became famous Puritan preachers (Opfell, p. 47). He died in the year 1640 in the one hundred and third year of his age, and it is said that to the end he could read a small-print Greek New Testament without glasses. There is a Latin epitaph to Chaderton at the entrance of the Emmanuel College chapel. Translated it says, “Here lies the body of Lawrence Chaderton, D.D., who was the first Master of this College.”

RICHARD KILBY (1560-1620) was a Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford, and became Rector of the college in 1590 and doctor of divinity in 1596. In 1601 he was made a Prebend of Westminster Abbey. “He was considered so accurate in Hebrew studies, that he was appointed the King’s Professor in that branch of literature. Among the fruits of his studies, he left a commentary on Exodus, chiefly drawn from the writings of the rabbinical interpreters” (McClure, *Translators Revived*). In his sermon on “The Burden of a Loaden Conscience,” we see Kilby’s gospel: “Consider well what He hath done for you. He made you at the first like unto Himself, in wisdom and holiness, and when you were by sin made like the devil, and must therefore have been condemned to hell torments, God sent His only son who taking unto him a body and soul, was a man and suffered great wrong and shameful death, to secure your pardon, and to buy you out of the devil’s bondage, that ye might be renewed to the likeness of God ... to the end ye might be fit to keep company with all saints in the joys of heaven” (Paine, *The Men Behind the KJV*, p. 48).

JOHN LAIFIELD (or Layfield) (d. 1617) was Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, and Rector of St. Clement Dane’s Church in London (in the Strand). Of him it is said “that being skilled in architecture, his judgment was much relied on for the fabric of the tabernacle and temple” (Collin’s *Ecclesiastical History*, 1852, Vol. VII, p. 337; cited from Paine, *The Men Behind the KJV*, p. 39). Laifield had traveled to Puerto Rico in 1598 as chaplain to Earl of Cumberland and had written of the dangerous adventure during which hundreds had died through sickness and combat. In this interesting record it is obvious that Laifield wielded an exceptional pen: “The trees do continually maintain themselves in a green-good liking, partly of many fine rivers, which to requite the shadow and coolness they receive from the trees, give them back again, a continual refreshing of very sweet and tasty water” (taken from *God’s Secretaries*, p. 104).

JOHN RAINOLDS (or Reynolds) (1549-1607), the leader of the Puritan party at Hampton Court, was president of Corpus Christi College, Oxford. He had become a Fellow of Corpus Christi at age 17 and a Greek lecturer at age 23. McClure observes: “It is stated that ‘his memory was little less than miraculous. He could readily turn to any material passage, in every leaf, page, column and paragraph of the numerous and voluminous works he had read.’

He came to be styled ‘the very treasury of erudition;’ and was spoken of as ‘a living library, and a third university.’” “This Dr. Reynolds was party to a most curious episode. He had been an ardent Roman Catholic, and he had a brother who was an equally ardent Protestant. They argued with each other so earnestly that each convinced the other; the Roman Catholic became a Protestant, and the Protestant became a Roman Catholic” (Ian Paisley, *My Plea for the Old Sword*). John Rainolds’ Catholic brother, William, taught divinity and Hebrew at the English College at Rheims and probably assisted Gregory Martin in the translation of the Rheims-Douay Catholic Bible that was published in 1610 (Opfell, p. 56). Rainolds not only became a Protestant, he became one of England’s greatest champions for Protestantism. “About the year 1578, John Hart, a popish zealot, challenged all the learned men in the nation to a public debate. At the solicitation of one of Queen Elizabeth’s privy counsellors, Mr. Reynolds encountered him. After several combats, the Romish champion owned himself driven from the field. An account of the conferences, subscribed by both parties, was published, and widely circulated. This added greatly to the reputation of Mr. Reynolds, who soon after took his degrees in divinity, and was appointed by the queen to be Royal Professor of Divinity in the University. At that time, the celebrated Cardinal Bellarmine, the Goliath of the Philistines at Rome, was professor of theology in the English Seminary at that city. As fast as he delivered his popish doctrine, it was taken down in writing, and regularly sent to Dr. Reynolds; who, from time to time, publicly confuted it at Oxford. Thus Bellarmine’s books were answered, even before they were printed” (McClure, *Translators Revived*). In 1586 “Sir Francis Walsingham founded a temporary lectureship to confute ‘popish tenets’ and secured Rainolds’ appointment to those lectures” (Opfell, p. 58). It was suspicioned that an attempt was made on Rainolds’ life, perhaps by “the papists,” when an arrow was shot at him as he was walking in London in 1602, though the arrow failed to enter his body. At the height of the popularity of Shakespearean productions, Rainolds wrote a book against stage plays. His warning was plain and very much to the point: “They meditate how they may inflame a tender youth with love, entice him to dalliance, to whoredom, to incest, inure their minds and bodies to uncomely, dissolute, railing, boasting, knavish, foolish, brainsick, drunken conceits, words and gestures” (Rainolds, “The Overthrow of Stage Plays,” cited from Paine, *The Men Behind the*

KJV, p. 24). Rainolds warned that it was unlawful for men to wear women's clothing on the stage and cited Deuteronomy 22:5. Though he died before the translation was complete, he worked at it during his last sickness as long as his strength permitted. "During his decline, the company to which he belonged met regularly every week in his chamber, to compare and perfect what they had done in their private studies. His days were thought to be shortened by too intense application to study." When urged to cease his labors he nobly replied that "for the sake of life, he would not lose the very end of living!" As he was dying, a rumor was spread by some Roman Catholics that he had renounced Protestantism. Replying the day before he expired, he wrote the following: "These are to testify to all the world, that I die in the possession of that faith which I have taught all my life, both in my preachings and in my writings, with an assured hope of my salvation, only by the merits of Christ my Saviour." John Rainolds is buried in the chapel of Corpus Christi College and a statue there depicts the scholar holding a closed book.

HENRY SAVILE (or Saville) (1549-1621), Warden of Merton College, Oxford, and Provost of Eton College, was "a weighty Greek scholar." He was the first to edit the complete works of Chrysostom (with help from others). Toward this end he searched out the best manuscripts of Chrysostom's works throughout Europe and assembled more than 15,000 sheets of them, which he gave to the Bodleian Library at Oxford. "Sir Henry Savile was one of the most profound, exact, and critical scholars of his age. In 1570, he read his ordinaries on the *Almagest* of Ptolemy, a collection of the geometrical and astronomical observations and problems of the ancients. By this exercise he very early became famous for his Greek and mathematical learning." He was the tutor in Greek and mathematics to Queen Elizabeth. In about 1604 he was knighted by King James. One of his sayings was: "Give me the plodding student. If I would look for wits, I would go to Newgate [prison];--there be the wits!" Saville founded two professorships at Oxford, one of geometry and one of astronomy. Many of his books remain at the Bodleian Library. Sir Henry and his wife Margaret had two children, a boy and a girl, but the boy died at age eight. In finishing up this brief review of Savile's life, I must include an account given by Alexander McClure, which most studious husbands and most wives of studious husbands can doubtless relate to: "He was so much of a book-worm, and so sedulous at his

study, that his lady, who was not very deep in such matters, thought herself neglected. She once petulantly said to him, ‘Sir Henry, I would that I were a book, and then you would a little more respect me.’ A person standing by was so ungallant as to reply, ‘Madam, you ought to be an almanac, that he might change at the year’s end.’ At this retort the lady was not a little offended. A little before the publication of Chrysostom, when Sir Henry lay sick, Lady Savile said, that if Sir Henry died, she would burn Chrysostom for killing her husband. To this, Mr. Bois, who rendered Sir Henry much assistance in that laborious undertaking, meekly replied, that ‘so to do were great pity.’ To him, the lady said, ‘Why, who was Chrysostom?’ ‘One of the sweetest preachers since the apostles’ times,’ answered the enthusiastic Bois. Whereupon the lady was much appeased, and said, ‘she would not burn him for all the world.’” He was buried in the chapel at Eton College, Oxford. “There is a large monument, with portrait bust resting on a southern hemisphere and statuettes of Ptolemy and Euclid, on the west wall of Merton Antechapel, near the south door. His portrait in the Bodleian [Library Picture Gallery] was presented by his widow” (<http://www.dcs.warwick.ac.uk/bshm/zingaz/OxfordPeople.html#e3>). There is a portrait of Savile in Oxford’s Museum of the History of Science.

MILES SMITH (1524-1624), who was on the 12-man final revision committee and also wrote the Preface, was expert in Hebrew, Chaldee, Syriac, Latin, Greek, and Arabic. These were as familiar to him as his own mother tongue. A fellow bishop called him “a very walking library.” He was a graduate of Brasenose College, Oxford, a doctor of divinity, Prebendary* of Hereford Cathedral, and (from 1612) Bishop of Gloucester. His father had made a fortune as a fletcher or a maker of bows and arrows. It was long thought that he was buried in the cathedral at Gloucester, but recently it was discovered that he was buried somewhere in Oxford, and it is his brother that was buried in Gloucester. The tombs of his two daughters that died in childbirth are in the cathedral. His portrait, which was made in 1612, hangs in Christ Church College, Oxford. [* A Prebendary “was the holder of a cathedral benefice, and his Prebend usually consisted of revenue from one manor of the cathedral states” Opfell, *The King James Bible Translators*, p. 29.]

Consider some further testimonies to the capability of the KJV

translators:

John Selden, in *Table-talk* (1689), said: “The English translation of the Bible is the best translation in the world, and renders the sense of the original best.”

Thomas Hartwell Horne (1818), in *Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures*, said: “We cannot but call to mind with gratitude and admiration, the integrity, wisdom, fidelity, and learning of the venerable translators, of whose pious labors we are now-reaping, the benefit; who, while their reverence for the Holy Scriptures induced them to be as literal as they could, to avoid obscurity have been extremely happy in the simplicity and dignity of their expressions; and who, by their adherence to the Hebrew idiom, have at once enriched and adorned our language.”

William T. Brantly, a leader in the Baptist denomination in America, said (1837): “... the forty seven professors and divines, who were appointed by James I., to re-translate, revise and correct preceding versions ... were profound philologists, men of ripe scholarship, and well skilled in critical acumen. ... it is difficult to imagine, how any individual, professedly acquainted with the literature of the reigns of Elizabeth and James, could be purblind to the fact, that so far from the Hebrew and Oriental languages falling into neglect and disuse during those periods, *au contraire*, they were among the first and prominent studies at Oxford and Cambridge; and that men, profoundly skilled in both, composed the conference who sat in solemn and nature deliberation at Hampton Court. ... we believe it will be difficult for the most incredulous mind to evade the conviction, that the venerable translators were eminently qualified, both by their learning and their piety, to produce an accurate and faithful version of the Bible in the English language...” (*Objections to a Baptist Version of the New Testament*, 1837, pp. 42-45).

Alexander McClure, author of *Translators Revived*, 1855: “As to the capability of those men, we may say again that by the good Providence of God, their work was undertaken in a fortunate time. Not only had the English language, that singular compound, then ripened to its full perfection, but the study of Greek, and of the oriental tongues ... had then been carried to a greater extent in England than ever before or since. ... it is confidently expected that the reader of these pages will yield to the conviction, that all the

colleges of Great Britain and America, even in this proud day of boastings, could not bring together the same number of divines equally qualified by learning and piety for the great undertaking. Few indeed are the living names worthy to be enrolled with these mighty men. It would be impossible to convent out of any one Christian denomination, or out of all, a body of translators, on whom the whole Christian community would bestow such confidence as is reposed upon that illustrious company, or who would prove themselves as deserving of such confidence.”

Arthur Cleveland Coxe, Episcopalian bishop in western New York, exalted the skills of the King James translators in his “Apology for the Common English Bible” of 1857. He called them “those giants of Scriptural scholarship” and the “great scholars of the old time, whose reputation and labours have received the homage of men of learning for more than two centuries complete.” After describing some of the individual translators, Coxe concluded: “A biographical history of all who had part in the Translation, is a desideratum, and might be an effectual antidote to the itch for superseding their work, which seems to trouble so many in our days” (Coxe, *An Apology for the Common English Bible*, pp, 21, 22). (A “disideratum” is “that which is not possessed, but which is desirable; any perfection or improvement which is wanted,” Webster 1828).

Dean John Burgon (1883), one of the greatest textual scholars of the 19th century: “... the plain fact being that the men of 1611 produced a work of real genius: seizing with generous warmth the meaning and intention of the sacred Writers. ... Verily, those men understood their craft! ‘There were giants in those days.’ ... the Spirit of their God was mightily upon them” (*The Revision Revised*, 1883, pp. 167, 196).

Edward F. Hills (1956, 1979), who had a doctorate in textual criticism from Harvard: “Judged even by modern standards, their knowledge of the biblical languages was second to none” (*The King James Version Defended*, p. 114).

David Otis Fuller (1986), Princeton-educated Pastor of Wealthy Street Baptist Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan: “God Himself, I believe, was in the choosing of those great scholars of 1611. NEVER in all world history has any such a group of learned and tremendous geniuses ever gathered together. The Chairman of the 1611 committee, Lancelot Andrews, was fluent in 20 languages

and spent 5 hours a day in prayer” (D.O. Fuller in a letter to David Cloud, February 7, 1986).

3. The translators had the noble and godly objective of opening the eternal Word of God to English-speaking readers:

“Translation it is that openeth the window, to let in the light; that breaketh the shell, that we may eat the kernel; that putteth aside the curtain, that we may look into the most Holy place; that removeth the cover of the well, that we may come by the water, even as Jacob rolled away the stone from the mouth of the well, by which means the flocks of Laban were watered. Indeed without translation into the vulgar tongue, the unlearned are but like children at Jacobs well (which was deep) without a bucket or some thing to draw with: or as that person mentioned by Isaiah, to whom when a sealed book was delivered, with the motion: ‘Read this, I pray thee,’ he was fain to answer, ‘I cannot, for it is sealed’” (“Translators to the Reader”).

4. The translators knew that the great wisdom necessary to produce an accurate Bible translation can only come from God.

“To that purpose there were many chosen, that were greater in other men’s eyes than in their own, and that sought the truth rather than their own praise . . . And in what sort did these assemble? In the trust of their own knowledge, or of their sharpness of wit, or deepness of judgment, as it were an arm of flesh? At no hand. They trusted in him that hath the key of David, opening, and no man shutting; they prayed to the Lord, the Father of our Lord, to the effect that St. Augustine did, O let thy Scriptures be my pure delight; let me not be deceived in them, neither let me deceive by them. In this confidence and with this devotion, did they assemble together; not too many, lest one should trouble another; and yet many, lest many things haply might escape them” (“Translators to the Reader”).

5. They understood that the Bible is the infallible Word of God. To my knowledge, a loftier testimony of the Bible’s divine inspiration has never been written than that which is contained in the Preface to the 1611 King James Bible.

“It is not only an armour, but also a whole armory of weapons, both offensive, and defensive; whereby we may save our selves and put the enemy to flight. It is not an herb, but a tree, or rather a whole paradise of trees and the leaves for medicine. It is not a pot of Manna, or a cruse of oil, which were for memory only, or for a meal’s meat or two, but as it were a shower of heavenly bread sufficient for a whole host, be it never so great; and as it were a whole cellar full of oil vessels; whereby all our necessities may be provided for, and our debts discharged. In a word, it is a Panary of wholesome food, against fenowed [moldy] traditions; a Physicians-shop (Saint Basil calleth it) of preservatives against poisoned heresies; a Pandect* of profitable laws, against rebellious spirits; a treasury of most costly jewels,

against beggarly rudiments; Finally a fountain of most pure water springing up unto everlasting life. And what marvel? The original thereof being from heaven, not from earth; the author being God, not man; the editer [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; the matter, verity, piety, purity, uprightness; the form, God's word, God's testimony, God's oracles, the word of truth, the word of salvation, etc.; the effects, light of understanding, stableness of persuasion, repentance from dead works, newness of life, holiness, peace, joy in the holy Ghost; lastly, the end and reward of the study thereof, fellowship with the Saints, participation of the heavenly nature, fruition of an inheritance immortal, undefiled, and that never shall fade away; Happy is the man that delighteth in the Scripture, and thrice happy that meditateth in it day and night" ("Translators to the Reader"). [* A *pandect* is a treatise which contains the whole of any science.]

6. The translators were not paid for their work.

A few of the translators were awarded with ecclesiastical positions that provided them with an income.

Except for one case in which a KJV translator (John Harmer) was paid 50 pounds, only the 12 men who did the final revision received any direct financial payment and their wage was a weekly stipend of 30 shillings for basic expenses as they met in London for the nine months required to complete that portion of the work. This was paid by the king's printer Robert Barker.

The final revision committee met at Stationers Hall. "The Stationers' charter established a monopoly on book production ensured that once a member had asserted ownership of a text (or 'copy') no other member would publish it. This is the origin of the term 'copyright'. Members asserted such ownership by entering it in the 'entry book of copies' or the Stationers' Company Register. In 1695 this monopoly was diminished and in 1710 Parliament passed the first copyright act. In 1606 the Company bought Abergavenny House in Ave Maria Lane and moved out of Peters College. The new hall burnt down in the Great Fire of 1666 along with books to the value of about £40,000. It was rebuilt; its present interior is much as it was when it reopened in 1673. The Court Room was added in 1748 and in 1800 the external façade was remodelled to its present form" (*Wikipedia.com*).

7. King James had nothing to do with the translation itself.

THE PRINTING

The King James Bible was published in 1611. It was printed by Robert Barker in a large volume bearing on its title page the following inscription: “The Holy Bible, containing the Old Testament & the New: Newly Translated out of the Original tongues; & with the former Translations diligently compared and revised by His Majesties special Commandment.” Robert Barker’s father Christopher had obtained an exclusive patent as the Royal Printer in 1577. This was transferred to Robert in 1589. Thus when James I ascended the throne, Robert Barker held this position. He started printing Geneva Bibles in 1600 and printed the first Bishops Bible that same year.

There were seven printings of the first edition. The Gene Scott collection claims to be the only collection that has all seven -- <http://www.drgenescott.org/stn27.htm>. This collection is located in The Crystal Cathedral, Garden Grove, California.

There were many mistakes in the first printings. The most infamous is the omission of “not” from the seventh commandment in Exodus 20:14. Copies containing this error were called “the wicked Bible.” (The printer was fined the massive sum of two or three thousand pounds by the King. See Scrivener, *The Authorized Edition of the English Bible*, p. 25.)

THE NATURE OF THE TRANSLATION

1. The King James Bible is a masterpiece of Bible translation. It conforms to the Hebrew and Greek. Its English language is peerless. It has been called “The Miracle of English Prose.”

I have about 100 books in my library that extol the excellence of the King James Bible. The following statements could be greatly multiplied.

In his book *The Word of God in English: Criteria for Excellence in Bible Translation* (Wheaton: Crossway Book, 2002), Dr. Leland Ryken, professor of English at Wheaton College, continually applauds the KJV, praising its beauty, dignity, and power. He uses it as an example of what good Bible translation is all about. He calls for modern translation work to be done after “the King James tradition” (p. 282, 284). The book contains many quotations exalting the KJV.

“peerless literary masterpiece” (p. 270)
 “unquestionably the most beautiful book in the world” (p. 267)
 “the noblest monument of English prose” (p. 258)
 “incomparably the best English translation in its rhythm” (p. 259)
 “when it comes to stylistic range and flexibility, the King James Bible is peerless” (p. 227)
 “the touchstone of affective power” (p. 206)
 “matchless in its literary qualities among all English translations” (p. 188)
 “the supremely literary English translation” (p. 163)
 “immeasurably superior” (p. 163)
 “the touchstone of literary excellence” (p. 62)
 “stylistically the greatest English Bible translation ever produced” (p. 51)

Matthew Poole, 1669: “In the English version published in 1611, occur many specimens of an edition truly gigantic, of uncommon skill in the original tongues, or extraordinary critical acuteness and discrimination, which have been of great use to me very frequently in the most difficult texts” (Poole, *Synopsis Criticorum*; cited from James Lister, *The Excellence of the Authorized Version of the Sacred Scriptures Defended against the Socinians*, 1820, p. 17).

Edward Pocock, Commentary on Micah, 1685: “That translation from our own which we follow is such and so speakable to the original, as that we might well choose among others to follow it, were it not our own, and established by authority among us.”

Jonathan Swift, 1712: “The translators of our Bible were masters of an English style much fitter for that work than any which we see in our present writings, which I take to be owing to the simplicity that runs through the whole” (Jonathan Swift, *A Proposal for Correcting, Improving, and Ascertaining the English Tongue*, London, 1712).

Adam Clarke, 1810: “Those who have compared most of the European translations with the original, have not scrupled to say, that the English translation of the Bible made under the direction of king James I, is the most accurate and faithful of the whole. Nor is this its only praise; THE TRANSLATORS HAVE SEIZED THE VERY SPIRIT AND SOUL OF THE ORIGINAL AND EXPRESSED THIS ALMOST EVERYWHERE WITH PATHOS AND ENERGY. The

original, from which it was taken, is alone superior to the Bible which was translated by the authority of king James. ... Besides, our translators have not only made a standard translation, but they have made their translation the standard of our language. ... This is an opinion in which my heart, my judgment, and my conscience coincide” (Adam Clarke, General Introduction to his *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, 1810-26).

John Dowling, Baptist leader in America and author of *History of Romanism*, 1850: “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’...” (*The Old-Fashioned Bible, or Ten Reasons against the Proposed Baptist Version of the New Testament*, 1850, pp. 11, 12, 13).

Joseph Philpot, 1861: “They [the KJV translators] were deeply penetrated with a reverence for the word of God, and, therefore, they felt themselves bound by a holy constraint to discharge their trust in the most faithful way. UNDER THIS DIVINE CONSTRAINT THEY WERE LED TO GIVE US A TRANSLATION UNEQUALLED FOR FAITHFULNESS TO THE ORIGINAL, AND YET AT THE SAME TIME CLOTHED IN THE PUREST AND SIMPLEST ENGLISH. ... No one can read, with an enlightened eye, the discourses of our Lord without seeing what a divine simplicity ran through all His words; and our translators were favoured with heavenly wisdom to translate these words of the Lord into language as simple as that in which they first fell from His lips. What can exceed the simplicity and yet beauty and blessedness of such declarations as these?--‘I am the bread of life;’ ‘I am the door;’ ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life;’ ‘I lay down My life for the sheep;’ ‘I am the vine;’ ‘God is love;’ ‘By grace ye are saved.’ Even where the words are not strictly monosyllabic they are of the simplest kind, and as such are adapted to the capacity of every child of God, in whatever rank of life he may be. The blessedness of having not only such a Bible, but possessing such a translation of it can never be sufficiently valued.

... it is because the language of our Bible is such pure, simple, unaffected, idiomatic, intelligible English that it has become so thoroughly English a book, and has interwoven itself with our very laws and language” (Joseph Philpot, *Gospel Standard*, February 1861). [COMMENT: As we have seen, the purity and simplicity of the language of the KJV regularly goes back to William Tyndale, and some times even to Wycliffe.]

William Muir, *Our Grand Old Bible*, 1911: “The influence of the Authorised Version, alike on our religion and our literature, can never be exaggerated. ... The Authorized Version has often been called A WELL OF ENGLISH UNDEFILED, and much of its purity is due to the fact that its water was drawn from the ancient springs. It has the universal note which gives it a place among the immortals. IT HAS THE DIVINE TOUCH, EVEN IN ITS DICTION, WHICH LIFTS IT ABOVE THE LIMITATIONS OF LOCALITY AND TIME, AND MAKES IT VALID AND LIVING FOR ALL THE AGES. Like A RARE JEWEL FITLY SET, the sacred truths of Scripture have found such suitable expression in it, that we can hardly doubt that they filled those who made it with reverence and awe, so that they walked softly in the Holy Presence. ... THE ENGLISH BIBLE IS STILL FRESH AND MIGHTY, EVEN IF IT HAS ARCHAIC OR OBSOLETE WORDS. IT HAS WAXED OLD, BUT IT HAS NOT DECAYED. ITS YOUTH ABIDES, AND THE SUN NEVER SETS ON ITS SPHERE OF INFLUENCE. Many volumes have perished since it first saw the light; but its message is as modern as ever. It has not only kept up-to-date, it has anticipated every need of men, and still responds to every new demand” (Muir, *Our Grand Old Bible*, 1911, pp. 131, 192, 238).

Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, critic, scholar, and educational reformer, 1913: “I grant you, to be sure, that the path to the Authorised Version was made straight by previous translators, notably by William Tyndale. I grant you that Tyndale was a man of genius, and Wyclif before him a man of genius. I grant you that the forty-seven men who produced the Authorised Version worked in the main upon Tyndale’s version, taking that for their basis. ... Individual genius such as Tyndale’s or even Shakespeare’s, though we cannot explain it, we may admit as occurring somehow, and not incredibly, in the course of nature. But THAT A LARGE COMMITTEE OF FORTY-SEVEN SHOULD HAVE GONE STEADILY THROUGH THE GREAT MASS OF HOLY WRIT, SELDOM

INTERFERING WITH GENIUS, YET, WHEN INTERFERING, SELDOM MISSING TO IMPROVE: THAT A COMMITTEE OF FORTY-SEVEN SHOULD HAVE CAPTURED (OR EVEN, LET US SAY, SHOULD HAVE RETAINED AND IMPROVED) A RHYTHM SO PERSONAL, SO CONSTANT, THAT OUR BIBLE HAS THE VOICE OF ONE AUTHOR SPEAKING THROUGH ITS MANY MOUTHS: THAT, GENTLEMEN, IS A WONDER BEFORE WHICH I CAN ONLY STAND HUMBLE AND AGHAST. Does it or does it not strike you as queer that the people who set you ‘courses of study’ in English Literature never include the Authorised Version, which not only intrinsically but historically is out and away the greatest book of English Prose. ... the Authorised Version astounds me, as I believe it will astound you when you compare it with earlier translations. Aristotle (it has been said) invented Chance to cover the astonishing fact that there were certain phenomena for which he found himself wholly unable to account. Just so, if one may compare very small things with very great, I spoke of the Authorised Version as a ‘miracle.’ It was, it remains, marvellous to me. ... were this University to limit me to three texts on which to preach English Literature to you, I should choose the Bible in our Authorised Version, Shakespeare, and Homer (though it were but in a prose translation)” (*On the Art of Writing, Lectures delivered before the University of Cambridge, 1913-14*).

John Livingston Lowes (1867-1945), American scholar of English literature, 1936, called the King James Bible “THE NOBLEST MONUMENT OF ENGLISH PROSE.” This was the title of the chapter that he contributed to *Essays in Appreciation* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1936).

Arthur Clutton-Brock, essayist, critic, and journalist, 1938, said: “The Authorized Version of the Bible is a piece of literature without any parallel in modern times. Other countries of course, have their translations of the Bible, but they are not great works of art” (Vernon Storr, editor, *The English Bible: Essays by Various Writers*, Clutton-Brock, “The English Bible,” 1938).

H. Wheeler Robinson, *Ancient and English Versions of the Bible*, 1940: “The Authorized Version is a miracle and a landmark. Its felicities are manifold, its music has entered into the very blood and marrow of English thought and speech, it has given countless proverbs and proverbial phrases even to the unlearned and the irreligious. There is no corner of English life, no conversation ribald

or reverent it has not adorned. Embedded in its tercentenary wording is the language of a century earlier. IT HAS BOTH BROADENED AND RETARDED THE STREAM OF ENGLISH SPEECH” (Robinson, *Ancient and English Versions of the Bible*, p. 205).

Henry Louis Mencken (1880-1956), “the most prominent newspaperman, book reviewer, and political commentator of his day,” said this about the King James Bible: “It is the most beautiful of all the translations of the Bible; indeed, IT IS PROBABLY THE MOST BEAUTIFUL PIECE OF WRITING IN ALL THE LITERATURE OF THE WORLD. ... Its English is extraordinarily simple, pure, eloquent, lovely. It is a mine of lordly and incomparable poetry, at once the most stirring and the most touching ever heard of” (Gustavas Paine, Preface, *The Learned Men*).

Gustavus Paine, author of *The Men Behind the KJV*, 1977, wrote: “... not only was theirs the best of the English Bibles; there is, in no modern language, a Bible worthy to be compared with it as literature. ... indeed the 1611 rhythms have been potent to affect writing, speaking, and thinking ever since the learned men produced them. ... They knew how to make the Bible scare the wits out of you and then calm you, all in English as superb as the Hebrew and the Greek” (pp. 169, 171, 172).

When Harvard University Press published *The Literary Guide to the Bible* in 1987, they selected the KJV for the literary analysis of each of the Bible books. “... our reasons for doing so must be obvious: it is the version most English readers associate with the literary qualities of the Bible, and IT IS STILL ARGUABLY THE VERSION THAT BEST PRESERVES THE LITERARY EFFECTS OF THE ORIGINAL LANGUAGES” (*The Literary Guide to the Bible*, p. 7).

Jonathan Yardley, *Washington Post*: “King James Bible is THE GREATEST WORK EVER WRITTEN IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE, PERIOD” (quoted in Adam Nicholson, *God’s Secretaries*, in the section “Praise for God’s Secretaries” which follows the table of contents).

David Daniell, 2003: “On a historical scale, the sheer longevity of this version is a phenomenon, without parallel. ... IN THE STORY OF THE EARTH WE LIVE ON, ITS INFLUENCE CANNOT BE CALCULATED. ITS WORDS HAVE BEEN FOUND TO HAVE A UNIQUE QUALITY, of being able both to lift up a dedicated soul

higher than had been thought, and to reach even below the lowest depths of human experience” (David Daniell, *The Bible in English*, p. 427).

The style of the King James Bible is not that of the 17th century but is an English style molded by the Hebrew and Greek.

“... the English of the King James Version is not the English of the early 17th century. To be exact, it is not a type of English that was ever spoken anywhere. IT IS BIBLICAL ENGLISH, which was not used on ordinary occasions even by the translators who produced the King James Version. As H. Wheeler Robinson (1940) pointed out, one need only compare the preface written by the translators with the text of their translation to feel the difference in style. And the observations of W.A. Irwin (1952) are to the same purport. The King James Version, he reminds us, owes its merit, not to 17th-century English—which was very different—but to its faithful translation of the original. ITS STYLE IS THAT OF THE HEBREW AND OF THE NEW TESTAMENT GREEK. Even in their use of *thee* and *thou* the translators were not following 17th-century English usage but biblical usage, for at the time these translators were doing their work these singular forms had already been replaced by the plural *you* in polite conversation” (Edward Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, p. 218).

“Hallam ... [declares] that the English of the Jacobean version [the King James Bible] ‘is not the English of Daniel, or Raleigh, or Bacon’—in fact, that ‘it is not the language of the reign of James I.’ ... this is strictly true, and for the reason that he assigns, namely, ‘in consequence of the principle of adherence to the original versions which had been kept up since the time of Henry VIII’” (Albert Cook, *The Authorized Version of the Bible and Its Influence*, 1910).

“This English is there to serve the original not to replace it. It speaks in its master’s voice, and is not the English you would have heard on the street, then or ever. It took up its life in a new and distinct dimension of linguistic space, SOMEWHERE BETWEEN ENGLISH AND GREEK (OR, FOR THE OLD TESTAMENT, BETWEEN ENGLISH AND HEBREW). These scholars were not pulling the language of the scriptures into the English they knew and used at home. The words of the King James Bible are just as much English pushed towards the condition of a foreign language as a foreign language translated into English. It was, in other words, more important to make English godly than to make the words of God into the sort of prose that any Englishmen would have written, and that secretarial relationship to the original languages of the scriptures shaped the translation” (Adam Nicholson, *God’s Secretaries*, pp. 210, 211).

Professor Gerald Hammond of the University of Manchester, England, said the KJV translators “have taken care to reproduce the syntactic details of the originals,” and, “At its best, which means

often, the Authorized Version has the kind of transparency which makes it possible for the reader to see the original clearly. It lacks the narrow interpretative bias of modern versions, and is the stronger for it" (Gerald Hammond, "English Translations of the Bible," *The Literary Guide to the Bible*, eds. Robert Alter and Frank Kermode, Harvard University Press, 1987, pp. 664, 656).

The King James Bible has a proper "biblical" style that is understandable but exalted and reverent, having the proper "rhythm" and "tone." We have already seen that "majesty" was one of the objectives of the KJV translators.

"The Bible is not a modern, human book. It is not as new as the morning newspaper, and no translation should suggest this. If the Bible were this new, it would not be the Bible. On the contrary, the Bible is an ancient, divine Book, which nevertheless is always new because in it God reveals Himself. Hence THE LANGUAGE OF THE BIBLE SHOULD BE VENERABLE AS WELL AS INTELLIGIBLE, and the King James Version fulfills these two requirements better than any other Bible in English" (Edward F. Hills, p. 219).

"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'" (Leland Ryken, *The Word of God in English*, p. 182).

"GOOD RHYTHM FOR A BIBLE IS LIKE A QUALIFYING EXAM: If a translation cannot measure up on this matter, it is not in the running to be a superior Bible for public use and oral reading in more private situations. ... The best test of rhythm is simply to read passages aloud. ... If in oral reading a passage ebbs and flows smoothly, avoids abrupt stops between words and phrases where possible, and provides a sense of continuity, it is rhythmically excellent. If a translation clutters the flow of language and is consistently staccato in effect, it is rhythmically inferior. ... All of these considerations make rhythm an essential translation issue, not a peripheral one. For a book that is read aloud as often as the Bible is, and for a book whose utterances are so frequently charged with strong feeling and sublime ideas, excellent rhythm should be regarded as a given" (Ryken, pp. 257, 259).

"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)

2. The King James Version of 1611 was intended to be a study Bible. It contained 8,422 marginal notes. Of these, 4,111 gave a more literal meaning of the Hebrew and Greek, 2,156 gave alternative translations, and 67 gave variant readings. In the New Testament there are 37 variant readings in the marginal notes. “As the marginal notes indicate, the King James translators did not regard their work as perfect or inspired, but they did consider it to be a trustworthy reproduction of God’s holy Word, and as such they commended it to their Christian readers” (Edward Hills, p. 216).

3. The King James Bible gained general ascendancy over the popular Geneva Bible within a couple of decades. It was natural that the Geneva Bible would retain its popularity for some time. It had been THE English Bible for 50 years and had become an intimate part of the private lives, ministry, and public thinking of the English people.

By the 1630s, though, the Geneva Bible ceased to be imported from Holland.

During the transitional period many quoted both from Geneva and the King James. This was true of the poet John Milton, author of *Paradise Lost*; John Bunyan, Baptist preacher and author of *Pilgrim’s Progress*; and Oliver Cromwell who led the government from the beheading of Charles I to the coronation of Charles II.

4. The King James Version is still revered by millions of English-speaking people. In spite of the vast advertising campaign that has been waged for 100 years in favor of the modern versions, by the mid-1990s the KJV was still outselling all opponents.

In 1994 the following appeared in the preface to *The King James Bible Word Book*: “Despite the availability of many new translations and paraphrases of God’s Word, THE VENERABLE KING JAMES VERSION STILL POSTS MORE SALES EACH YEAR THAN ANY OTHER” (*The King James Bible Word Book*, Publisher’s Preface, p. iii).

In 1995, I wrote to Thomas Nelson Publishers to find out what English version had the greatest sales, and they replied that the King James Bible still had the greatest sales in the United States. "In your fax dated March 27th, you mentioned a statistic that the 'NIV version leads the King James Version in sales since 1986.' This perspective is usually based on data reported by Spring Arbor Distributors which footnotes in their report that these figures are based on their distribution only. ALL GENERAL DISTRIBUTORS SELL MORE KJV than NIV. Unfortunately there is no industry-wide report available" (Philip Stoner, Vice President, Biblical and Religious Reference Publishing, Thomas Nelson, April 4, 1995).

A 1995 poll showed that nearly all Americans own at least one version of the Bible and that approximately two-thirds of those surveyed claim the Authorized Version as their main translation (Thomas Holland, *Crowned with Glory*, chapter 5, "The English Jewel," citing information from Jennifer Lowe, "Buy the Book," *Dayton Daily News*, Dayton Ohio, Sept. 16, 1995, p. 7C).

TYNDALE'S INFLUENCE UPON THE KJV

1. The King James Version is a revision of the Tyndale Bible. Comparisons have been made, showing, for example, that nine-tenths of the Authorized Version in the First Epistle of John and five-sixths of the Epistle of Ephesians are directly from Tyndale. "These proportions are maintained throughout the entire New Testament" (Price, *The Ancestry of Our English Bible*, p. 251).

Tyndale Bible, Philippians 2:5-13 –

"Let the same mind be in you the which was in Christ Jesus: which, being in the shape of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God. Nevertheless he made himself of no reputation, and took on him the shape of a servant, and became like unto men, and was found in his apparel as a man. He humbled himself and became obedient unto the death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God hath exalted him, and given him a name above all names: that in the name of Jesus should every knee bow, both of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under earth, and that all tongues should confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord, unto the praise of God the Father. Wherefore, my dearly beloved, as ye have always

obeyed, not when I was present only, but now much more in mine absence, even so perform your own health with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you, both the will and also the deed, even of good will.”

2. Much of the powerful, direct, energetic style of the King James Bible is Tyndale’s. British historian James Froude observed: “Of the translation itself (the 1611), though since that time it has been many times revised and altered, we may say that it is substantially the Bible with which we are all familiar. The peculiar genius—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, 1893, p. 84).

3. The King James Bible is also a significant improvement over the Tyndale as well as over the Geneva.

“In a cumulative way, all the virtues of the various translations which preceded it were gathered up. **Tyndale** had coined words and phrases like ‘peace maker,’ ‘passover,’ ‘long-suffering,’ ‘scapegoat,’ ‘the Lord’s Anointed,’ ‘flowing with milk and honey,’ ‘filthy lucre,’ ‘the salt of the earth,’ and ‘the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.’ **Coverdale**, ‘tender mercies,’ ‘respect of persons,’ ‘lovingkindness,’ ‘pride of life,’ ‘enter thou into the joy of the Lord,’ ‘the valley of the shadow of death’; the **Geneva Bible**, ‘Vanity of vanities,’ ‘except a man be born again,’ ‘smite them hip and thigh,’ ‘remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth,’ ‘Solomon in all his glory,’ ‘a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump,’ and other unforgettable turn of phrase. ... From the **Bishops’ Bible** came: ‘the voice of one crying in the wilderness,’ ‘less than the least of all the saints,’ ‘Sufficient unto the day, is the evil thereof,’ and ‘Rend your hearts and not your garments.’ And from the **Second Wycliffe** version came ‘gave up the ghost,’ ‘well stricken in age,’ ‘held his peace,’ ‘three score and ten,’ ‘strait is the gate and narrow the way,’ and ‘a well of water springing up into everlasting life.’” (Benson Bobrick, *Wide as the Waters: The Story of the English Bible and the Revolution It Inspired*, 2002, p. 258)

Consider Genesis 1:1-2

Tyndale: "In the beginning God created heaven and earth. The earth was void and empty, and darkness was upon the deep, and the spirit of God moved upon the water.

Geneva: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the deep, and the Spirit of God moved upon the waters."

KJV: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters."

The Geneva is an improvement over the Tyndale, and with a few slight modifications the KJV translators improve the Geneva. "These are slight and marvellous changes. Some are almost purely rhythmic. ... The commas after 'heaven' and in the second verse are signs to pause in the reading of it, and the colon after 'deep' marks a slightly longer rest. In these slightest of ways, Andrewes [the head of the KJV committee that translated the Pentateuch] introduces two new qualities to add to Tyndale's: an aural fluency and the sense of ease which comes from that; and, allied to that ease, a pace of deliberate and magisterial slowness, no hurry here, pausing in its hugeness, those bass colours in the vocabulary matched by a heavy, soft drumming of the rhythm. It is as solemn and orderly as the beginning of a steady and majestic march" (Adam Nicholson, *God's Secretaries*, pp. 193, 194).

Consider Psalm 23:6

Geneva: "Doubtless kindness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, And I shall remain a long season in the house of the Lord."

KJV: "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."

Consider Psalm 121:1

Geneva: "I will lift mine eyes unto the mountains, from whence my help shall come."

KJV: "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help."

Consider the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6:9-13

Tyndale: "O our father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Let thy kingdom come. Thy will be fulfilled, as well in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, even as we forgive our trespassers. And lead us not into

temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and power, and the glory for ever. Amen.”

KJV: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.”

Consider Matthew 11:28-30

Tyndale: “Come unto me all ye that labour and are laden and I will ease you. Take my yoke on 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.”

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.”

Consider Mark 14:4

Tyndale: “When he was in Bethania, in the house of Simon the leper, even as he sat at meat, there came a woman with an alabaster box of ointment, called narde, that was pure and costly, and she brake the box and poured it on his head. There were some that disdained in themselves, and said: what needed this waste of ointment? For it might have been sold for more than two hundred pence, and been given unto the poor. And they grudged against her.”

KJV: “And being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on his head. And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of the ointment made? For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor. And they murmured against her.”

“Tyndale is flat and only half accurate. ‘What needed this waste of ointment?’ is a lumpen sentence compared with ‘Why was this waste of the ointment made?’ Tyndale’s version does not embrace the strange ambiguity of making something by wasting it which the Jacobean sentence conveys with economy, accuracy and its own form of resonant elegance. The King James Version steps beyond the question of liberalism verses gracefulness. It has plumbed and searched for the essence of the meaning and in that way is an exercise in passionate exactness. It doesn’t choose between the clear and the rich but makes its elucidation into a kind of richness. It is a sleight of hand, but this is the central paradox of the translation: the richness of the words somehow represents a

substance that goes beyond mere words and that is its triumph” (Nicholson, p. 197).

Consider Luke 22:20

Tyndale: “... This is the cup, the new testament, in my blood, which shall for you be shed.”

KJV: “... This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.”

By a simple rearrangement of the words, the KJV improves the sound dramatically.

Consider John 3:16

Geneva: “For God so loveth the world, that he hath given his only begotten Son: that none that believe in him, should perish, but have everlasting life.”

Tyndale: “For God so loveth the world, that he hath given his only son, that none that believe in him, should perish: but should have everlasting life.”

KJV: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son: that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

The KJV not only follows the Greek more precisely than its predecessors, it also improves the English in small but perceptible ways.

THE KING JAMES BIBLE’S WORLDWIDE INFLUENCE

1. It had a powerful influence upon England, producing spiritual reformation and making it into a great missionary-sending nation. We have examined this under the section on the Tyndale Bible.

2. It also had a strong role in the creation of the United States of America, a nation that in former days particularly was a spiritual light to the entire world. America was created as a bastion of religious liberty by those who believed the Bible and were fleeing persecution in England and Europe. The King James Bible had a powerful influence upon America’s founding political documents. And it built the hundreds of thousands of churches that once made her great, morally and spiritually.

3. It had a powerful influence upon the English language itself.

The English language is filled with sayings that come directly from the King James Bible. These have become so much a part of the language that most English speakers are not aware that they come from the Bible.

A few examples are “lick the dust,” “land of the living,” “from strength to strength,” “pride goeth before a fall,” “the skin of his teeth,” “a thorn in the flesh,” “the scales fall from your eyes,” “salt of the earth,” “fight the good fight,” “turn the other cheek,” “the pride of life,” “labour of love,” “root of all evil,” “a soft answer,” “the fat of the land,” and “a land of milk and honey.”

Consider the following testimony to the literary affect of the King James Bible from Cleland Boyd McAfee’s *The Greatest English Classic: A Study of the King James Version of the Bible and Its Influence on Life and Literature* (1912), chapter IV, “The Influence of the King James Version on English Literature” --

“The first and most notable fact regarding the influence of the Bible on English literature is the remarkable extent of that influence. It is literally everywhere. If every Bible in any considerable city were destroyed, the Book could be restored in all its essential parts from the quotations on the shelves of the city public library. There are works, covering almost all the great literary writers, devoted especially to showing how much the Bible has influenced them.

“The literary effect of the King James version at first was less than its social effect; but in that very fact lies a striking literary influence. For a long time it formed virtually the whole literature which was readily accessible to ordinary Englishmen. We get our phrases from a thousand books. The common talk of an intelligent man shows the effect of many authors upon his thinking. Our fathers got their phrases from one great book. Their writing and their speaking show the effect of that book. ...

“First, the style of the King James version has influenced English literature markedly. Professor Gardiner opens one of his essays with the dictum that ‘in all study of English literature, if there be any one axiom which may be accepted without question, it is that the ultimate standard of English prose style is set by the King James version of the Bible’ (*Atlantic Monthly*, May, 1900, p. 684). You almost measure the strength of writing by its agreement with the predominant traits of this version. ...

“The second element which English literature finds in the Bible is its language. The words of the Bible are the familiar ones of the English tongue, and have been kept familiar by the use of the Bible. The result is that ‘the path of literature lies parallel to that of religion. They are old and dear companions, brethren indeed of one blood; not always agreeing, to be sure; squabbling rather in true brotherly fashion now

and then; occasionally falling out very seriously and bitterly; but still interdependent and necessary to each other' (Chapman, *English Literature in Account with Religion*). Years ago a writer remarked that every student of English literature, or of English speech, finds three works or subjects referred to, or quoted from, more frequently than others. These are the Bible, tales of Greek and Roman mythology, and Aesop's Fables. Of these three, certainly the Bible furnishes the largest number of references. There is reason for that. A writer wants an audience. Very few men can claim to be independent of the public for which they write. There is nothing the public will be more apt to understand and appreciate quickly than a passing reference to the English Bible. So it comes about that when Dickens is describing the injustice of the Murdstones to little David Copperfield, he can put the whole matter before us in a parenthesis: "Though there was One once who set a child in the midst of the disciples." Dickens knew that his readers would at once catch the meaning of that reference, and would feel the contrast between the scene he was describing and that simple scene. Take any of the great books of literature and black out the phrases which manifestly come directly from the English Bible, and you would mark them beyond recovery" (McAfee, *The Greatest English Classic*).

4. It had a powerful influence upon the great missionary movement of the 17th to the 20th centuries. The King James Bible was almost the exclusive Bible of English-speaking missionaries for three and a half centuries, in which the Gospel went to the ends of the earth. In many cases, the King James Bible was the basis for translations into other languages.

5. Even in the 21st century, the King James Bible continues to be the Bible of tens of thousands of congregations throughout the world and of thousands of missionaries. It continues to be used as the basis for foreign-language translations. In recent decades fresh translations have been made from the King James Bible into Korean, Nepali, Thai, and other languages.

SUMMARY OF WHY WE BELIEVE THE KING JAMES BIBLE IS STILL THE BEST ENGLISH VERSION

The following is from "The King James Version of the Bible" by Steven Houck, minister in the Protestant Reformed Church (http://www.prca.org/pamphlets/pamphlet_9.html) --

Even though the King James Version has its weaknesses, it is an excellent translation and by far the best version available today. We must not be taken in by the modern versions and their claims. Our 400-year-old Bible is to be preferred above all others because

it is better than them all.

1. It was translated by men who are unsurpassed in their knowledge of Biblical studies.
2. The translators were pious men of God who believed in the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures.
3. It is the mature fruit of generations of English translations as well as the careful work of its translators.
4. The King James Version is based upon the Received Text rather than the critical Greek text of modern versions.
5. It is a word-for-word translation which faithfully and accurately reflects the originals.
6. The language is one of reverence and respect which gives honor to the majesty of its Author.
7. Of all the English versions of today, it alone is the Bible of the Reformation.
8. Our spiritual forefathers thought so highly of it that they were willing to suffer and even die for it.
9. It is the version which has been recognized for generations and generations as the Bible God has given to His English-speaking Church.

SOME FINAL QUESTIONS ABOUT THE KING JAMES BIBLE

1. 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:

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.

The crown of England has held the copyright to the King James Bible from the beginning.

The title page to the first edition of the King James Bible stated, “Appointed to be read in Churches.”

In 1616 the king issued a command that only the King James Bible was to be printed in England.

Conclusion: 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.”

2. Was the King James Bible ever copyrighted?

ANSWER:

The King James Bible was produced under the direct authority of the British Crown and is owned and “copyrighted” by the crown of England.

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.

The universities of Oxford and Cambridge also possess the right to print editions of the crown copyrighted Bibles.

“Annotated study Bibles escape the monopoly by being labeled as ‘Bible commentaries,’ and can also use the

text” (Freedictionary.com).

Effectively, there is no copyright outside of Britain. The KJV has been published without restriction in America, for example, since the revolution in the late 18th century.

3. Was King James a homosexual?

ANSWER:

The accusation that King James I was a homosexual has often been made, but we need to be cautious about accepting it.

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.).

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).

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).

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).

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).

While we do not believe 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 two men burned alive in England for their faith were 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.

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.

4. Were the King James translators universally godly and doctrinally without blame?

ANSWER:

The answer to this question, of course, is no.

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, Richard Thomson of the Westminster Old Testament committee, was immoderate in the consumption of alcohol.

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.

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.

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. Even with William Tyndale, there is no evidence that he was ever scripturally baptized or a member of a baptistic New Testament assembly. These are matters that we have to leave with God.

5. Since the KJV translators were so flawed, how do they differ from the authors of modern textual criticism that you reject?

ANSWER:

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." There was a dramatic change in the times during the 19th century and the Bible's inspiration began to be denied in ever widening circles, and from its inception modern textual criticism has been deeply infected with this spirit of end-time unbelief. Very few of the recognized names in this field have escaped the taint of rationalism.

It is the difference between a wrong doctrine and a damnable doctrine. A true child of God can hold some wrong doctrines, such as in eschatology or ecclesiology; but he cannot hold damnable doctrines. 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.

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.

6. Hasn't the KJV been revised and updated in thousands of places?

ANSWER:

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.

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). Cambridge University Press published edited editions in 1629 and 1638.

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" (Alexander McClure, *The Revision Revised*, 1855). The revision was made by collating the then current editions of Oxford and Cambridge with those of 1611 and 1701.

All of the changes were of a minor nature, such as the following:

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:

Psalms 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.

The use of italics was more standardized and its use was expanded, indicating words that are not explicitly in the Hebrew and Greek but are implied and "being so necessary to the sense that the English reader would be perplexed or go wrong without it" (Scrivener, *The Authorized Edition*, p. 62).

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 (alfo 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 darkenesse was vpon the face of the deepe: and the Spirit of God mooued vpon the face of the waters."

Capitalization was more freely used in 1611, and some words that were capitalized then are printed in lower case in later editions. Examples are Altar, Ark, Court, Hanging, Mercy-seat, Noble, Priest, Sabbath, Statutes, Tabernacle, and Cedar-wood.

In some cases, punctuation changes were significant, such as the removal of the comma after "God" in Titus 2:13, which was in the 1611 but was omitted in the 1769 edition.

A large number of new marginal notes and cross-references were added. Chronological dates were also added. "The chronological dates placed in the margin of our modern Bibles are derived from that of Bishop Lloyd in 1701 ... They are in substance taken from Archbishop Ussher's *Annales V. et N. Testamenti* (1650-4), and are beyond doubt sufficiently exact to be a real help to the reader, the data on which they are constructed being always assumed as true" (Scrivener, *The Authorized Edition of the English Bible*, pp. 133-34).

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). He counted 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. He found only 421 changes that affect the sound throughout the entire 791,328 words in the King James Bible. Of these 421, the majority (285) are minor changes of form, such as “towards” changed to “toward” (14 times) and “burnt” changed to “burned” (31 times) and “amongst” changed to “among” (36 times) and “lift up” changed to “lifted up” (51 times) and “you” changed to “ye” (82 times). Obviously these are not real changes of any translational significance. 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. 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/>.

Following are some of the 136 substantial changes that were made in the 1769 revision, the vast majority of which are the correction of printing errors:

- 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”

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”

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>, mlangle1@cox.net.

What is the significance of the changes which have been made to the KJV between 1611 and today?

We see that the KJV has gone through a strenuous purification process that can give the reader confidence in its accuracy.

We also see that any idea that the KJV was “given by inspiration” is disproved. If it was “given by inspiration” in 1611 it would not have needed any sort of correction. 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.

7. Isn’t it significant that the translators retained ecclesiastical terminology from the Bishops Bible? (e.g., “baptize” instead of “immerse”; “church” instead of “congregation”; “charity” instead of “love”)

ANSWER:

It is true that the KJV translators were instructed not to change

these terms from the Bishops Bible, but I do not think that this did any harm to the Word of God. None of these are wrong translations, and Bible words must be interpreted first and foremost by their context, and when “church” or “baptize” or “charity” are so interpreted, there is no confusion.

The term “church,” for example, 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. Many 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 Cyclopedica). Wycliffe used “church,” as did the Geneva translators. 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.”

As for “charity,” that was an excellent translation and still carries more of the meaning of the Greek than our modern concept of “love.”

The term “baptism” is another word that some have criticized in the King James Bible. All of the English versions predating the KJV, including the Geneva, used the word “baptize,” which is simply a transliteration of the Greek word “*baptizo*.” Some American Baptists formed a Bible society in the 19th century with the goal of translating “*baptizo*” as “immerse” instead of transliterating it. They wanted to revise the English Bible in this manner, but the project didn’t get very far. Even the word “immerse” does not carry the full meaning of “*baptizo*,” which has the meaning not only of putting something under but also of bringing it up again. Some of the German versions have translated “*baptizo*” as “*dip*,” which is a good translation, as it has the complete meaning of immersing something in water and then lifting it out, which is what scriptural baptism is, being symbolic of Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection. The word “immersion” carries only half of the meaning of the Greek “*baptizo*.” (The same is true of replacing the word “fetch,” which is used 31 times in the KJV, with “bring” or “get,” as modern English versions such as the NIV do. Fetch has the meaning of going and obtaining something and then bringing it

back. Thus “bring” or “get” has only half of the meaning.)

I do not say that the KJV could never be changed or that its words are always the very best that possibly could be (though I do not believe it will ever be replaced in this apostate hour). I do believe, though, that in all cases the translators chose a word or phrase that is a proper translation. I also know that I am not scholar enough to correct them. For 30 blessed years since I was saved, the KJV translators have been my teachers and I have been their humble student. I don't see that changing in this life, because I have only begun to learn what the KJV translators can teach me.

8. Is the King James Bible inspired?

ANSWER:

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.”

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.

9. Could the King James Bible be revised again?

ANSWER:

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.

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 before, and we see no reason in theory why it could not be done again.

The best-known attempt to revise the King James Bible in recent times is 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. I, for one, do not accept these revisions and I do not believe that such revision is needed.

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.

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.

10. Isn't the King James Bible too antiquated and difficult to understand today?

ANSWER:

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
conversation (Gal. 1:13) = conduct
devotions (Acts 17:23) = objects of worship
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
noised (Acts 2:6) = reported
prevent (1 Thess. 4:15) = precede
quick (Heb. 4:12) = living
room (Lk. 14:7) = seat
scrip (Mat. 10:10) = bag
take no thought (Mat. 6:25) = be not anxious
wot (Gen. 21:26) = know

The overall reading level of the KJV is not very high.

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.

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 became

famous with the publication of his book *Why Johnny Can't Read*.

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.

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).

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.

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 and most of those are only two.

The most important thing in a Bible translation is not simple language but faithfulness to the original.

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).

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).

A large part of the antiquated feel of the King James Bible is its usage of the second person singular pronominal forms, “thee,” “thou,” and “thine.”

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.

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.

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.

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).

“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>).

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).

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:

“Of the translation itself (the 1611), though since that time it has been many times revised and altered, we may say that it is substantially the Bible with which we are all familiar. 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—unequalled, 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).

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 and YE refer to the nation Israel.

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 (Lev. 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 be able to 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 refers 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.

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).

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 not 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).

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 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>.

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 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 hard cover 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).

For more questions and answers on this subject see the *The Bible Version Question Answer Database*, available from Way of Life Literature. This book gives accurate and in-depth answers to more than 80 of the most common and important questions on this important topic.

CONCLUSION

The King James Bible is not merely another translation. It has a glorious and unmatched heritage. It came out of the fires of persecution, out of an age of revival and faith, by a peerless process of translation. Its Hebrew and Greek texts represent the traditional

text that has come down to us through the age. All of this is in contrast to the modern versions.

A BRIEF TEXTUAL CHECKLIST

The following are some of the key omissions and changes in the critical Greek text, largely based on the Sinaiticus and/or the Vaticanus plus a handful of other manuscripts that contain Alexandrian or Egyptian readings. These omissions and changes are found in most of the modern English versions. Where these omissions or changes also appear in the Rheims-Douay of 1582 (from the 1841 *Hexapla*) and thus in the Latin Vulgate from which it was translated, I have noted this. The omissions and changes found in the Rheims-Douay also appear in the Wycliffe English Bible of 1382 unless otherwise noted.

Abbreviations

Aleph - Codex Sinaiticus

B - Codex Vaticanus

A - Codex Alexandrinus

WH - Westcott-Hort Greek N.T. of 1881

N - Nestles' Greek N.T.

UBS - United Bible Societies' Greek N.T.

ASV - American Standard Version

RSV - Revised Standard Version

NASV - New American Standard Version

NIV - New International Version

* - omitted or changed in the Latin Vulgate but typically found in the Greek (16 instances in this abbreviated checklist)

** - omitted or changed in the Byzantine Greek but typically found in the Latin (6 instances in this abbreviated checklist)

Matthew

---- 6:13 -- "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen" omitted Aleph, B, D, WH, N, UBS, ASV, NASV, RSV, NIV, Rheims-Douay

---- 9:13 -- the words "to repentance" omitted Aleph, B, WH, N, UBS, Rheims-Douay

---- 17:21 -- "Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting" verse omitted Aleph, B, WH, N, UBS, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV

---- 18:11 -- “For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost.” verse omitted Aleph, B, WH, N, UBS, ASV, RSV, NASV (bracket), NIV

---- 19:17 -- “Why callest thou me good?” is changed to “Why do you ask me about what is good?” Aleph, B, ASV, RSV, NEB, NIV

---- 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.” verse omitted Aleph, B, D, WH, N, UBS, ASV, RSV, NASV (bracket), NIV

---- 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” omitted in the Alexandrian Text as well as the majority Byzantine Greek but found in the Latin

Mark

---- 2:17 -- “to repentance” omitted Aleph, B, A, WH, N, UBS, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV, Rheims-Douay)

---- 7:16 -- “If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.” verse omitted Aleph, B, WH, N, UBS, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV

---- 9:44, 46 -- “Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.” both verses omitted Aleph, B, WH, N, UBS, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV

---- 11:26 -- “But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.” verse omitted Aleph, B, WH, N, UBS, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV

----13:14 -- “spoken by Daniel the prophet” omitted Aleph, B, WH, N, UBS, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV, Rheims-Douay

---- 15:28 -- “And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors.” verse omitted Aleph, B, A, D, WH, N, UBS, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV

---- 16:9-20 -- entire ending of Mark omitted Aleph, B, WH, N, UBS, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV

Luke

---- 2:22** -- “her purification” changed to “their purification” in the Alexandrian Text as well as the majority of Byzantine Greek but found in Latin, some Greek, other versions, and quotations. Omitted Aleph, B, WH, N, UBS, MT, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV

---- 2:33 -- “Joseph” is changed to “the child’s father” Aleph, B, WH, N, UBS, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV, Rheims-Douay

---- 4:4 -- “every word of God” omitted Aleph, B, WH, N, UBS, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV

---- 17:36 -- “Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.” verse omitted WH, N, UBS, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV

---- 22:43-44 -- “And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground” both verses omitted B, A, WH (double brackets), N (double brackets), UBS (double brackets), ASV (margin), RSV, NIV (margin)

---- 23:17 -- “(For of necessity he must release one unto them at the feast.)” verse omitted B, WH, N, UBS, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV

---- 24:51 -- “was carried up into heaven” omitted Aleph, D, WH (double brackets), N, UBS (B rating), RSV, NASV

John

---- 1:27 -- “is preferred before me” omitted Aleph, B, WH, N, UBS, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV

---- 3:13 -- “who is in heaven” omitted Aleph, B, WH, N, UBS, RSV, NASV, NIV

---- 4:42 -- “the Christ” omitted Aleph, B, WH, N, UBS, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV, Rheims-Douay

---- 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 Aleph, B, WH, N, UBS, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV

---- 6:69 -- “that Christ, the Son of the living God” is changed to “the holy one of God” WH, N, UBS, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV

---- 7:8 -- “yet” omitted (creating an error in the Scripture) Aleph, N, UBS, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV (footnote “some early manuscripts do not have ‘yet’”)

---- 7:53--8:11 -- Entire passage omitted WH (double brackets), N, UBS (double brackets), ASV (bracket), RSV, NASV (bracket), NIV (footnote says “The earliest and most reliable manuscripts and other ancient witnesses do not have John 7:53-8:11”)

Acts

---- 7:37** -- “him shall ye hear” omitted in the Alexandrian Text as well as most Byzantine Greek but found in the Latin, some Greek, and versions

---- 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.” verse omitted in the Alexandrian Text as well as the Byzantine Greek but found in the Latin and some Greek and version s (found in at least 9 Greek manuscripts, some lectionaries, some Old Latin, some Syriac, Coptic, Armenian, Ethiopian, Georgian, Slavonic, and quoted by at least 7 “church fathers”)

Romans

---- 1:16 -- “of Christ” omitted Aleph, B, WH, N, UBS, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV, Rheims-Douay

---- 14:10 -- “judgment seat of Christ” changed to “judgment seat of God” Aleph, B, WH, N, UBS, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV. (The “judgment seat of Christ” identifies Jesus Christ with Jehovah God, Isaiah 45:23.)

1 Corinthians

---- 5:7 -- “for us” omitted Aleph, B, WH, N, UBS, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV, Rheims-Douay

---- 7:5 -- “fasting” omitted Aleph, B, WH, N, UBS, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV, Rheims-Douay

---- 15:47 -- “the Lord” omitted Aleph, B, WH, N, UBS, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV, Rheims-Douay

Galatians

---- 3:17 -- “in Christ” omitted Aleph, B, A, WH, N, UBS, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV, Rheims-Douay

Ephesians

---- 3:9 -- “by Jesus Christ” omitted Aleph, B, A, WH, N, UBS, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV, Rheims-Douay

Colossians

---- 1:14 -- “through his blood” omitted Aleph, B, A, WH, N, UBS, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV, Rheims-Douay

1 Timothy

---- 3:16 - “God” omitted in most Latin manuscripts (replaced with “which”) and in the Alexandrian text (replaced with “who” in the Sinaiticus), but it is present in most Greek manuscripts. Omitted in WH, N, UBS, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV

---- 6:5 -- “from such withdraw thyself” omitted Aleph, A, WH, N, UBS, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV, Rheims-Douay

Hebrews

---- 1:3 -- “by himself” omitted Aleph, B, A, WH, N, UBS, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV, Rheims-Douay

James

---- 5:16 -- “faults” changed to “sins” Aleph, B, WH, N, UBS, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV, Rheims-Douay

1 Peter

---- 2:2 -- “grow thereby” is changed to “grow unto salvation” Aleph, B, A, WH, N, UBS, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV, Rheims-Douay (but not omitted in the Wycliffe)

---- 4:1 -- “for us” omitted B, WH, N, UBS, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV, Rheims-Douay

1 John

---- 4:3 -- “confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh” changed to “confesseth not Jesus” B, A, WH, N, UBS, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV, Rheims-Douay

---- 5:7** -- “For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one” omitted in the Alexandrian Text as well as most Byzantine Greek but found in the Latin, some Greek, and versions. Omitted Aleph, B, WH, N, UBS, MT, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV

Revelation

---- 1:8** -- “the beginning and the ending” omitted in the Alexandrian Text as well as most Byzantine Greek but found in the Latin, some Greek, and versions. Omitted Aleph, B, WH, N, UBS, MT, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV

---- 1:11** -- “I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last ... which are in Asia” omitted in the Alexandrian Text as well as most Byzantine Greek but found in the Latin, some Greek, and versions. Omitted Aleph, B, WH, N, UBS, MT, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV

---- 8:13** -- “angel” changed to “eagle” in the Alexandrian Text as well as most Byzantine Greek but found in the Latin, some Greek, and versions. Omitted Aleph, A, WH, N, UBS, MT, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV

---- 21:24** -- “of them which are saved” omitted in the Alexandrian Text as well as most Byzantine Greek but found in the Latin, some Greek, and versions. Omitted Aleph, A, WH, N, UBS, MT, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV, Rheims-Douay

---- 22:19** -- “book of life” changed to “tree of life” in the Alexandrian Text as well as most Byzantine Greek but found in the Latin, some Greek, and versions. Omitted Aleph, B, WH, N, UBS, MT, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV, Rheims-Douay

A BASIC BIBLE VERSION LIBRARY

The following are some books that I recommend as a basic library on the Bible version issue.

THE BIBLE VERSION QUESTION ANSWER DATABASE by David Cloud. This volume gives accurate, diligently-researched, in-depth answers to more than 80 of the most common and important questions on this important topic. 375 pages. Available from Way of Life Literature, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061. 866-495-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org, <http://www.wayoflife.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 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.

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 his 1992 book *Defending the King James Bible* is an important contribution to this field. 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.

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 Plain Paths Ministry.

FAITH VS. THE MODERN BIBLE VERSIONS: A COURSE ON BIBLE TEXTS AND VERSIONS AND A 10-FOLD DEFENSE OF THE KING JAMES BIBLE. To our knowledge, this is the most comprehensive course on this topic in print. The two large-format volumes contain more than 800 pages of information. The author has researched this issue for 25 years, having built one of the largest personal libraries on this subject and having done on-site investigation in many parts of the world, including Great Britain, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland, Slovakia, and Italy. Available from Way of Life Literature, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061. 866-495-4143, 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 century. 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.

THE MODERN BIBLE VERSION HALL OF SHAME by David Cloud. This volume documents the heresy and apostasy of the most

influential names in the field of modern textual criticism and the modern Bible versions of the past 250 years. 361 pages. 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 is almost 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.

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 exposé 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.

THREE HUNDRED FIFTY-SIX DOCTRINAL ERRORS IN THE NIV AND OTHER MODERN BIBLE VERSIONS by Jack

Moorman. "The Digest records the bare facts of a warfare that has raged through the centuries over the doctrinal heart of the New Testament. From the beginning, the pressure has been upon God's people to surrender the doctrinal edge of their Sword until it is something not much more than a butter knife! The 356 doctrinal passages listed here are what makes the Authorized Version unique among today's 'Bibles.' Despite the enemy's rage against these

precious lines of truth -- in one manuscript, out of another -- they have all come home to their rightful place in the pages of the King James Bible. The Digest is, therefore, not only a record of the substantial support they command, but is also something of a chronicle of their warfare and travels through the manuscript period of transmission history.” Available from Bible for Today, 900 Park Ave., Collingswood, NJ 08108, 800-564-6109, www.BibleForToday.org.

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 and 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 Plain Paths Publishers, P.O. Box 830, Columbus, NC 28722, <http://www.plainpath.org>, 828-863-2736, plain@juno.com

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