

Answering the Myths on the Bible Version Debate

MYTHS

HERESIES

**FALSE
TEACHING**

David Cloud

Answering the Myths on the Bible Version Debate

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GENERAL MYTHS

MYTH: “KING JAMES ONLY” PEOPLE BELIEVE THAT GOD’S WORD IS ONLY IN ENGLISH AND THAT WE SHOULD NOT STUDY GREEK AND HEBREW.

ANSWER:

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

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

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

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

If “King James Only” defines one who believes that God has preserved the Scripture in its common use among apostolic churches through the fulfillment of the Great Commission and

that He guided the Reformation editors and translators in their choice of the Received Text and that we don't have to start all over today in an attempt to find the preserved text of Scripture, call me "King James Only." The theories of modern textual criticism, on the other hand, all revolve around the idea that the pure text of Scripture was not preserved in the Reformation text but that the Reformation editors, because of their alleged ignorance and or lack of resources, rejected the pure text and chose, instead, an inferior text. In fact, modern textual criticism is predicated upon the theory that the best text of the New Testament (the Egyptian or Alexandrian) was rejected in the earliest centuries and was replaced with a corrupt recension that was created through the conflation of various manuscript readings (the Byzantine or Traditional text) and that the corrupt text became the dominant text throughout most of church history (for 1,500 years) until the best text was rediscovered in the 19th century. You are free to accept such views if it suits you. I, for one, believe this is absolute nonsense, and if that is "King James Only," count me in.

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

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

ON THE OTHER HAND

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

Word of God in the English language because it is an accurate translation of the preserved Hebrew and Greek is not the same as saying that it was *given by inspiration*.

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

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

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

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

If “King James Only” defines one who believes that translations in other languages should be based on English rather than (when possible) Greek and Hebrew, I am *not* “King James Only.” (I also

believe that a good translation can be made directly from the King James Bible when necessary if it is done by men who are capable in the use of dictionaries so that they understand the somewhat antiquated language of the KJV properly.)

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

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

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

MYTH: KING “JAMES ONLYISM” WAS INVENTED BY A SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST.

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

passed it along to the contemporary “KJV Only” crowd.

It is true that in his 1930 book, “Our Authorized Bible Vindicated,” Wilkinson defended the text of the King James Bible and attempted to trace the primacy of the Traditional Text among Bible believers through the centuries. And it is true that some of Wilkinson’s writings were republished in David Otis Fuller’s 1970 book, *Which Bible*. That much is fact. Whether Fuller was right or wrong in reprinting some of Wilkinson’s writings is something each reader will have to decide. I, for one, believe it was a mistake. I have obtained almost every book referenced by Wilkinson with the objective of checking his statements. And my conclusion is that while he did some good research and published some important facts, he also went out on a limb in some cases and made some statements that cannot be substantiated and others that are contrary to the evidence. Some of his history, in fact, is strongly influenced by his devotion to Seventh-day Adventist “prophetess” Ellen G. White.

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

ANSWER:

1. The defense of the King James Bible pre-dated Benjamin Wilkinson. We have documented this extensively in our book *For Love of the Bible: The Defense of the KJV and the Received Text from 1800 to Present*. Consider a few examples of men and institutions that stood for the King James Bible before Benjamin Wilkinson on the same basis that I and many other KJV defenders stand for it today.

John Jebb (1775-1833)

In 1829 John Jebb, bishop of Limerick, stated: “Let individuals give new versions ... but in days of epidemic quackery, let our authorized version be kept inviolate, and guarded as the apple of our eye” (John Jebb, 1829, *Life of John Jebb*, ii, p. 454; cited by Samuel Hemphill, *A History of the Revised Version of the New Testament*, pp. 21, 22).

Dr. Jebb continued to oppose the revision of the Authorized Bible. During the discussion that surrounded the proposal for revision in

May 1870, in the Lower House of the Province of Canterbury, Jebb gave his opinion that it was “a fatal thing that a version, of which we have been now in possession for more than 250 years, should be subject to the criticism of this very hasty and not very orthodox age” (John Stoughton, *Our English Bible*, p. 288).

Henry John Todd (1765-1845)

Henry Todd was chaplain to the king of England and keeper of the Archbishop of Canterbury’s records at Lambeth Palace. In 1819 Todd published *A Vindication of Our Authorized Translation and Translators of the Bible*. This work was occasioned by the clamor of some who wanted to correct the Received Greek New Testament and the King James Bible on the basis of modern textual criticism. This clamoring gradually increased among a relatively small segment of influential scholars through the 19th century and resulted, ultimately, in the Westcott-Hort Greek New Testament and the English Revised Version of 1881.

Todd understood that modern textual criticism was intimately associated with theological heresy. I searched for Todd’s treatise for five years before locating it in the British Library and having a copy made for my personal library. Consider the following important excerpt: “For when WE SEE MEN OF THE MOST LATITUDINARIAN PRINCIPLES UNIFORMLY PRESSING FORWARD THIS DANGEROUS PROPOSAL; when we see the most unbounded panegyrics [praise] bestowed on THOSE, WHO HAVE CONVERTED THE MOSAIC HISTORY INTO ALLEGORY, AND THE NEW TESTAMENT INTO SOCINIANISM; when we see these attempts studiously fostered, and applauded, by the advocates for this projected [Bible] revision; WE MUST CONJECTURE, THAT SOMETHING MORE IS MEANT THAN A CORRECTION OF MISTAKES, OR AN IMPROVEMENT OF DICTION. Those doctrines, the demolition of which we know to be, in late instances, the grand object of such innovators when they propose alterations in articles of faith, or correction of liturgical forms, are surely in still greater danger when attempted, by the same men, under the distant approaches of a revision of our English Bible (Todd, *A Vindication of Our Authorized Translation and Translators of the Bible*, 1819, pp. 79, 80).

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

issue.

John Dowling (1807-78)

Dowling, who pastored Baptist churches in Rhode Island (Providence) and New York (Broadway Baptist Church, New York City), was the author of the influential *History of Romanism*.

In 1843 Dowling published a defense of the KJV in “*The Burning of the Bibles, Defence of the Protestant Version of the Scriptures Against the Attacks of Popish Apologists for the Champlain Bible Burners* (Philadelphia: Nathan Moore, 1843). This was occasioned by the burning of hundreds of King James Bibles by Jesuit priests in Carbo, New York (near Champlain) in October 1842 and a subsequent newspaper article by a Roman Catholic priest named John Corry in which the accuracy and authority of the King James Bible was attacked. Dowling made the following defense of the KJV: “The Bible which Protestants now use, was translated by order of King James. It was published in A.D. 1611. IT IS PERHAPS, THE MOST ACCURATE THAT HAS BEEN MADE, IN ANY LANGUAGE” (Dowling, pp. 10, 11).

Dowling quoted from seven authorities in praise of the King James Bible, such as John Selden and J.W. Whitaker, and he gave his own opinion that “as a whole, I have never yet seen a version which I would be willing to substitute for that as the commonly received version of the mass of the people” (p. 62).

In 1850 John Dowling published *The Old-Fashioned Bible, or Ten Reasons against the Proposed Baptist Version of the New Testament* (New York: Edward H. Fletcher, 1850). It was an edited version of a message he had delivered at Hope Chapel, Broadway, March 31, 1850, and again at First Baptist Church, Brooklyn, pastored by J. L. Hodge. Dowling used the strongest terminology to describe his concern over the new version of the English Bible that had been published by the American and Foreign Bible Society and he exalted the King James Bible in the highest manner: “The fact is that the common version which it is proposed to amend, is, taken as a whole, a wonderful translation, and although it may be conceded that it is not perfect--for what human performance is so?-yet it is exceedingly doubtful, whether a translation has ever been made from any ancient book, Greek, Latin, or Oriental--which in point of faithfulness to its original can be compared with this, or

which has fewer errors in proportion to the entire amount of its contents. ... TO ATTEMPT TO SUPPLANT IT BY A 'NEW VERSION,' OR TO INTRODUCE ANY MATERIAL ALTERATIONS, WOULD BE LIKE 'GILDING REFINED GOLD'... In conclusion, then, I say, brethren, sisters and fathers, cling to your old-fashioned Bible!" (*The Old-Fashioned Bible, or Ten Reasons against the Proposed Baptist Version of the New Testament*, 1850, pp. 11, 12, 13, 27, 36).

The Trinitarian Bible Society of England (TBS)

The TBS was formed in 1831 from a conflict within the British and Foreign Bible Society (BFBS) over the doctrine of the Trinity and the deity of Jesus Christ. With the publication of the English Revised Version New Testament and the Westcott-Hort Greek text of 1881, the TBS began to take an active position on texts and versions. A number of articles were published in the TBS *Quarterly Record* at the turn of the century critiquing the ERV and supporting the Received Text.

The Trinitarian Bible Society has continued to stand for the Received Text and the King James Bible. Their published writings have promoted all of the major points commonly given in defense of the KJV.

Fundamentalist leader William Aberhart (1878-1943)

Aberhart was both a Christian leader and a greatly beloved political leader. He was Premier of Alberta from 1935-43. In the late 1920s, Aberhart separated from the Regular Baptists over issues such as Bible inspiration and the interpretation of prophecy. In 1924 he established the Calgary Prophetic Bible Institute. The first student enrolled in this Bible Institute was Ernest Charles Manning, who eventually became the premier of Alberta from 1943 until 1968. Aberhart also founded the 1,250-seat Bible Institute Baptist Church, which often featured the preaching of well-known fundamentalist leaders such as William B. Riley and Harry Rimmer.

Aberhart trained his people and his students to have confidence in the divine preservation of the Bible. He defended the King James Bible as the preserved Word of God.

A summary of Aberhart's teaching was given to me personally by Pastor Mark Buch (1910-1995), who was educated by Aberhart in

the 1930s. Buch was the founder and pastor of the People's Fellowship Tabernacle in Vancouver, British Columbia. This church was a stronghold for biblical fundamentalism in western Canada from the time it was founded in 1939. Buch knew and preached with many of the well-known fundamentalist leaders of the last century, including J. Frank Norris, G. Beauchamp Vick, and Bob Jones Sr. Buch took the second year apologetics course Aberhart taught on the subject of inspiration and preservation at the Prophetic Bible Institute. Note how he described Aberhart's position on Bible preservation: "Mr. Aberhart was one of the greatest Bible teachers in Canada. He was the first person I came in contact with WHO KNEW THE TRUE STORY OF THE DIVINE INSPIRATION AND PRESERVATION OF GOD'S HOLY WORD. He explained how it came down from the first apostolic faultless autograph, its safe keeping through the Byzantine church, the majority reformation copy by Erasmus of Rotterdam, William Tyndale's translation, the Authorized committee of mental and spiritual giants, and the resultant glorious treasure—the Authorized Version" (Mark Buch, *In Defence of the Authorized Version*, People's Fellowship Tabernacle, Vancouver, British Columbia, p. 25).

During my personal interviews with Pastor Buch, he gave me a copy of one of Aberhart's booklets on the subject of Bible versions. It was titled *The Latest of Modern Movements: Or What about the Revised Version of the Bible?* Published in 1924 or 1925, it was printed and distributed by the thousands. In the title of his booklet, Aberhart was referring to the English Revised Version of 1885. He also mentioned Darby's Version, Russell's Diaglot, Moulton's Bible, the American Revised Version, 20th Century in Modern Speech, Moffatt's Translation, Goodspeed's New Testament, and Kent's Shorter Bible. HE WARNED THAT MODERN TEXTUAL CRITICISM AND THE MULTIPLICITY OF MODERN VERSIONS WAS WEAKENING THE AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE.

The position William Aberhart held on the Bible version issue in the 1920s is exactly the position that David Otis Fuller taught, and ABERHART WAS WRITING AND TEACHING THIS YEARS BEFORE THE PUBLICATION OF WILKINSON'S BOOK.

Fundamentalist leader Philip Mauro (1859-1952)

Mauro was a famous patent lawyer who argued before the bar of

the United States Supreme Court. He wrote the legal brief that was used by William Jennings Bryan at the famous “Scopes Trial” to defend the Tennessee law prohibiting the teaching of evolution in public schools. Converted in 1903, at age 45, Mauro became a bold witness for Jesus Christ. He testified of his faith to Thomas Edison, the famous inventor. Mauro was aboard the *Carpathian* when it rescued survivors from the ill-fated *Titanic* in 1912. He wrote many books on various themes and also penned articles for *The Fundamentals*, the books that gave the fundamentalist movement its name in the 1920s.

Mauro’s position on the Bible version issue was no secret. In 1924 he published *Which Version? Authorized or Revised?* This was several years before the Adventist Benjamin Wilkinson published his book on this subject. Note the following statement: “In view also of the leading part the English speaking peoples were to play in shaping the destinies of mankind, we are justified in believing that it was through a providential ordering that the preparation of that Version was not in anywise affected by higher critical theories in general, or specifically by the two ancient Codices [Vaticanus and Sinaiticus] we have been discussing” (Mauro, *Which Version?*).

Thus, it is obvious that the defense of the King James Bible did not begin with the Adventist Benjamin Wilkinson in the 1930s. In the book *For Love of the Bible* I have given dozens of other examples of men and organizations that stood for the KJV prior to then.

Of course, this was not a Ruckmanite defense of the KJV. These men did not claim that the KJV was given by inspiration or that it is “advanced revelation” or that it is better than the Hebrew and Greek or that it was perfect in every detail. Such claims began with Peter Ruckman in the 1970s, and even Benjamin Wilkinson and David Otis Fuller did not hold to them.

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

While it is true that David Otis Fuller published some of Wilkinson’s writings, he also published the writings of a wide variety of men on the Bible version issue, and to focus on Wilkinson as the basis for Fuller’s views is something that is done for the sole purpose of demagoguing Fuller and other defenders of the KJV.

By his enemies, Dr. Fuller is made out to be some sort of scheming madman, and an ignorant one at that! But consider the facts: He obtained the Master of Divinity degree at Princeton University and was honored with a Doctor of Divinity degree by Dallas Theological Seminary. He pastored the prominent Wealthy Street Baptist Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan, for 40 years (1934-74). While there, he founded the Grand Rapids Baptist Institute, which later became the Grand Rapids Baptist Bible College. Fuller co-founded the Children's Bible Hour radio program in 1942 and for 33 years was its chairman. For 52 years Fuller was on the board of the Association of Baptists for World Evangelism. He was on the Council of 14 in the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches. Fuller published between fifteen to twenty books.

When he first began investigating the Bible version issue for himself in the 1970s, Fuller came across not only Wilkinson's work, but also the following, among others:

(1) Philip Mauro's *Which Version?* from 1924.

(2) John Burgon's *The Revision Revised*. Fuller was so industrious in his zeal to search out the facts on this issue that he sought out John Burgon's unpublished works in the British Museum. "It was the privilege of this compiler, after struggling through several rounds of red tape, to see for myself three of the sixteen folio volumes Burgon had written in his own hand, a compilation of eighty-seven thousand quotations from the early Church Fathers. I make bold to say there is no other collection like this in existence" (Fuller, *Counterfeit or Genuine*, introduction, p. 11).

(3) Alfred Martin's doctoral dissertation against the Westcott-Hort Text (*A Critical Examination of the Westcott-Hort Textual Theory*). Martin was Vice President of Moody Bible Institute and defended the Received Text against the critical text in his doctoral dissertation to the faculty of Dallas Theological Seminary graduate school in May 1951. Martin corresponded with Fuller on the Bible text issue and allowed Fuller to publish a condensation of his dissertation in *Which Bible*.

(4) Donald Brake's dissertation to the faculty of the Department of Systematic Theology at Dallas Theological Seminary in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Theology Degree, *The Preservation of the Scriptures*, May 1970.

(5) Wilbur Pickering's thesis presented to the faculty of the Department of New Testament Literature and Exegesis at the Dallas Theological Seminary in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Theology Degree, *An Evaluation of the Contribution of John William Burgon to New Testament Textual Criticism*, May 1968.

(6) Writings on the Bible version issue by Joseph Philpot

(7) Writings on the Bible version issue by Samuel Zwemer

(8) Writings on the Bible version issue by Herman Hoskier

(9) Writings on the Bible version issue by Edward F. Hills

(10) Writings on the Bible version issue by Terence Brown, editorial secretary of the Trinitarian Bible Society

Altogether D.O. Fuller edited three major volumes totaling 900 pages on the Bible version issue: *Which Bible?* (1970), *True or False?* (1973), and *Counterfeit or Genuine?* (1975). These volumes are evidence of Dr. Fuller's diligent research on the subject of texts and versions.

Dr. Fuller did not claim that the King James Bible was given by inspiration or that it could not be improved or changed. He claimed simply that it is the only reliable English translation of the preserved Greek and Hebrew text of Scripture. He did not believe the KJV has errors, but he differentiated plainly between improvements and errors. "We do not say that the KJV does not permit of changes. There are a number that could be AND SHOULD BE made, but there is a vast difference between a change and an error" (D.O. Fuller, *Is the King James Version Nearest to the Original Autographs?*, nd., p. 1).

Fuller did not gain anything, from an earthly perspective, for his stand for the King James Bible. He was a highly respected pastor and Christian leader BEFORE he published *Which Bible*. He certainly did not gain in prestige or influence, generally speaking, from his stand for the KJV. Rather, he was mocked, ridiculed, slandered, and ostracized, even by many of his own fundamentalist and Baptist brethren. He made no personal financial gain from the sale of his books, having turned all of the profit back into the Which Bible Society ministry.

3. It is hypocritical for the defender of modern textual criticism to make a large issue of using the writings of a Seventh-day Adventist.

This is true for the simple reason that textual criticism is founded upon the writings of hundreds of men at least as unsound in the faith as Benjamin Wilkinson. The influential names in the field of textual criticism include **UNITARIANS** such as Johann Wettstein, Edward Harwood, George Vance Smith, Ezra Abbot, Joseph Thayer, and Caspar Gregory; **RATIONALISTS** such as Johann Semler, Johann Griesbach, Bernhard Weiss, William Sanday, William Robertson Smith, Samuel Driver, Eberhard Nestle, James Rendel Harris, Hermann von Soden, Frederick Conybeare, Fredric Kenyon, Francis Burkitt, Henry Wheeler Robinson, Kirsopp Lake, Gerhard Kittel, Edgar Goodspeed, James Moffatt, Kenneth Clark, Ernest Colwell, Gunther Zuntz, J.B. Phillips, William Barclay, Theodore Skeat, George Kilpatrick, F.F. Bruce, George Ladd, J.K. Elliott, Eldon Epp, Brevard Childs, Bart Ehrman, C.H. Dodd, Barclay Newman, Arthur Voobus, Eugene Nida, Jan de Waard, Kurt Aland, Barbara Aland, Matthew Black, Allen Wikgren, Bruce Metzger, and Johannes Karavidopoulos; and **ROMAN CATHOLICS** such as Richard Simon, Alexander Geddes, Johann Hug, and Carlo Martini.

For documentation of the theological position of these and many other men in the field of modern textual criticism see “The Modern Bible Version’s Hall of Shame,” available from Way of Life Literature, Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org.

MYTH: THERE ARE NO DOCTRINAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE MODERN VERSIONS AND THE KJV.

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

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

ANSWER:

1. The allegation that the Bible version issue is not a

doctrinal one IS COMMONLY ACCOMPANIED BY A DISTORTION OF THE ACTUAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TEXTS AND VERSIONS.

Note the following statements:

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

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

REPLY:

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*. He 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. Therefore, 45 entire verses are either omitted or questioned.

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

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

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

The Preface to the Revised Standard Version makes this claim about the King James Bible and its underlying Greek text: "The King James Version has GRAVE DEFECTS. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the development of Biblical studies and the discovery of many manuscripts more ancient than those upon which the King James Version was based, made it manifest that THESE DEFECTS ARE SO MANY AND SO SERIOUS as to call for revision of the English translation."

Frederic Kenyon described the manuscripts representing the Received Text as the "LEAST TRUSTWORTHY that existed" and "FULL OF INACCURACIES" (Frederic Kenyon, *Our Bible and Ancient Manuscripts*, p. 104).

Bruce Metzger calls the TR “CORRUPT” (Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, 1968, p. 106). He further calls it “DEBASED” and “DISFIGURED” (Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 1975, pp. xxi, xxiii).

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

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

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

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

Exodus 24:4--“And Moses wrote ALL THE WORDS of the Lord...”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

COLOSSIANS 2:18

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

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

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

There is only one word omitted in the critical Greek text in this verse and that is the word “not”; and this omission is reflected in the modern English translations. To remove this one word changes the teaching and interpretation of the verse dramatically. According to the Traditional Text, these Gnostic heretics were intruding into things they had not seen. The meaning of this is not difficult to perceive. They were dealing with spiritual matters that

they did not understand and were boldly describing the unseen spirit world even though they could not see it and actually knew nothing about it. On the other hand, the ASV says that the Gnostic heretic was “dwelling in the things which he hath seen.” What does that mean? It is impossible to know, and the change further seems to confirm that these heretics had actually seen something. Yet only one word is changed. In fact, Bible doctrine often hinges on only one word.

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

LUKE 2:14

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

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

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

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

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

(1) How can we logically stand for a doctrine of verbal inspiration if we believe that the verbally inspired “original” text is somehow represented today only by a mass of contradictory texts and versions?

(2) Of what benefit is the doctrine of verbal inspiration if it applies only to the autographs and if we do not hold to a doctrine of preservation that results in one authoritative Bible today? Were there many editions and varieties of the inspired autographs? This is what the modernistic textual critics hold, but how can a believer accept such a thing?

(3) How is the doctrine of verbal inspiration upheld when one believes that God has allowed the textual situation to deteriorate to the place where we cannot know exactly what the verbally inspired text is in hundreds of places? The United Bible Societies Greek New Testament evaluates its own readings by the letters A, B, C, and D, representing various degrees of uncertainty. "A" represents "that the text is (allegedly) certain," B "that it is almost certain," C "that the Committee had difficulty in deciding," and D "that the Committee had great difficulty in arriving at a decision." Even assuming that the "A" readings are "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. How does all of this uncertainty and confusion support the doctrine of the inerrancy of the biblical text?

Further, 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).

“Oh, but it is only one word [they say]. Yes, but one word of Scripture of which it is said ‘Thou hast magnified Thy Word above all Thy Name!’ ‘Only one word!’ But that word is ‘God.’ Better the whole living church of God should perish than that that one word should perish. ‘If any man take away from the words of the book of this prophecy God shall take away his part.’ Let criticism pause. The principle at stake is solemn” (George Sayles Bishop, 1885, referring to the omission of “God” in 1 Timothy 3:16; Bishop was pastor of the Reformed Church of Orange, New Jersey).

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 a few examples:

Frederick Nolan (1784-1864) published *An Inquiry into the Integrity of the Greek Vulgate or Received Text of the New Testament* in 1815 and defended the Greek Received Text against the critical text. Nolan traced the history of the doctrinal corruptions that were introduced into the text of various manuscripts during the first four centuries after Christ. He associates this textual corruption with the manuscripts that are preferred by modern textual critics, such as the Vaticanus. Nolan looked upon the textual issue as a doctrinal issue and was convinced that the omissions and changes introduced by modern textual criticism was an attack upon sound doctrine that could be traced to the early centuries following the apostles.

Joseph Charles Philpot (1802-69), editor of *The Gospel Standard*, in 1857 gave six reasons against the revision of the King James Bible. Under reason number four he warned about the doctrinal nature of the textual innovations proposed by modern textual critics. “The Socinianising Neologian would blot out ‘GOD’ in 1 Tim. 3.16, and strike out 1 John 5.7, as an interpolation. The Puseyite would mend it to suit his Tractarian views. ... Once set up a notice, ‘The Old Bible to be mended,’ and there would be plenty of workmen, who trying to mend the cover, would pull the pages to pieces” (Philpot, “The Authorized Version of 1611,” *The Gospel Standard*, April 1857). Philpot further warned of giving up the Bible “to be rifled by the sacrilegious hands of the Puseyites, concealed Papists, German Neologians, infidel divines, Arminians, Socinians, and the whole tribe of enemies of God and godliness.” [Puseyites was another term for the Oxford Movement, the back-to-Rome movement within the Anglican Church. It was so named for Edward Pusey, an influential personality within the movement. German Neologians refers to German modernists who were pursuing every new modernistic theory; neology is a love of novelty.]

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. He mentioned Matt. 6:13; John 8:1-11; Mark 16:8-20; Acts 8:37; 9:5,6; 1 Tim. 3:16; Jude 4, Rev. 1:11; 1 John 5:7; and others. He concluded: "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).

It is amazing that these matters, which were understood by the Reformation editors and confirmed by believing scholars in the nineteenth century, are scoffed at today, even by many evangelicals and fundamentalists. Why? It is because these evangelicals and fundamentalists are not depending on their own scholarship but upon rationalistic scholarship. Robert Dabney observed that evangelicals have adopted textual criticism "FROM THE MINT OF INFIDEL RATIONALISM."

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

Consider the example of Unitarian G. Vance Smith, who was a

member of the English Revised Version translation committee. Smith testified that the textual changes in the ERV and the Westcott-Hort Greek New Testament reflected his own Unitarian theology. Some of the passages listed by Smith as being theologically “superior” in the modern texts and versions as opposed to the King James Bible were Rom. 9:5; 1 Tim. 3:16; Tit. 2:13; and 1 Jn. 5:7, and that is because these passages in the critical text weaken the doctrine of Christ’s deity, which Smith rejected.

Consider the example of Unitarian Ezra Abbot, who was a member of the American Standard Version translation committee. Abbot argued that the last clause of Romans 9:5 is a doxology to God and does not refer to Christ. In Acts 20:28 Abbot led the ASV committee to remove “God” and replace it with “the Lord,” thus corrupting this powerful witness to the deity of Jesus Christ. Unitarians and theological modernists allege that Jesus is “the Lord” but not actually God. Abbot wrote a long article arguing for the omission of “God” in 1 Timothy 3:16 along theological lines.

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 divine 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 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. For a more thorough study see “The Bible Version Question-Answer Database” or “Faith vs. the Modern Bible Versions,” available from Way of Life Literature.

THE DEITY OF JESUS CHRIST IS WEAKENED

A key example pertains to the doctrine of Christ's Divinity. Following are just a few of the ways that this crucial doctrine is weakened by the changes in the modern versions:

MARK 9:24

KJV: "And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, 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!'"

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

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."

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."

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.”

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.”

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.”

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.”

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.”

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).

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.”

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.”

Modern versions such 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.”

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.”

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.”

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.”

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.”

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.”

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.

98% of Greek manuscripts (some 600), including most of the uncials and all of the lectionaries, contain “God.” Though Codex A no longer has the line through the O indicating God, it was there and was seen and testified by many textual editors prior to 1765, including Fell, Mill, Bentley, Wettstein, Bengel, and Woide. This was documented by John Burgon in *The Revision Revised*, p. 434.

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).

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.”

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.’”

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

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

THE OMISSION OF “LORD” AS APPLIED TO JESUS CHRIST

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

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

THE SEPARATION OF “JESUS” FROM “CHRIST”

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

These are just a few examples of more than 60 passages in which the name “Jesus” is omitted in association with the great works of Christ, or in which “Christ” is omitted in association with the name “Jesus.”

“The separation of ‘Jesus’ from ‘Christ’ occurs far too often to look for any cause other than deliberate editing in certain N.T. manuscripts. That there was a strong movement in the early centuries which could result in such a systematic editing, there can be no doubt! The foremost error regarding the Person of Christ, is of course, to deny His true Deity and true Humanity. The chief means by which this was done, and which finds expression down to our own day, is technically known as ‘Adoptionism’ or ‘Spirit Christology.’ Here, Jesus of Nazareth, an ordinary man of unusual virtue, was ‘adopted’ by God into divine Sonship by the advent of the ‘Christ-Spirit’ at His baptism. Therefore, Jesus became Christ at His baptism, rather than, the fact that He was always the Christ from eternity. And though united for a time, Jesus and Christ were separate personages. ... it is the small group of Alexandrian manuscripts which consistently disassociate ‘Jesus’ from ‘Christ.’ And, along with Aleph and B, Papyri 46 follows the same trend. ... in 1 Cor. 15:47, it reveals its dark secret! ‘... the second man is THE SPIRIT from heaven’ (P46)” (Jack Moorman, *A Closer Look: Early Manuscripts and the Authorized Version*, pp. 5, 6).

In “The Bible Version Question-Answer Database” and “Faith vs. the Modern Bible Versions” we document the weakening of other doctrines, such as the virgin birth, the blood atonement, and

separation.

6. 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. 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."

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."

The critical Greek text and most modern versions based on this text omit "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.”

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...’”

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.”

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.”

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;”

NASV: “in beatings, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in hunger.”

NIV: “in beatings, imprisonments and riots; in hard work, sleepless nights and 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.”

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

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.”

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.” Though the critical Greek New Testament also has the Greek word “nesteia,” for some reason the modern versions refuse to translate it properly.

7. 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 ...”

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. ...”

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

MARK 1:2-3

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

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...”

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.

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.”

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.

Conclusion to this section on the doctrinal issue

pertaining to the modern versions:

1. There is a serious doctrinal issue pertaining to the texts and versions, and we must be careful not to accept commonly held myths.
2. Both the heretics and the Bible believers in the 19th century understood that there is a serious theological issue at stake with the competing texts.
3. While we can thank the Lord that sound doctrine in general can be taught from most texts and versions in spite of their differences, this does not mean that one version is as theologically sound as another or that the theological issue at stake is not serious.
4. We must remember the principal of the sword.

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?

MYTH: THE BIBLE DOES NOT EXPLICITLY TEACH THAT GOD WOULD PRESERVE THE SCRIPTURE.

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

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

ANSWER:

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

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

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

“Concerning thy testimonies, I have known of old that thou hast

founded them for ever" (v. 152).

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

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

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

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

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.

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

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

4. God's people have always had confidence in the divine preservation of Scripture ("*I have known of old...*" v. 152). This was true historically until the rise of modern biblical criticism. Prior to that, the saints testified of their faith in divine preservation in their confessions. An example is the Westminster Confession of 1648, which was repeated in the London Baptist Confession of 1677 and the Philadelphia Confession of 1742. "The Old Testament in

Hebrew (which was the native language of the people of God of old), and the New Testament in Greek (which, at the time of the writing of it, was most generally known to the nations), being immediately inspired by God, and BY HIS SINGULAR CARE AND PROVIDENCE, KEPT PURE IN ALL AGES, are therefore authentical; so as, in all controversies of religion, the Church is finally to appeal unto them.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

“For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one

tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled” (Mat. 5:18).

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

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

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

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

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

2. The doctrine of inspiration and preservation are intimately associated throughout Scripture. The association is not merely logical, it is scriptural; it is not merely inferred, it is plainly stated.

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

4. Christ’s promise applies not only to the four Gospels but also to all of the words of the New Testament as given by the Spirit of Christ (1 Pet. 1:11). Some Bibles are “red letter editions” because

they print the spoken words of Christ in the Gospels in red; but scripturally speaking, the entire Bible is a “red letter” edition!

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

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

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

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

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

4. Peter associates the inspiration and preservation of the Old Testament directly with that of the New (v. 25). As the New

Covenant exceeds the Old in glory (2 Cor. 3:6-11), we can expect that the God who has promised to preserve the very jots and tittles of the Old will do no less with the New.

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

“For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.”

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

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

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

4. God gave this warning because He knew that men would tamper with the Scripture. The promise of divine preservation is not the promise that no Old or New Testament manuscripts and

translations will be corrupted. It is the promise, rather, that in the midst of the devil's attack God will keep His Word pure and not allow it to be lost.

Summary of the doctrine of Bible Preservation

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

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

MYTH: THE BIBLE DOES NOT SAY HOW GOD WOULD PRESERVE THE SCRIPTURE

The modernists and Unitarians who were at the forefront of the development of modern textual criticism in the 18th and 19th centuries did not care anything about a doctrine of *preservation*. In fact, they did not even believe in supernatural *inspiration*. But evangelicals and fundamentalists who defend the modern versions and practice modern textual criticism must attempt to fit some type of doctrine of preservation into the process. The standard approach is to claim that the Bible does not teach us *HOW* God would preserve the Scripture. For example, writing in *The Bible Version Debate: The Perspective of Central Baptist Theological Seminary* (1997), W. Edward Glenny stated that "no verse in Scripture explain[s] how God will preserve His Word..." (p. 95). They take this position because they hold to modern textual criticism; and

they understand that if modern textual criticism is true, the majority of extant Bible manuscripts from throughout the church age are corrupt. Therefore, they must devise a doctrine of preservation that allows for this strange situation. Dr. Stewart Custer of Bob Jones University says, “God has preserved His word in the sands of Egypt” (stated during a debate in Marquette Manor Baptist Church, Chicago, 1984). He is referring to the view held by modern textual critics that the pure New Testament text is “preserved” in a small number of manuscripts from Egypt that owe their preservation to the dry climate and to the fact that they were not used.

ANSWER:

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

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

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

In particular, it was the Jewish priests who were responsible to care for the Scriptures (Deut. 31:24-26; 17:18). Every seven years the priests were to gather the people together to teach them the Scriptures (Deut. 31:10-12).

Though there were periods of spiritual backsliding in which the Word of God was almost unknown (2 Chron. 15:3), God preserved His Word in spite of man’s failure. The Word of God was never permanently lost (2 Kings 22:8).

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).

Following the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. and the further scattering of the Jews throughout the nations, it was the scribes called *Tannaim* (Teachers) who guarded the Old Testament Scriptures. These were followed by the *Amoraim* (Expositors). In addition to copying the Old Testament, they produced the Talmud, a commentary on the Jewish traditions. Though they did not believe and obey the Bible, they revered it and continue to preserve it from generation to generation.

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:

Each column must have no less than 48 or more than 60 lines. The entire copy must be first lined.

No word nor letter could be written from memory; the scribe must have an authentic copy before him, and he must read and pronounce aloud each word before writing it.

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

.2. God has preserved the New Testament through the

churches by the process of the Great Commission (Mat. 28:19-20; 1 Tim. 3:15; 6:14; 2 Tim. 2:2; 1 Pet. 2:9).

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

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

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

We see that the Scriptures are not preserved by being hidden away (such as in a remote monastery in the Sinai desert or the Vatican Library or in a cave by the Dead Sea) but by being used. "God did not preserve His Word in the 'disusing' but in the 'using.' He did not preserve the Word by it being stored away or buried, but rather through its use and transmission in the hands of humble believers" (Jack Moorman, *Forever Settled*, 1985, p. 90).

The witness of the Latin manuscripts and other versions have significance in determining the text of Scripture, because these were even more commonly used by the churches through the Dark Ages than the Greek. Likewise, in this light the lectionaries that were read in the churches and the quotations from church leaders are important witnesses. This is why the Reformation editors looked to the Latin as an important secondary witness after the Greek. Thus in a few places there is more testimony to the preserved text in the Latin than the Greek (i.e., Acts 8:37; 1 John 5:7). Edward F. Hills observed, "... it was not trickery that was responsible for the inclusion of the *Johannine Comma* in the Textus Receptus [referring to the claim that a Greek manuscript was fabricated by Erasmus' contemporaries to support this verse], but the usage of the Latin speaking Church." This is the chief reason

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

The purest Bible manuscripts and translations were literally used up in the process of time so that they were replaced with new copies. This is why ancient manuscripts that are in mint condition, such as the Sinaiticus and the Vaticanus, are deeply suspect. They weren't used! The majority of the most ancient manuscripts extant are mere fragments because they were worn out and come down to us only in pieces. The fact that manuscripts such as the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus come down to us relatively intact from ancient times is due to their corruption and disuse. This process continues today. Though I have only been saved 32 years, I have worn out Bibles and replaced them with new ones in this brief period of a mere three decades. Ancient manuscripts would ordinarily have worn out even more quickly than modern Bibles, because they were used not only for reading and study but also for copying.

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.

God's people are to be zealous for the details of the Scripture, for the "spots" (1 Tim. 6:14). The lax attitude that characterizes the modern textual criticism position, that the omission of thousands of words is of little significance, is not Scriptural.

"Faithful men" play an important role in Bible preservation, because it is only such men who will care enough to guard the Word and who will have the spiritual discernment necessary for the task.

God preserves His Word by His own power (Mat. 19:20). Christ explains how the preservation of Scripture can be possible in light of human frailty and the vicious and unceasing assault of the devil. It is possible because of God's active role in preserving it. We see this in Christ's promise, "lo, I am with you alway..." Though men have an important part to play in the process of preservation, it is

God Himself who has preserved the Scripture. Modern textual critics focus almost exclusively upon *man's* role in the transmission of the text, but the Bible believer traces the hand of *God*.

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

It was in operation through the Dark Ages of Rome's rule. This is why we know that the preserved Word of God is found in the majority of Greek and Latin manuscripts and translations thereof that were in common use among the churches during those centuries.

This process was in operation during the Protestant era when the Reformation editors and translators put the Scriptures into print. They understood that the preserved New Testament was found largely in the Greek Byzantine text that had come down from Antioch in the early centuries of the church age and secondarily in the Latin that was even more widely used than Greek during the Dark Ages (and not so much by Rome as by "dissident" or separatist Bible believers such as the Waldenses, the pre-Reformation Anabaptists, and the Lollards who used Latin or Latin-based versions). In a few instances, such as the Trinitarian statement of 1 John 5:7, the Scripture was preserved more in Latin and in other versions. But always it was preserved in the common usage among the churches.

This process was in operation in the 19th century, when the Scripture continued to be preserved in the Bible-believing churches that resisted the tide of skepticism coming from Germany. Modern textual criticism was never popular in believing churches in that century. In fact, it was strongly resisted.

This process is still in operation today. By the late 20th century, the tide of end-time apostasy was so powerful that the corrupt critical Greek text and the translations thereof had become a majority, but Bible believing churches continue, in the midst of this apostasy, to love, preach, and defend the preserved Scripture. Most of the staunchly fundamentalist churches today that are boldly resisting the ecumenical tide continue to love the King James Bible and other Received Text versions.

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

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

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).

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

This teaches us that preserved Scripture is often found in small pockets. This is what we see in the Dark Ages. The purest Scripture was not preserved in the Greek Byzantine text that was kept within the ever-narrowing borders of the Byzantine Empire and in translations used by smaller groups of believing churches. In our day, at the beginning of the 21st century, we see this truth in play as the corrupt critical Greek text and its translations have become the majority. This should not confuse a Bible believer, because Jesus taught us that we should expect the truth to be in the minority.

This teaches us to expect that the record of the Bible throughout the church age will be a mixture of truth and error. The Bible is preserved *in the midst of* the enemy’s attacks and *in spite of* these attacks, not *from* the enemy’s attacks.

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. In the midst of the growth of this end-time 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 the Word of God.

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

These verses teach us that the Scriptures have been preserved among 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 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.

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 John's day. How could the truth be preserved in the midst of such fierce assaults? The answer is not found in the arm of flesh but in the eternal, omniscient, omnipotent Spirit of God. Thus it is by the Spirit that the pure Scripture has been preserved through the dark

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

The weakness of man has not prevented the Scriptures from being preserved, for though man has a part in its preservation, the job ultimately does not lie on man's shoulders. For "when the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him" (Isaiah 59:17).

Therefore, when considering the Bible text issue we must not focus on man but on God.

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

MYTH: PSALM 12:7 DOES NOT REFER TO THE PRESERVATION OF SCRIPTURE.

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

ANSWER:

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

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

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

Psalm 119:111 -- the feminine "testimonies" is the antecedent for the masculine "they."

Psalm 119:129 -- the feminine "testimonies" is the antecedent for the masculine "them."

Psalm 119:152 -- the feminine "testimonies" is the antecedent for the masculine "them."

Psalm 119:167 -- the feminine "testimonies" is the antecedent for the masculine "them."

3. In the context of Psalm 12, the words of men are contrasted with the words of God. This favors the view that verse 7 describes God's words. "The context is favorable to the preservation interpretation. God's promise to save the poor and needy is given in verse 5; verses 6 and 7 are injected to show that His promise of verse 5 will never be broken" (Bruce Lackey, personal letter to David Cloud, Feb. 29, 1984).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“In spite of *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* reading ‘keep them’ and

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

MYTH: ALL OF THE SCHOLARS SUPPORT THE MODERN VERSIONS.

ANSWER:

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

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

“A GROWING VANGUARD OF YOUNG GRADUATES OF EVANGELICAL COLLEGES WHO HOLD DOCTORATES FROM NON-EVANGELICAL DIVINITY CENTERS NOW QUESTION OR DISOWN INERRANCY and the doctrine is held less consistently by evangelical faculties. ... Some retain the term and reassure supportive constituencies but nonetheless stretch the term’s meaning” (Carl F.H. Henry, past senior editor of *Christianity Today*, “Conflict over Biblical Inerrancy,” *Christianity Today*, May 7, 1976).

“Most people outside the evangelical community itself are totally unaware of the profound changes that have occurred within evangelicalism during the last several years - in the movement’s understanding of the inspiration and authority of Scripture ... evangelical theologians have begun looking at the Bible with a

scrutiny reflecting THEIR WIDESPREAD ACCEPTANCE OF THE PRINCIPLES OF HISTORICAL AND LITERARY CRITICISM ... The position-affirming that Scripture is inerrant or infallible in its teaching on matters of faith and conduct but not necessarily in all its assertions concerning history and the cosmos-IS GRADUALLY BECOMING ASCENDANT AMONG THE MOST HIGHLY RESPECTED EVANGELICAL THEOLOGIANS. ... ONE MIGHT EVEN SUGGEST THAT THE NEW GENERATION OF EVANGELICALS IS CLOSER TO BONHOEFFER, BARTH AND BRUNNER THAN TO HODGE AND WARFIELD ON THE INSPIRATION AND AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE” (Richard Quebedeaux, “The Evangelicals: New Trends and Tensions,” *Christianity and Crisis*, Sept. 20, 1976, pp. 197-202).

“I must regretfully conclude that the term evangelical has been so debased that it has lost its usefulness. ... Forty years ago the term evangelical represented those who were theologically orthodox and who held to biblical inerrancy as one of the distinctives. ... WITHIN A DECADE OR SO NEOEVANGELICALISM . . . WAS BEING ASSAULTED FROM WITHIN BY INCREASING SKEPTICISM WITH REGARD TO BIBLICAL INFALLIBILITY OR INERRANCY” (Harold Lindsell, *The Bible in the Balance*, 1979, p. 319; Lindsell was vice-president of Fuller Seminary and editor of *Christianity Today*).

“WITHIN EVANGELICALISM THERE ARE A GROWING NUMBER WHO ARE MODIFYING THEIR VIEWS ON THE INERRANCY OF THE BIBLE SO THAT THE FULL AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE IS COMPLETELY UNDERCUT” (Francis Schaeffer, *The Great Evangelical Disaster*, 1983, p. 44; this was the last book written by Schaeffer).

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

“Evangelical What’s in a Name?” *The Coming Evangelical Crisis*, 1996, pp. 32, 33, 36).

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

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

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 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.”

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 on 2 Peter: “The tradition that this letter is the work of the apostle Peter was questioned in early times, and internal indications are almost decisive against it. ... Most scholars therefore regard the letter as the work of one who was deeply indebted to Peter and who published it under his master’s name early in the second century.” [Note: Those who believe this nonsense must think the early Christians were liars and fools and the Holy Spirit was on vacation.]

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.”

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

3. It is important to understand that the Bible warns of increasing apostasy throughout the course of the church age (i.e., Mat. 24:3-5; Lk. 18:8; 2 Tim. 3:3; 4:3-4; 2 Pet. 2:1-2; 1 John 2:18-19). Since the end of the age will be characterized by a

great scarcity of faith and truth, we can expect to find sound Bibles and sound churches in the extreme minority as the time of Christ's return draws nearer, and this is exactly what we find today.

In the 19th century, apostasy began to blossom within Protestantism in even more damnable forms than it had assumed in the Dark Ages, by way of theological Modernism and Unitarianism.

In the midst of the rise of Modernism, the principles of modern textual criticism were devised from naturalistic disciplines; the much-blessed Greek Received Text was despised and replaced with the Alexandrian text that had been discarded 1,500 years earlier. On the side of the English language, the King James Bible became the target of destruction and beginning with the English Revision of 1881, version after version was put forth in an attempt to dethrone it. By the end of the 20th century, the Alexandrian Greek text dominated.

Where apostasy is the strongest, the critical Greek text is prominent. The Roman Catholic is committed to it. The modernistic Protestant denominations are committed to it without exception. The cults are likewise committed to it. Europe is a bastion of apostasy, and it is no surprise that the Bible light has almost gone out in that part of the world and the only Bibles generally available are weak dynamic equivalencies based on a corrupt Greek text. One will look almost in vain for European Bible scholarship that defends the Traditional text. The same is true for England and Canada and Australia.

The onslaught of end-time apostasy explains why only one man trained in textual criticism at the doctorate level in the last 75 years approached this issue by faith, and that was Edward F. Hills. I am not puzzled at this fact; I believe it is a fulfillment of prophecy.

It is important to note that many intelligent, highly educated, and informed Christians have rejected the modern versions. I personally know of many such men, not only those whose mother tongue is English, but also Chinese, Korean, Spanish, French, German, and other languages.

I have documented this extensively in my book *For Love of the Bible: The History of the Defense of the KJV and the Received Text*

from 1800 to Present (available from Way of Life Literature, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 41085. <http://www.wayoflife.org>, fbns@wayoflife.org).

One example is **Dr. Edward F. Hills** (1912-1981), a respected Presbyterian scholar. Though largely ignored by professional textual critics and translators, Hills has encouraged thousands of pastors, evangelists, missionaries, and Bible teachers by his defense of the Received Text and his exposure of the unbelief of modern textual criticism.

He was a distinguished Latin and Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Yale University. He also earned the Th.B. degree from Westminster Theological Seminary and the Th.M. from Columbia Theological Seminary. After doing doctoral work at the University of Chicago in New Testament textual criticism, he completed his program at Harvard, earning the Th.D. in this field.

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

Consider this quote from his book: "Has the text of the New Testament, like those of other ancient books, been damaged during its voyage over the seas of time? Ought the same methods of textual criticism to be applied to it that are applied to the texts of other ancient books? These are questions which the following pages will endeavor to answer. An earnest effort will be made to convince the Christian reader that this is a matter to which he *must* attend. FOR IN THE REALM OF NEW TESTAMENT TEXTUAL

CRITICISM AS WELL AS IN OTHER FIELDS THE PRESUPPOSITIONS OF MODERN THOUGHT ARE HOSTILE TO THE HISTORIC CHRISTIAN FAITH AND WILL DESTROY IT IF THEIR FATAL OPERATION IS NOT CHECKED. If faithful Christians, therefore, would defend their sacred religion against this danger, they must forsake the foundations of unbelieving thought and build upon their faith, a faith that rests entirely on the solid rock of holy Scripture. And when they do this in the sphere of New Testament textual criticism, they will find themselves led back step by step (perhaps, at first, against their wills) to the text of the Protestant Reformation, namely, that form of New Testament text which underlies the King James Version and the other early Protestant translations” (*The King James Version Defended*, “Introduction,” p. 1).

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

Dr. Waite has 118 semester hours (1,888 class hours) of training in the biblical and other foreign languages, plus countless hours of teaching and personal research in the use of these languages. He obtained a B.A. in classical Greek and Latin from the University of Michigan in 1948; a Th.M. with high honors in New Testament Greek Literature and Exegesis from Dallas Theological Seminary in 1952; a Th.D. with honors in Bible Exposition from Dallas Seminary in 1955; and a Ph.D. in Speech from Purdue University in 1961. He holds both New Jersey and Pennsylvania teacher certificates in Greek and Language Arts, and has taught Greek, Hebrew, Bible, Speech, and English for over thirty-five years in nine schools.

Dr. Waite founded the Bible For Today (BFT) ministry in 1971, the year he published his first book on the subject of Bible versions. He has produced over 700 studies, booklets, cassettes, and VCR's that he distributes through BFT, along with hundreds of titles by other men on a wide variety of subjects. [Bible for Today, 900 Park Ave., Collingswood, NJ 08108. 800-564-6109, BFT@BibleForToday.org.]

Dr. Waite has produced a number of exacting studies in the field of Bible versions. To find out for himself the exact number and nature of changes that have been made in the critical Greek text, for example, Waite compared the Westcott-Hort text with the Received

Text, counting every single word difference and weighing its significance. When Waite says there are 9,970 Greek words added, subtracted, or changed from the Received Text in the Westcott-Hort text, he is not merely parroting what he read somewhere. He is citing his own scholarly research. He has also done this with at least three of the modern English versions (the NASV, NIV, and the NKJV), comparing them word for word with the King James Bible and the Received Text, noting the number and significance of the differences. *I can understand how someone might disagree with the King James defender's conclusions, but to gloss over or ignore the diligent research that has been accomplished by men such as this and to pretend that they could not possibly be true scholars is a farce.*

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

Strouse left a teaching position at Maranatha Baptist Bible Seminary in 1988 and founded Tabernacle Baptist Bible Seminary in Virginia Beach, Virginia, under the pastoral oversight of Rodney Bell, heading up the Doctorate Program at Tabernacle until 2000, when he moved to Emmanuel. Strouse has a B.S. in industrial engineering from Purdue University, an M.Div. in theology and Biblical languages from Maranatha Baptist Graduate School of Theology, and a Ph.D. in theology from Bob Jones University.

Strouse was a founding member of the Dean Burgon Society (1979) and stands firmly for the Received Text and the King James Bible. In a letter to this editor dated March 2, 1995, Strouse said: "I took a course on textual criticism at Maranatha under Dr. M. James Hollowood. He was a close friend to Dr. D.A. Waite and used some of his materials to defend the *textus receptus* in 1972. In 1974-78, I was at BJU and was exposed to the critical text and I found it inferior to the *textus receptus*. Maranatha was started in 1968 by Dr. Cedarholm who used the *textus receptus* until his successor, Dr. A.Q. Weniger, came in 1983. I left Maranatha in 1988, after trying to preserve the foundational heritage of MBBC in regards to the text, the local church doctrine, and fundamentalism, and failing."

Dr. Strouse has authored many publications dealing with Bible defense. His 1992 book "The Lord God Hath Spoken: A Guide to Bibliology" deals with revelation, inspiration, canonicity, illumination, and interpretation. A 1996 publication is entitled

“Fundamentalism and the Authorized Version.” In 2001, Dr. Strouse published an excellent book on preservation titled “But My Words Shall Not Pass Away: The Biblical Defense of the Doctrine of the Preservation of Scripture.” He compares a faith position with that of modern textual criticism, which assumes that God’s Word was not divinely kept. Dr. Strouse has also authored a reply to D.A. Carson’s *The King James Version Debate* as well as to *From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man*.

Emmanuel Baptist Theological Seminary is a ministry of Emmanuel Baptist Church. The school’s literature emphasizes that “Emmanuel Baptist Theological Seminary is an independent, local-church, Baptist seminary which stands without apology for the Word of God (Textus Receptus/KJV), for our Baptist heritage, for a balance between biblical scholarship and practical application, and for the primacy of preaching.” The school will not seek accreditation with the state of Connecticut or with any secular accrediting association. The seminary currently offers three degree programs: Master of Biblical Studies (32 hours), Master of Divinity (96 hours), and Doctor of Ministry (32 hours). The Master of Divinity requires 12 hours of Greek and 12 of Hebrew. The following is from the school’s doctrinal statement: “We believe in the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Old and New Testaments and the Bible as the only rule of faith and practice. We believe that the process of inspiration ceased with the *autographa*. The Textus Receptus is essentially the preserved *autographa* and the Authorized Version (KJV) is an accurate and trustworthy translation of the TR. Consequently, the Authorized Version is the Word of God in the English language.”

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

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

In Matthew 11:25 the Lord Jesus thanked the Father for hiding the truth from the wise and prudent and revealing it unto babes. Thus we would not expect to find the truth among the scholars of this world but among the humble saints who have been regenerated by the Spirit of God.

The apostles and early believers were common men, for the most

part (1 Cor. 1:26-31), and they were despised by the religious scholars of their day (Acts 4:13). I am not opposed to godly Bible colleges and I understand that biblical learning is crucial for the ministry. It is required that preachers be taught (2 Tim. 2:2; Titus 1:9), but we must not forget that the apostles did not establish schools as such; they built churches. They did not bestow degrees; they ordained pastors.

The qualifications for church leaders do not include a high level of scholarship (1 Tim. 3; Titus 1). God's qualifications for pastors and teachers mention nothing about scholarship. The requirement, rather, is regeneration, holiness of life, explicit faith (which is based on the Word of God--Rom. 10:14), humility, knowledge of and zeal for God's Word, and the call of God as recognized by the churches. If the apostolic churches did not need ivory tower scholarship, the churches of today do not either.

Do not be deceived by the proud who belittle the common pastor and who erroneously imply that a man must be a trained textual critic to understand where God's Word is today. *WHILE WE PRAISE THE LORD FOR BIBLE-BELIEVING SCHOLARSHIP AND WHILE WE PUT NO PREMIUM ON IGNORANCE, WE ARE NOT DELUDED INTO THINKING THAT WISDOM COMES THROUGH GRADUATE STUDIES.*

Thousands of humble, godly believers have rejected modern textual criticism and have taken a stand for the Masoretic Hebrew and the Received Greek Text and the formal equivalence translations in many languages based upon this Text. I will rather take my stand with the Spirit-taught wisdom of God's "babes" (Mat. 11:25) as opposed to proud religious scholarship.

MYTH: FUNDAMENTALISTS DID NOT DEFEND THE KING JAMES BIBLE BEFORE DAVID OTIS FULLER IN THE 1970S.

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

ANSWER:

1. Most fundamentalist leaders of the past did not devote special study to the subject of texts and versions.

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

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

First, our authority is not human leaders, but the Word of God itself (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Some men seem to think that if John Rice

or J. Frank Norris or Bob Jones did or believed something, I am obligated to follow them. I don't understand that mindset. I don't unquestioningly follow fundamentalist leaders, past or present, in any matter. I appreciate all of the good things they stood for, but they were only men.

Furthermore, fundamentalism has never been a homogenous thing; it has always been extremely divided. Fundamentalists have never agreed even on the doctrine of baptism or on eschatology, not to speak of the doctrine of preservation. Even Baptist fundamentalists are divided on many issues. The men who wrote *The Fundamentals* in the 1920s represented an extremely wide variety of doctrine and practice. In fact, some of them held serious error. For example, James Orr of Scotland denied the verbal inspiration of Scripture and allowed for theistic evolution. J. Campbell Morgan denied the literal fire of hell and believed that men could be saved even if they do not hear of or exercise personal faith in Christ. Thus, to uphold fundamentalist leaders of old as a standard will not do.

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

Benjamin Franklin Dearmore (1897-1969)

Dearmore was chairman of the faculty at the Bible Baptist Seminary (J. Frank Norris's school in Ft. Worth) until 1948, when he co-founded the Worth Bible College. He was also co-founder of Trinity Valley Seminary in the South Fort Worth Baptist Temple. For many years he edited an independent Baptist paper called *The Message*.

His son, James Dearmore (M.D.), described the position of B.F. Dearmore on the Bible version issue: "There was a very heavy emphasis on the KJV-AV Bible and a rejection of all other versions as 'per-versions.' ... [Worth Bible College] always consistently defended the KJV-AV Bible. ... None could have graduated without strong teachings and belief in the defense of, and acceptance of, the KJV-AV as the ONLY acceptable English version of the Bible" (Letter from James Dearmore, May 24, 1995).

Benjamin Dearmore's paper *The Message* "only recognized the KJV as truly God's Word in the English language, rejecting all other (per)versions." Following are two statements from a 1959 edition of this paper: "As for me, I will take the King James translation as the very Word of God for the English people. I believe it is without error. It is 100 percent correct. ... I do positively state that people who do not know a word of Greek can become real Bible scholars. Many times their understanding is far greater than the Greek scholars." (B.F. Dearmore, *The Message*, May 28, 1959).

This opens a window into many churches during the first half of the twentieth century in the south central and southwestern United States. There were hundreds of independent Baptist churches in Texas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas in those days that stood exclusively for the King James Bible and opposed the modern versions.

William Aberhart (1878-1943)

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

A summary of Aberhart's teaching was given to me by Pastor Mark Buch (1910-1995), who was educated by Aberhart in the 1930s.

Buch was the founding pastor of the People's Fellowship Tabernacle in Vancouver, British Columbia, a stronghold for biblical fundamentalism in western Canada from the time it was founded in 1939. Buch knew and preached with many of the well-known fundamentalist leaders of that century, including J. Frank Norris, G. Beauchamp Vick, and Bob Jones Sr. Mark Buch testified: "Aberhart's teaching opened the subject of Divine Inspiration and

preservation. My mind was saturated with new confidence as we followed the pure stream of the divinely inspired Bible, back, back to the divinely inbreathed autographs. I saw that the Authorized Version was an accurate translation of the preserved Scriptures.”

In his 1925 booklet entitled *What About the Revised Version of the Bible*, which was widely distributed, we can see what William Aberhart taught on the Bible version issue: “Here and there and everywhere men are rising up above the Scriptures to correct them. The tables are being turned today Instead of the Bible correcting men and men’s opinions, some are correcting the Bible. ... To propose that we need a new Bible is to declare that God has not spoken. ... Pity should be our feeling toward those young preachers who cry, ‘See my new theology! See my latest Revision!’ The Authorized Version is reliable.” (Aberhart, *What About the Revised Version of the Bible*, 1925)

Philip Mauro (1859-1952)

Mauro was a famous patent lawyer who argued before the bar of the United States Supreme Court. He wrote the legal brief that was used by William Jennings Bryan at the famous “Scopes Trial” to defend the Tennessee law prohibiting the teaching of evolution in public schools. Converted in 1903, at age 45, he became a bold testimony for Christ. He witnessed to Thomas Edison, the famous inventor. Mauro was aboard the *Carpathian* when it rescued survivors from the ill-fated *Titanic* in 1912. He wrote many books on various themes and penned articles for *The Fundamentals*, the books that gave the fundamentalist movement its name in the 1920s.

Mauro’s position on the Bible version issue was no secret. In 1924 he published *Which Version? Authorized or Revised?* (This was reprinted 50 years later in David Otis Fuller’s *True or False*.) Mauro leaned heavily upon the research of John Burgon. Note the following statement: “In view also of the leading part the English speaking peoples were to play in shaping the destinies of mankind, we are justified in believing that it was through a providential ordering that the preparation of that Version was not in anywise affected by higher critical theories in general, or specifically by the two ancient Codices we have been discussing [Vaticanus and Sinaiticus]” (Mauro, *Which Version?*).

4. It is important to understand that there have always been two aspects to fundamentalism: the scholars and the common people.

And the common people, who have made up the vast majority of fundamentalism, have always stood for the KJV. See Mk. 12:37. This is a fact that is recognized by historians of fundamentalism. Consider this from James Barr:

“For fundamentalist society as a whole the Authorized Version functioned as the direct and immediate expression or transcript of divine revelation” (Barr, *Fundamentalism*, p. 210). Likewise, Robert Gromacki, in his *New Testament Survey*, observed that the King James Bible is

“the text of fundamentalism.” Peter Thuesen stated: “Yet many, if not most, fundamentalists of the fifties and sixties still regarded the King James Version as the only real Bible, save for the autographs themselves” (Thuesen, *In Discordance with the Scriptures: American Protestant Battles over Translating the Bible*, p. 112).

5. It is also crucial to understand that the Bible version issue was not a prominent issue among fundamentalists until the 1970s.

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

MYTHS PERTAINING TO THE KING JAMES VERSION

MYTH: THE KING JAMES BIBLE WAS NEVER AUTHORIZED.

Was the King James Bible Authorized? This point has been debated aggressively, because no record of authorization has survived. (All of the documents from the Privy Council from 1600-1613 were destroyed in the Whitehall fire of 1619.) Whether or not it was actually authorized by a king is not really important, of course, as there can be no doubt that God put His stamp of approval upon it, and that is what matters. But since this is a point that is debated, I will give four reasons why I am confident that it is proper to refer to the King James Bible as authorized.

ANSWER:

1. At the Hampton Court conference in 1604 King James I made a formal decision to approve the new translation for use in all the churches. It was done by royal order and under royal watchcare. It has never been explained to my satisfaction why this in itself does not constitute “authorization.” William Barlow’s report of the Hampton Court conference (Barlow was one of the KJV translators and was present at Hampton Court in 1604), stated that the decision was made by the king not only that a new translation would be made but also that it be “ratified by his Royal authority; and so his whole Church to be bound unto it, and none other” (Barlow, *The Sum and Substance of the Conference*, reprinted in Alfred Pollard, *Records of the English Bible*, pp. 46, 47). Barlow’s report was published with the king’s approval.

2. The crown of England has held the copyright to the King James Bible from the beginning.

3. The title page to the first edition of the King James Bible stated, “Appointed to be read in Churches.”

4. In 1616 the king issued a command that only the King James Bible was to be printed in England.

The King James Bible was created by royal order, was printed by

authority of the Crown of England, and was appointed to be read in all the churches. I see no reason why this does not constitute formal “authorization.”

MYTH: THE FACT THAT THE ORIGINAL KJV INCLUDED THE APOCRYPHA DISCREDITS THE “KING JAMES ONLY” POSITION.

ANSWER:

1. Early editions of the English Bible (as well as other Reformation Bibles, including the German Luther and the Olivetan French) contained the Apocrypha, but these books were included for historical reference only, not as additions to the canon of Scripture. Alexander McClure, a biographer of the KJV translators, says: “... the Apocryphal books in those times were more read and accounted of than now, though by no means placed on a level with the canonical books of Scripture” (McClure, *Translators Revived*, p. 185). He then lists seven reasons assigned by the KJV translators for rejecting the Apocrypha as canonical. (1) Not one of them is in the Hebrew language, which was alone used by the inspired historians and poets of the Old Testament. (2) Not one of the writers lays any claim to inspiration. (3) These books were never acknowledged as sacred Scriptures by the Jewish Church, and therefore were never sanctioned by our Lord. (4) They were not allowed a place among the sacred books, during the first four centuries of the Christian Church. (5) They contain fabulous statements, and statements which contradict not only the canonical Scriptures, but themselves; as when, in the two Books of Maccabees, Antiochus Epiphanes is made to die three different deaths in as many different places. (6) It inculcates doctrines at variance with the Bible, such as prayers for the dead and sinless perfection. (7) It teaches immoral practices, such as lying, suicide, assassination, and magical incantation.

2. The Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England clearly state that the Apocryphal books have no scriptural authority. “... [the Church of England] doth not apply to them to establish any doctrine.”

3. It is important to understand that in the early King James Bibles, the Apocryphal books were placed by themselves between the Old and New Testaments rather than intermingled among the

canonical O.T. books as is done in Catholic Bibles. In the Jerusalem Bible (a Catholic Bible), for example, Tobit, Judith, and the Maccabees follow Nehemiah; the Book of Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus follow Ecclesiastes; Baruch follows Lamentations; etc. Thus the very location of the apocryphal books denotes the canonical authority (or lack thereof) attributed to them by a Bible's publisher.

4. It is not true that the Geneva Bible excluded the Apocrypha. One of the authors of the book *From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man* (published in 1999 by Ambassador-Emerald International, Greenville, SC and Belfast, N. Ireland) claims that the Puritans and Separatists rejected the KJV in favor of the Geneva Bible because the latter excluded the Apocrypha (pp. 45-46). Dr. Jeffrey Khoo observes: "Dr. Errol F. Rhodes and Dr. Liana Lupas who edited *The Translators to the Reader: The Original Preface to the King James Version Revised*, present a more accurate picture: "The books of the Apocrypha were included in the King James Version from the first as a matter of course, as they had been in all versions of the English Bible from the time of Wycliffe (c. 1384), including the Calvinist Geneva Bible of 1560. ... The deliberate omission of the Apocrypha from an English Bible is first noted in the 1640 edition of the Geneva Bible. ... Not until the nineteenth century, however, did the omission of the Apocrypha in Protestant Bibles become normal" (Khoo, *Kept Pure in All Ages*, 2001, p. 143).

5. Of Bibles printed in America, David Daniell testifies: "The present writer's experience of examining Bibles printed in America throughout the nineteenth century is that in the first half more of them than not included the Apocrypha" (*The Bible in English*, 2003, p. 600).

6. Thus, in conclusion, the Apocrypha was never considered canonical by the Church of England or by the KJV translators. It was commonly included in Reformation Bibles in many languages until the 19th century for historical reference only, much as extensive notes and comments are included in modern study Bibles.

MYTH: THE KJV HAS BEEN UPDATED IN THOUSANDS OF PLACES.

A question that comes up frequently in the Bible Version debate is

this: “If you believe that the KJV is the preserved Word of God in English, which edition do you use, seeing that it has been revised many times and in thousands of places?”

ANSWER:

I will answer this question under the following five headings:

1. There were corrections of printing errors, typographical changes, and spelling updates. These were done by the British publishers of the KJV and can be grouped into two time periods.

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).

An update was made between 1762-69 to correct any lingering printing errors and to update the spelling, enlarge and standardize the italics, and increase the number of cross references and marginal notes. The revision was begun in 1762 by Dr. F.S. Paris of Cambridge University and completed in 1769 by Dr. Benjamin Blayney of Hertford College, Oxford University. “The edition in folio and quarto, revised and corrected with very great care by Benjamin Blayney, D.D., under the direction of the Vice-Chancellor of Oxford, and the Delegates of The Clarendon Press, in 1769” (McClure, *The Revision Revised*). The revision was made by collating the then current editions of Oxford and Cambridge with those of 1611 and 1701.

2. All of the changes were of a minor nature, such as the following:

Printing errors were corrected. This was almost exclusively the nature of the corrections made in the 28 years following the first printing. Consider some examples:

Psalm 69:32 -- “seek good” was a printing error in the 1611 that was corrected to “seek God” in 1617

Ecclesiastes 1:5 -- “the place” was a printing error in the 1611 that

was corrected to “his place” in 1638.

Matthew 6:3 -- “thy right doeth” was a printing error in the 1611 that was corrected to “thy right hand doeth” in 1613.

Consider some famous printing errors that have appeared in printings of the King James Bible:

The Wicked Bible (1631) omitted “not” in “Thou shalt not commit adultery” in Exodus 20:14.

The Printer’s Bible (1702) read “printers have persecuted me” instead of “princes” in Psalm 119:161

The Vinegar Bible (1717) read “The Parable of the Vinegar” instead of Vineyard.

The Ears to Ear Bible (1810) read “who hath ears to ear let him hear” in Mat. 14:43.

The Rebekah’s Camel’s Bible (1823) read “And Rebekah arose, and her camels [should be damsels]” in Gen. 24:61.

The use of italics was more standardized and its use was expanded.

Spelling and punctuation were updated. For example, old English had an “e” after the verb (i.e., feare, blinde, sinne, borne). The old English also used a “long s” in places. The long s looked like an f except the horizontal line extended only to the left of the vertical. Thus the word “also” looked like “alfo” in the early editions of the King James Bible. The old English also used a “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.”

A large number of new marginal notes and cross-references were added.

3. Donald Waite of Bible for Today compared every word of the 1611 KJV with a standard KJV in publication today (the 1917 Scofield which uses an Oxford text). Dr. Waite’s study is entitled

“KJB of 1611 Compared to the KJB of the 1917 Old Scofield” (BFT1294) and can be obtained from Bible for Today, 900 Park Ave., Collingswood, NJ 08108, <http://www.biblefortoday.org/>. He counted all of the changes that could be heard. The largest number of changes were spelling (e.g., “blinde” to “blind”), but as these have no real significance he did not count them.

Waite found only 1,095 changes* that affect the sound throughout the entire 791,328 words in the King James Bible. Of these, the vast majority are minor changes of form, such as “towards” changed to “toward,” “burnt” changed to “burned,” “amongst” changed to “among,” “lift up” changed to “lifted up,” and “you” changed to “ye.” Obviously these are not real changes of any translational significance. [* Waite’s original report stated that he found 421 changes that affect the sound, but he later revised that to 1,095 changes.]

Dr. Waite found ONLY 136 SUBSTANTIAL CHANGES (out of 791,328 words) between the original KJV of 1611 and the contemporary Oxford edition. Most of these changes were made within 28 years after the original publication of the KJV and were the simple correction of printer’s errors. Following are some of the 136 substantial changes:

1 Samuel 16:12 -- “requite good” changed to “requite me good”
Esther 1:8 -- “for the king” changed to “for so the king”
Isaiah 47:6 -- “the” changed to “thy”
Isaiah 49:13 -- “God” changed to “Lord”
Isaiah 57:8 “made a” changed to “made thee a”
Ezekiel 3:11 -- “the people” changed to “the children of thy people”
Naham 3:17 -- “the crowned” changed to “thy crowned”
Acts 8:32 -- “shearer” changed to “his shearer”
Acts 16:1 -- “which was a Jew” changed to “which was a Jewess”
1 Peter 2:5 -- “sacrifice” changed to “sacrifices”
Jude 25 -- “now and ever” changed to “both now and ever”

Further, there are a few differences between the Oxford and the Cambridge corrected editions that can still be found in current editions of the KJV. Following is one example:

Jeremiah 34:16 -- Cambridge has “whom YE had set at liberty” while Oxford has “whom HE had set at liberty”

4. The most thorough study ever done on the various editions of the King James Bible was by Frederick Scrivener in the late 19th century. He was the author of the *Cambridge Paragraph Bible*, which was an “elaborate attempt to publish a trustworthy text of King James’ version.” It first appeared in 1873 and was republished in 1884 accompanied by Scrivener’s valuable Introduction and Appendices as *The Authorized Edition of the English Bible (1611): Its Subsequent Reprints and Modern Representatives* (Cambridge: University Press, 1884). One of the Appendices is a “List of original readings of the Bible of 1611 examined and arranged” and another is a “List of wrong readings of the Bible of 1611 amended in later editions.” Scrivener also analyzed the KJV’s underlying Greek text and tabulated the number of times that it varied from the Stephens and the Beza editions of the Received Text. A reprint of Scrivener’s important book is available from Bible for Today. It is also available on CD from Sola Scriptura Publishing, 1118 SW Orleans St., Topeka, KS 66604. <http://www.solascripturapublishing.com>, mlangle1@cox.net.

5. What is the significance of these facts?

First, we see that the KJV has gone through such a strenuous purification process that the reader can have complete confidence in its accuracy.

Also, any idea that the KJV was “given by inspiration” is disproved. If it were “given by inspiration” in 1611 it would not have needed any sort of correction or refinement, because it would have been infallible in every detail. Those who teach that the KJV is more than an accurate translation, that it is given by inspiration and perfect and inerrant in itself and advanced revelation and such must show us exactly which edition they are referring to.

MYTH: KING JAMES I WAS A HOMOSEXUAL.

ANSWER:

1. The accusation that King James I was a homosexual has often been made, but we need to be cautious about accepting it.

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).

2. While we doubt that King James was a homosexual, we do not defend his character very far. He was a profligate, conniving, deceitful man, and he was a persecutor of Baptists and other separatists who refused to submit to the state church. In fact, the last person burned alive in England for his faith was burned during the reign of James, and many others died in their cruel prison cells for no crime other than following the Bible according to the dictates of their own conscience. It was because of the persecution poured out during James’ reign that the Puritans fled England and sailed for America in 1607 and the Pilgrims followed in 1620.

3. The bottom line is that the character of King James I has no relevance to the King James Bible itself. Though he set the project in motion and there is evidence that he maintained an interest in keeping it moving along, he had no role in the translation. He did not even finance the project.

MYTH: THE ANGLICAN TRANSLATORS OF THE KJV CHANGED THE TRANSLATION TO FIT THEIR DOCTRINE.

ANSWER:

1. The KJV translators were instructed not to change “old ecclesiastical words.” Rule #3 said, “The old ecclesiastical words to be kept, as the word *church*, not to be translated congregation.” On this rule I agree with the 19th century Baptist pastor John Dowling, who said: “Without expressing an opinion in relation to the

particular word mentioned here as an instance of one of a class of words, the author would take this opportunity of stating his solemn conviction that the conscience of a translator should be left perfectly free and untrammelled by any rules, except that of giving the exact meaning (as nearly as he can ascertain it, by earnest prayer and diligent study) of the original text” (Dowling, *The Burning of the Bibles: Defence of the Protestant Version of the Scriptures against the Attacks of Popish Apologists for the Camplain Bible Burners*, 1843, p. 57).

2. At the same time, I do not think that this did any harm to the Word of God. The word “church” is not a wrong translation. Bible words must be interpreted first and foremost by their context, and when “church” is so interpreted, there is no confusion. The term “church” was an ancient English word by the time that the KJV translators used it, and beyond that it was an ancient word in Anglo-Saxon (*circ*), Scottish (*kirk*), German (*kirche*), and other languages. Some linguists believe it was derived from the Latin “curia,” which in turn was from the Greek “kuriakon,” meaning “the Lord’s house” (*McClintok and Strong Cyclopedia*). Wycliffe used “church,” as did the Geneva Bible. Tyndale, on the other hand, used “congregation.” This might be deemed better, but even this is not a complete translation of the Greek word “ecclesia,” meaning “a called out assembly.” The term “church” in the KJV is easily interpreted by the Bible itself. I have never been tempted to become an Anglican because the KJV has the word “church” instead of “congregation.”

3. As for the term “baptism” I see no problem. It was already an ancient English word by the time of 1611. All of the English versions from the time of Wycliffe, including the Geneva, used “baptize,” which is simply a transliteration of the Greek word “baptizo.”

At the time when the King James Bible was translated, the Church of England still practiced baptism by immersion, so the mode of baptism was not an issue. “If *baptism* was one of the old ecclesiastical words which were to be retained, it certainly could not have been because any partiality for infant sprinkling was detected in that term. It had been, up to the time when king James’ version was made, the uniform and invariable understanding, that to baptize signified to dip or plunge into water. It was the common

understanding and practice at that time, and after that time. ‘Dipping,’ says [William] Wall [*A Defence of the History of Infant Baptism*, 1705], ‘must have been pretty ordinary during the former half of king James’ reign, if not longer.’ The same historian mentions a pamphlet written by a Mr. Blake in 1645,--that is, nearly forty years after the publication of king James’ Bible,--showing clearly what must have been the common opinion and usage at that time. This Mr. Blake was a clergyman of the Church of England. In reply to his opponent, who had objected to the baptism of infants, the fact, that they were not dipped, but sprinkled, he says, ‘I have been an eye-witness of many infants dipped, and know it to have been the constant practice of many ministers in their places for many years together. I have seen several dipped; I never saw nor heard of any sprinkled.’ It would thus appear, that up to 1645, immersion was the prevailing practice in the English Church, and that the custom of sprinkling was introduced subsequent to that period. There can be little doubt, that the famous assembly of Westminster divines were the first to impart countenance and currency to the practice of sprinkling in lieu of baptism” (William Brantly, *Objections to a Baptist Version of the New Testament*, 1837, pp. 21-22).

Some American Baptists in the 19th century proposed a new English translation that would render “baptizo” as “immerse.” The project didn’t get very far, because most Baptists were opposed to changing the Authorized English Bible and understood that “baptize” is a good translation. Baptist leaders who opposed changing “baptize” to “immersion” included William Brantly, Octavius Winslow, and John Dowling. The latter published “The Old-Fashioned Bible, or Ten Reasons against the Proposed Baptist Version of the New Testament” (1850). One of the ten reasons was “because the word *Baptize* is itself to all intents and purposes an English word.” This is correct, for the fact that it has appeared in the English Bible from the very first and thus passed into common usage among all English-speaking churches since the 14th century. Dowling said: “I formerly entertained the opinion that the translators of King James’ version ought to have translated the word *Baptize*, immerse or dip. Since examining more fully the age of the English word *Baptize*, and its use when that version was made, I have come to a different conclusion. I am now fully satisfied that when the translators selected *Baptize* as the word descriptive of the ordinance, they made the best choice that could

then be made.”

Even the words “immerse” or “dip” do not carry the full meaning of “baptizo.” The word “dip,” which is used in many German Bibles, is a much better translation than “immerse” because “baptizo” has the idea not only of putting something under but also of bringing it up again. The word “immersion” carries only half of the meaning of the Greek “baptizo.” Further, though, “baptizo” not only involves dipping in water but also carries the idea of death, burial, and resurrection of which the dipping is merely a picture (Rom. 6:3-4; Col. 2:12). No English word other than “baptism” has all of the biblical meaning.

MYTH: THE KING JAMES TRANSLATORS SAID ALL VERSIONS ARE GOOD.

The book *From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man*, which was published in 1999 by associates of Bob Jones University and the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship, is filled with errors pertaining to the subject of Bible texts and versions. One of the oft-repeated but misguided statements is the charge made on page 141 that the King James translators gave their recommendation to all versions and refused to condemn any Bible translation. John Mincy (one of the authors of *From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man*) argued that the KJV translators themselves “viewed even the worst English versions as the Word of God” (p. 141). He quoted them as saying, “Now to answer our enemies; we do not deny, rather we affirm and insist that the very worst translation of the Bible in English issued by Protestants contains the word of God, or rather, is the word of God.”

ANSWER:

1. The Puritans among the KJV translators had appealed to the king for a new English version because they considered the Bishops’ Bible “a most corrupted translation.” It is obvious that they did not accept all translations as accurate and profitable.

2. Mincy misquotes what the KJV translators actually said. Mincy’s quotation of the KJV translators is taken from Rhodes and Lupas’s paraphrase (published by the American Bible Society in 1997) of the original statement of the translators found in “The Translators to the Readers.”

Here is the original version: “Now to the latter we answer, that we do not deny, nay, we affirm and avow, that THE VERY MEANEST TRANSLATION of the Bible in English set forth by men of our profession (for we have seen none of theirs of the whole Bible as yet) containeth the word of God, nay, is the word of God: as the King’s speech which he uttered in parliament, being translated into French, Dutch, Italian, and Latin, is still the King’s speech, though it be not interpreted by every translator with the like grace...”

The word “meanest” does not mean worst. It does not refer to a translation that is corrupt in meaning; it refers to one that is lowly in literary style. The KJV translators would not have supported a translation either of the king’s words or of God’s words that was corrupt in meaning. In his zeal to discredit the defenders of the KJV, Mincy has actually turned the words of the King James translators on their head.

3. We know for sure that the KJV translators rejected the critical Greek text. From the time of Erasmus in the early 1500s to 1611, the Greek editors and Reformation Bible translators were aware of the alternate readings of manuscripts such as the Vaticanus. They knew that some manuscripts removed the word “God” from 1 Timothy 3:16, for example. In 1533, Sepulveda furnished Erasmus with 365 such readings from the Vaticanus, but these were rejected not only by Erasmus but also by Stephenus, Beza, Luther, Reina and Valera, Olivetan, Tyndale, Whittingham, and by all of the 50 translators on the KJV committee. Beza owned a famous old Greek manuscript containing some of the readings preferred by the modern textual critics, but he considered it of little value and gave it away.

4. In reality, there is no evidence whatsoever that the KJV translators would have accepted either the modern critical Greek text or a modern “dynamic equivalency” translation such as the New International Version (not to speak of corruptions such as the Today’s English Bible and The Message). The KJV translators called the Scriptures “a fountain of most pure water springing up unto everlasting life” (*The Translators to the Readers*). It is obvious that they would not look lightly upon a translation that polluted that fountain.

5. It is important also to note that the King James translators are not our authority. Even if they had said that all versions are valid

and none to be condemned (and they did not), this does not mean that we should follow them in such a position. We believe that the KJV translators were wrong in many of the things that they believed and put into print. Do the authors of *From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man* and the professors of Bob Jones University believe that all versions are valid and none to be condemned? Of course not. Stewart Custer, for example, has warned about loose paraphrases such as the Today's English Version. Thus we see that their misquotation of what the KJV translators said about "the very meanest translation" is merely a polemic.

For some of the previous information we are indebted to Jeffrey Khoo's review of *From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man*. Dr. Khoo is the Academic Dean of the Far Eastern Bible College in Singapore. His review is available in the booklet "Reviews of the book *From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man*" by Thomas Strouse and J. Khoo, Pensacola Baptist Seminary, Pensacola, Florida.

MYTH: THE KING JAMES BIBLE IS TOO ANTIQUATED AND DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND.

ANSWER:

1. The KJV does have some antiquated words and forms of speech, but there are not too many of these. The Trinitarian Bible Society publishes a list of 618 antiquated words. It is called *Bible Word List*. Most of these can be understood by considering the context. There are only about two hundred words in the KJV that have become so antiquated that they have changed meanings or have dropped entirely out of common usage, so that you really need a dictionary to understand them. Following are some examples:

- carriages (Acts 21:15) = baggage
- charger (Mk. 6:25) = platter
- devotions (Acts 17:23) = objects of worship
- conversation (Gal. 1:13) = conduct
- do you to wit (2 Cor. 8:1) = make known to you
- fetch a compass (Acts 28:13) = circled
- leasing (Ps. 4:2) = lying
- let (2 Thess. 2:7) = restrain
- meat (Mat. 3:4) = food
- prevent (1 Thess. 4:15) = precede

room (Lk. 14:7) = seat
scrip (Mat. 10:10) = bag
take no thought (Mat. 6:25) = be not anxious
noised (Acts 2:6) = reported
quick (Heb. 4:12) = living

2. The overall reading level of the KJV is not very high.

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 is most famous for the book *Why Johnny Can't Read*.

3. The KJV has a small vocabulary. While Shakespeare used a vocabulary of roughly 21,000 English words, the vocabulary of the King James Bible is composed of only 6,000 (Albert Cook, *The Authorized Version of the Bible and Its Influence*, 1910). This compares favorably to the vocabulary of the Hebrew Old Testament, which is 5,642 words, and the vocabulary of the Greek New Testament, which is about 4,800 words.

4. The KJV uses simple words; most are only one or two syllables. “The entire KJV averages 1.31 syllables and 3.968 letters per word. This word length puts the KJV in the same readability category as the children’s books” (D.A. Waite, Jr., *The Comparative Readability of the Authorized Version, Bible for Today*, Collingswood, NJ, 1996).

Consider Psalm 23, for example: “The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for

thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.”

Of the 119 words in this Psalm, only 24 are more than two syllables and only 5 are three.

Consider the Parable of the Rich Man in Luke 12:15-21. “And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”

Of the 157 English words in this passage, only 22 are more than two syllables.

5. The most important thing in a Bible translation is not simple language but faithfulness to the original.

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).

6. Part of the antiquated feel of the King James Bible is its usage of the second person singular pronominal forms, "thee," "thou," and "thine."

These should be retained because their use allows the distinction in English between singular and plural pronouns. In other words, "you" and "ye" are plural, while "thou" and "thine" are singular. The singular forms have disappeared from contemporary English, so that there is no difference today between "you" plural and "you" singular. The Hebrew and Greek languages, though, have both a singular and plural form of the pronoun, and the King James Bible was able to pass this distinction along to the English reader.

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).

Oswald Allis concurs: "It is often asserted or assumed that the usage of the AV represents the speech of 300 years ago, and that now, three centuries later, it should be changed to accord with contemporary usage. But this is not at all a correct statement of the problem. The important fact is this. THE USAGE OF THE AV IS NOT THE ORDINARY USAGE OF THE EARLY SEVENTEENTH CENTURY: IT IS THE BIBLICAL USAGE BASED ON THE STYLE OF THE HEBREW AND THE GREEK SCRIPTURES. The second part of this statement needs no proof and will be challenged by no one. It is undeniable that where the Hebrew and Greek use the singular of the pronoun the AV regularly uses the singular, and where they use the plural it uses the plural. Even in Deuteronomy where in his addresses, and apparently for rhetorical and pedagogical effect, Moses often changes suddenly, and seemingly arbitrarily, from singular to plural or from plural to singular, the AV reproduces the style of the text with fidelity. THAT IS TO SAY, THE USAGE OF THE AV IS STRICTLY BIBLICAL" (Oswald T. Allis, "Is a Pronominal Revision of the Authorized Version Desirable?" This article is available in the Bible Version section of the End Times Apostasy Database at the Way of Life Literature web site -- <http://www.wayoflife.org>).

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: “The peculiar genius—if such a word may be permitted—which breathes through it—the mingled tenderness and majesty—the Saxon simplicity—the preternatural grandeur—unequaled, unapproached in the attempted improvements of modern scholars—all are here, and bear the impress of the mind of one man—William Tyndale. Lying, while engaged in that great office, under the shadow of death, the sword above his head and ready at any moment to fall, he worked, under circumstances alone perhaps truly worthy of the task which was laid upon him—his spirit, as it were divorced from the world, moved in a purer element than common air” (Froude, *History of England from the Fall of Wolsey to the Defeat of the Spanish Armada*, III, p. 84).

Following are some examples of how important it is to retain the distinction between second person singular and plural. These examples (excepting Isaiah 7:14) are adapted from the book *Archaic or Accurate: Modern Translations of the Bible and You versus Thee in the Language of Worship*, edited by J.P. Thackway, and published by The Bible League of England:

Exodus 4:15. “THOU shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth; and I will be with THY mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach YOU what YE shall do.” THOU and THY refer to Moses, but YOU refers to the nation.

Exodus 29:42. “This shalt be a continual burnt offering throughout YOUR generations at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD where I will meet YOU, to speak there unto THEE.” YOU, referring to the children of Israel, is explained in the following verse, but THEE refers to Moses, who had the holy privilege of hearing the words of God directly (Leviticus 1:1).

2 Samuel 7:23. “And what one nation in the earth is like THY people, even like Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people to himself, and to make him a name, and to do for YOU great things and terrible, for THY land, before THY people, which THOU redeemedst to THEE from Egypt.” Here David is in prayer to God, thus accounting for the singular words THY and THOU, referring to

God. David turns his attention to the people Israel when he uses the plural YOU. If “you” were used throughout, the reader would not understand who David was addressing.

Isaiah 7:14. “Therefore the Lord himself shall give YOU a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.” There is a long-running debate by liberal and even New Evangelical scholars that Isaiah 7:14 is only secondarily a Messianic prophecy and that its primary fulfillment was in Isaiah’s day. For example, the note in the *NIV Study Bible* says of the word virgin: “May refer to a young woman betrothed to Isaiah (8:3), who was to become his second wife (his first wife presumably having died after Shear-jashub was born).” In fact, the prophecy is not directed to Isaiah personally but to the nation Israel as a whole, and this is clear in the KJV, because it indicates properly that “YOU” is plural, not singular. This important information is lost in the modern English versions, including the New King James.

Matthew 26:64. “Jesus saith unto him, THOU hast said: nevertheless I say unto YOU, Hereafter shall YE see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.” The singular THOU refers to the high priest, but the plural YOU refers to all who will see Christ in the day of His glory (Rev. 1:7).

Luke 22:31-32. “The Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have YOU, that he may sift YOU as wheat: but I have prayed for THEE, that THY faith fail not: and when THOU art converted, strengthen THY brethren.” Satan’s desire was directed to all the apostles (YOU), but the Lord prays for each individually and for Peter specifically (THEE, THY).

John 3:7. “Marvel not that I said unto THEE, YE must be born again.” The message was spoken to an individual (THEE), Nicodemus, but the message encompassed all men (YE). The same thing occurs in verse 11, where we read, “I say unto THEE ... that YE receive not our witness.”

1 Corinthians 8:9-12. “Take heed lest ... this liberty of YOURS ... if any man see THEE which hast knowledge ... through THY knowledge ... But when YE sin.” The plural YOURS and YE refer to the church members in general, but the Holy Spirit personalizes the

exhortation by changing to the singular THEE and THY.

2 Timothy 4:22. “The Lord Jesus Christ be with THY spirit. Grace be with YOU.” The singular THY refers to Timothy, to whom the epistle was written (2 Tim. 1:1), but the plural YOU refers to others who were also included in Paul’s final greetings, “Priscilla and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus” (2 Tim. 4:19).

Titus 3:15. “All that are with me salute THEE. Greet them that love us in the faith. Grace be with YOU all.” Here, the singular THEE refers to Titus, but the plural YOU refers to the church in Crete (Tit. 1:5), and to all who loved Paul in the faith.

Philemon 21-25. “Having confidence in THY obedience I wrote unto THEE, knowing that THOU wilt also do more than I say ... I trust that through YOUR prayers I shall be given unto YOU ... There salute THEE ... the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with YOUR spirit.” The singular THEE refers to Philemon, but as this short letter was also addressed to “Apphia ... Archippus ... and to the church in thy house” (v. 2), the plural form YOU, YOUR is used in verses 3, 22, and 25.

7. Previous generations educated the people UP TO the Bible, and that is what we should do today. It is my conviction that we don’t need a new translation today; we need to renew our study of the excellent one that we already have. “Instead of lowering the Bible to a lowest common denominator, why should we not educate people to rise to the level required to experience the Bible in its full richness and exaltation? Instead of expecting the least from Bible readers, we should expect the most from them. The greatness of the Bible requires the best, not the least. ... The most difficult of modern English translations -- the King James -- is used most by segments of our society that are relatively uneducated as defined by formal education. ... research has shown repeatedly that people are capable of rising to surprising and even amazing abilities to read and master a subject that is important to them. ... Previous generations did not find the King James Bible, with its theological heaviness, beyond their comprehension. Nor do readers and congregations who continue to use the King James translation find it incomprehensible. Neither of my parents finished grade school, and they learned to understand the King James Bible from their reading of it and the preaching they heard based on it. We do not need to assume a theologically

inept readership for the Bible. Furthermore, if modern readers are less adept at theology than they can and should be, it is the task of the church to educate them, not to give them Bible translations that will permanently deprive them of the theological content that is really present in the Bible” (Leland Ryken, *The Word of God in English*, pp. 107, 109).

8. Though the terms “thou” and “thine” have been out of common usage of the English language for more than 400 years, it was only a few decades ago that people started complaining about it. Even then it was done largely at the prompting of Bible publishers greedy to make ever larger profits by introducing an ever more bewildering smorgasbord of “up-to-date” Bibles. Believers of the 1600s, 1700s, 1800s, and even most of the 1900s, loved the “quaint” old English of the King James Bible. They did not think it strange that their Bible did not sound like the morning newspaper. It is the Bible! It was written thousands of years ago! It is the Word of the eternal God! It is nothing like the morning newspaper; why, pray tell, should it sound like one? “I believe that it is correct for an English translation to preserve an appropriate archaic flavor as a way of preserving the distance between us and the biblical world. Joseph Wood Krutch used an evocative formula in connection with the King James Bible when he spoke of ‘an appropriate flavor of a past time’” (Ryken, *The Word of God in English*, p. 182).

9. There are many tools available to help people understand the KJV.

Following are a few of these:

The *Bible Word List* from the Trinitarian Bible Society of London, England. This is a pamphlet that defines 618 antiquated words in the King James Bible. See <http://www.trinitarianbiblesociety.org/>.

The *Concise King James Bible Dictionary*, available from Way of Life Literature. Designed to fit in a Bible case, its convenient size makes it easy to use, because it can be kept right with one’s Bible. It includes an extensive list of King James Bible words that have changed meaning since 1611, plus all of the doctrinal terms (“justification,” “sanctification,” “propitiation,” etc.) and much more. Not only does it define individual Bible words but also many of the phrases and descriptive statements that are no longer a part

of contemporary English usage, such as “superfluity of naughtiness,” “at your hand,” “taken with the manner,” and “in the gate.” It is an excellent small Bible dictionary for both new and older Christians. Way of Life Literature, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061-0368. 866-295-4143, <http://www.wayoflife.org> (web site).

Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance. In my estimation, *Strong’s* is the most important Bible study tool ever published. Not only is it exhaustive in its treatment of the words of the English Bible, but it also links the English words to an exceptional dictionary of the Hebrew and Greek terms underlying the English. One does not have to know the Greek and Hebrew alphabets to use *Strong’s* dictionary; he developed a masterly apparatus whereby each Greek and Hebrew word is assigned a number, and the student can thus search for Greek and Hebrew terms by numbers. The dictionary gives a concise definition of the Greek or Hebrew word as well as a list of how the word is translated at various places in the English Bible.

The Way of Life Encyclopedia of the Bible & Christianity. Another tool for studying the King James Bible is the *Way of Life Encyclopedia of the Bible & Christianity*. (The above-mentioned *Concise King James Bible* was based on the *Way of Life Encyclopedia*.) This lovely hardcover Bible encyclopedia contains 560 pages (8.5X11) of information, over 5,500 entries, and over 6,000 cross-references. Twenty-five years of research has gone into this one-of-a-kind reference tool. It is the only Bible dictionary/encyclopedia written by a fundamental Baptist and based strictly upon the King James Bible. It is a complete dictionary of biblical terminology, plus it features many other areas of research not often covered in a single volume Bible reference tool. Subjects include Bible versions, Denominations, Cults, Christian Movements, Typology, the Church, Social Issues and Practical Christian Living, Bible Prophecy, and Old English Terminology. The Christian will be helped and fortified in his faith through this Encyclopedia. It does not correct the Authorized Bible 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).

MYTHS PERTAINING TO THE GREEK RECEIVED TEXT

MYTH: THE TERM TEXTUS RECEPTUS WAS MERELY AN ADVERTISING BLURB.

The term *Textus Receptus* in Latin (“Received Text” in English) that was printed in the Elziver’s edition of the Greek New Testament in 1633 *was not merely an advertising blurb*, as has been falsely claimed by modern version defenders. It was a statement of the faith of God’s people before the advent of modern textual criticism, that the text commonly passed down through the centuries, the text commonly and traditionally used in the churches, is the Holy Spirit inspired text of the prophets and apostles.

Bruce Metzger trips himself up on this in *The Text of the New Testament*. On the one hand he claims that this “was a more or less casual phrase advertising the edition (what modern publishers might call a ‘blurb’)” and that “partly because of this catchword” the Received Text became the standard text (Metzger, p. 106). But on the previous page, Metzger admitted that the reason Beza, in the 1500s, made little use of Codex D and Codex Claromontanus, which were in his possession, was because “they deviated too far from the generally received text of the time” (Metzger, p. 105). Thus, it is obvious that the publication of the term *Textus Receptus* in 1633 had nothing to do with popularizing this particular Greek New Testament. It was already the generally received text in the century prior to the Elziver’s. All of the Protestant Bibles had been based on this same Greek New Testament for more than 100 years prior to the Elziver’s. Thus the term *Textus Receptus* in the 1633 edition of the Elziver Greek New Testament was not merely an advertising blurb but an accurate statement of how believers in general looked upon the Received Greek text.

MYTH: SINCE THERE ARE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE VARIOUS EDITIONS OF THE RECEIVED TEXT THE “RECEIVED TEXT” POSITION IS DISCREDITED.

It is true that there were several editions of the Greek Received Text. Erasmus published five editions (1516, 1519, 1522, 1527, 1535). Robert Stephanus published four editions (1546, 1549,

1550, 1551). Theodore Beza published at least four independent editions (1556, 1582, 1688-89, 1598). The Elziver family printed two editions (1624, 1633). Another edition of the Greek Received Text was published in the Complutensian Polyglot. Finally in 1881 Frederick Scrivener, under contract to the Cambridge University Press, published the Greek text underlying the King James Bible. This edition of the Received Text has been republished many times, most recently by the Trinitarian Bible Society and by the Dean Burgon Society.

ANSWER:

1. The differences between the various editions of the Greek Received Text are extremely slight and cannot be compared to the differences found in the Alexandrian manuscripts.

According to Scrivener's extensive comparisons, there are only 252 places in which the Erasmus, Stephanus, Elzevir, Beza, and Complutensian Polyglot disagree sufficiently to affect the English translation. The 3rd edition of Stephanus and the 1st edition of Elzevir differ only 19 times in Mark. The editions of Beza differ from the 4th edition of Stephanus only 38 times in the entire New Testament.

In contrast, consider three of the chief Alexandrian manuscripts, Sinaiticus, Vaticanus, and Codex D. In the Gospel of Mark alone, Vaticanus disagrees with Sinaiticus 652 times and with Codex D 1,944 times. Sinaiticus and Vaticanus disagree with one another in more than 3,000 places in the four Gospels alone!

2. Following are some of the most important of the differences between editions of the Greek Received Text:

Luke 2:22 -- Erasmus and Stephanus have "their purification," while Beza, Elzevir, and Complutensian have "her purification"

Luke 17:36 -- Erasmus and the first three editions of Stephanus omit this verse, while Beza, Elzevir, and the 4th edition of Stephanus include it.

John 1:28 -- Erasmus, Beza, Elzevir, and the 3rd and 4th editions of Stephanus have "Bethabara beyond Jordan," while the 1st and 2nd editions of Stephanus have "Bethany"

beyond Jordan.”

John 16:33 -- Beza and Elzevir read “shall have tribulation,” while Erasmus and Stephanus read “have tribulation.”

Romans 8:11 -- Beza and Elzevir read “by His Spirit that dwelleth in you,” while Erasmus and Stephanus read “because of His Spirit that dwelleth in you.”

Romans 12:11 -- Beza, Elzevir, and the first edition of Erasmus read “serving the Lord,” while Stephanus and the 2nd to the 5th editions of Erasmus read “serving the time.”

1 Timothy 1:4 -- Erasmus, Beza, and Elzevir have “godly edifying,” while Stephanus has “dispensation of God.”

Hebrews 9:1 -- Stephanus reads “first tabernacle,” while Erasmus and Beza omit “tabernacle.”

James 2:18 -- The last three editions of Beza has “without thy works,” while Erasmus, Stephanus, and the first edition of Beza have “by thy works.”

3. Which edition of the Received Text should we follow today? Edward F. Hills, who had a doctorate in modern textual criticism from Harvard, made the following important statement in regard to the KJV and the Received Text:

“The King James Version is a variety of the Textus Receptus. The translators that produced the King James Version relied mainly, it seems, on the later editions of Beza's Greek New Testament, especially his 4th edition (1588-9). But also they frequently consulted the editions of Erasmus and Stephanus and the Complutensian Polyglot. According to Scrivener (1884), out of the 252 passages in which these sources differ sufficiently to affect the English rendering, the King James Version agrees with Beza against Stephanus 113 times, with Stephanus against Beza 59 times, and 80 times with Erasmus, or the Complutensian, or the Latin Vulgate against Beza and Stephanus. HENCE THE KING JAMES VERSION OUGHT TO BE REGARDED NOT MERELY AS A TRANSLATION OF THE TEXTUS RECEPTUS BUT ALSO AS AN INDEPENDENT VARIETY OF THE TEXTUS RECEPTUS....

“BUT WHAT DO WE DO IN THESE FEW PLACES IN WHICH

THE SEVERAL EDITIONS OF THE TEXTUS RECEPTUS DISAGREE WITH ONE ANOTHER? WHICH TEXT DO WE FOLLOW? THE ANSWER TO THIS QUESTION IS EASY. WE ARE GUIDED BY THE COMMON FAITH. HENCE WE FAVOR THAT FORM OF THE TEXTUS RECEPTUS UPON WHICH MORE THAN ANY OTHER GOD, WORKING PROVIDENTIALLY, HAS PLACED THE STAMP OF HIS APPROVAL, NAMELY, THE KING JAMES VERSION, OR, MORE PRECISELY, THE GREEK TEXT UNDERLYING THE KING JAMES VERSION. This text was published in 1881 by the Cambridge University Press under the editorship of Dr. Scrivener, and there have been eight reprints, the latest being in 1949 [DWC: It has since been republished by the Trinitarian Bible Society of London, England, and the Dean Burgon Society of Collingswood, New Jersey.] We ought to be grateful that in the providence of God the best form of the Textus Receptus is still available to believing Bible students” (Edward F. Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, 4th edition, pp. 220, 223).

We agree with Dr. Hills’ position.

The exact Greek text underlying the King James Bible was reconstructed by Frederick Scrivener under the direction of the Cambridge University Press and published in 1891. It is republished today by the Trinitarian Bible Society in England as well as the Dean Burgon Society in America.

MYTH: ERASMUS WAS A ROMAN CATHOLIC HUMANIST.

“The Textus Receptus began with an edition of the Greek New Testament put together by a Roman Catholic humanist, Desiderius Erasmus, in A.D. 1516” (Stewart Custer, *The Truth about the King James Version Controversy*, p. 10).

ANSWER:

That Erasmus was a Roman Catholic humanist is not so much a myth as a half-truth. To set the record straight and to give a more complete picture we offer the following facts:

We agree with the following assessment of Erasmus: “But Erasmus is a complex and many-faceted individual. His true face is difficult to delineate. And there is also the tendency to picture him in one’s own mold or to interpret him in the light of one’s own convictions and preconceptions. A study of the studies about him and of the various judgments that have been passed reveals this quite clearly” (John Olin, *Christian Humanism and the Reformation*:

Selected Writings of Erasmus, p. 37).

1. Erasmus was not a humanist as it is defined today. He was a Christian humanist, “a biblical humanist” (*Erasmus*, Huizinga, p. 110).

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 warned about various dangers that he perceived in the humanist movement of his day and toward the end of his life was increasingly distancing himself from it. “Nothing is more characteristic of the independence which Erasmus reserved for himself regarding all movements of his time than the fact that he also joined issue in the camp of the humanists. ... In spite of the great expectations he cherished of classical studies for pure Christianity, he saw one danger: ‘that under the cloak of reviving ancient literature paganism tries to rear its head, as there are those among Christians who acknowledge Christ only in name but inwardly breathe heathenism’. This he writes in 1517 to Capito. In Italy scholars devote themselves too exclusively and in too pagan guise to *bonae literae*. ... The core of the *Ciceronianus* [meaning ‘On the Best Diction’ and published in 1528] is where Erasmus points out the danger to Christian faith of a too zealous classicism. ... We here see the aged Erasmus on the path of reaction, which might eventually have led him far from humanism. In his combat with

humanistic purism he foreshadows a Christian puritanism” (*Erasmus*, Huizinga, pp. 170-173).

2. Though we do not claim that Erasmus was a staunch, Bible-believing Christian, the whole story should be told.

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

Erasmus’ *Enchiridion militis Christiani* (*Christian Soldier’s Manual*) was translated into English by William Tyndale. It was written as a spiritual challenge to an actual soldier then living. “The general rules of the Christian conduct of life are followed by a number of remedies for particular sins and faults” (*Erasmus*, Johan Huizinga, p. 51).

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 and remember that these were extremely bold words in those days, words that the Roman Catholic Church looked upon as heretical and worthy of death, words that very few were willing to put into print even if they believed them.

Matthew 23:27 (on whited sepulchres) -- ‘What would Jerome say could he see the Virgin’s milk exhibited for money ... the miraculous oil; the portions of the true cross, enough if they were collected to freight a large ship? Here we have the hood of St. Francis, there Our Lady’s petticoat, or St. Anne’s comb, or St.

Thomas of Canterbury's shoes ... and all through the avarice of priests and the hypocrisy of monks playing on the credulity of the people. Even bishops play their parts in these fantastic shows, and approve and dwell on them in their rescripts.'

Matthew 24:23 (on Lo, here is Christ or there) -- 'I saw with my own eyes Pope Julius II, at Bologna, and afterwards at Rome, marching at the head of a triumphal procession as if he were Pompey or Cesar. St. Peter subdued the world with faith, not with arms or soldiers or military engines.'

1 Timothy 3:2 (on the husband of one wife) -- 'Other qualifications are laid down by St. Paul as required for a bishop's office, a long list of them. But not one at present is held essential, except this one of abstinence from marriage. Homicide, parricide, incest, piracy, sodomy, sacrilege, these can be got over, but marriage is fatal. There are priests now in vast numbers, enormous herds of them, seculars and regulars, and it is notorious that very few of them are chaste. The great proportion fall into lust and incest, and open profligacy. It would surely be better if those who cannot contain should be allowed lawful wives of their own, and so escape this foul and miserable pollution.'

In about 1518 Erasmus published (anonymously) *Julius Exclusus* (*Julius Excluded*), a bold reproof against papal glory and wars. It depicted the late Pope Julius II as a worldly Julius Caesar appearing "in all of his glory before the gate of the Heavenly Paradise to plead his cause and find himself excluded" (Huizinga, p. 84). In 1506 Erasmus had witnessed the triumphal entry of Pope Julius into Florence at the head of the army that had conquered Bologna.

Erasmus understood the necessity of uprooting the papacy, even though he did not have the courage to attempt it himself nor to openly join hands with those, like Luther, who were trying to do it. In 1518 he wrote the following remarks in his letters: "I see that the monarchy of the Pope at Rome, as it is now, is a pestilence to Christendom, but I do not know if it is expedient to touch that sore openly." "We shall never triumph over feigned Christians unless we first abolish the tyranny of the Roman see, and of its satellites, the Dominicans, the Franciscans and the Carmelites. But no one could attempt that without a serious tumult" (Huizinga, pp. 141, 144).

Though Erasmus was not a separating reformer after the fashion of a Luther or a Zwingli or a Tyndale, he desired the Scriptures to be placed in the hands of every man. This sentiment alone set him apart dramatically from that which prevailed among Catholic authorities of that day, and it was a sentiment that was severely condemned by Catholic authorities. From the days of Pope Innocent III in the early 13th century, the Roman Catholic Church had forbidden the Bible to be translated into the common tongues and had put men to death for translating and reading the Bible.

Erasmus first expressed his desire for every Christian to understand the Scripture in his *Enchiridion militis Christiani* of 1501. "... within this scope Erasmus finds an opportunity, for the first time, to develop his theological programme. This programme calls upon us to return to Scripture. It should be the endeavour of every Christian to understand Scripture in its purity and original meaning" (*Erasmus*, Huizinga, p. 51).

Erasmus developed this theme boldly in his *Paraclesis* (meaning "a summons or exhortation" and referring to his summons for Christians to study Holy Scripture) which was published as a preface to the first edition of his Greek and Latin New Testament of 1516. "Indeed, I disagree very much with those who are unwilling that Holy Scripture, translated into the vulgar tongue, be read by the uneducated as if Christ taught such intricate doctrines that they could scarcely be understood by very few theologians, or as if the strength of the Christian religion consisted in men's ignorance of it. The mysteries of kings, perhaps, are better concealed, but Christ wishes His mysteries published as openly as possible. I would that even the lowliest women read the Gospels and the Pauline Epistles. And I would that they were translated into all languages so that they could be read and understood not only by Scots and Irish but also by Turks and Saracens. ... Would that, as a result, the farmer sing some portion of them at the plow, the weaver hum some parts of them to the movement of his shuttle, the traveler lighten the weariness of the journey with stories of this kind! Let all the conversations of every Christian be drawn from this source. ... I think, and rightly so, unless I am mistaken, that that pure and genuine philosophy of Christ is not to be drawn from any source more abundantly than from the evangelical books and from the Apostolic Letters. ... If we desire to learn, why is another author more pleasing than Christ Himself? ... And He, since He promised

to be with us all days, even unto the consummation of the world, stands forth especially in this literature, in which He lives for us even at this time, breathes and speaks. I should say almost more effectively than when He dwelt among men. ... We preserve the letters written by a dear friend, we kiss them fondly, we carry them about, we read them again and again, yet there are many thousands of Christians who, although they are learned in other respects, never read, however, the evangelical and apostolic books in an entire lifetime. The Mohammedans hold fast to their doctrines, the Jews also today from the very cradle study the books of Moses. Why do not we in the same way distinguish ourselves in Christ? ... Let us all, therefore, with our whole heart covet this literature, let us embrace it, let us continually occupy ourselves with it, let us fondly kiss it, at length let us die in its embrace, let us be transformed in it ... We embellish a wooden or stone statue with gems and gold for the love of Christ. Why not, rather, mark with gold and gems and with ornaments of greater value than these, if such there be, these writings which bring Christ to us so much more effectively than any paltry image? The latter represents only the form of the body--if indeed it represents anything of Him--but these writings bring you the living image of His holy mind and the speaking, healing, dying, rising Christ Himself, and thus they render Him so fully present that you would see less if you gazed upon Him with your very eyes" (quoted from John Olin, *Christian Humanism and the Reformation: Selected Writings of Erasmus*).

As we have noted, this sentiment was 180 degrees contrary to the position of the Catholic Church in that day. In 1428 Rome had dug up the bones of English Bible translator John Wycliffe and burned them to express its outrage with his work. The Council of Toulouse (1229) and the Council of Tarragona (1234) had forbid the laity to possess or read the vernacular translations of the Bible. The Council of Toulouse used these words: "We prohibit the permission of the books of the Old and New Testament to laymen, except perhaps they might desire to have the Psalter, or some Breviary for the divine service, or the Hours of the blessed Virgin Mary, for devotion; expressly forbidding their having the other parts of the Bible translated into the vulgar tongue" (Allix, *Ecclesiastical History*, II, p. 213). The declarations of these Councils were still in force in Erasmus' lifetime.

As early as 1506, Erasmus expressed a desire to be completely

devoted to Christ. “I am deliberating again how best to devote the remainder of my life (how much that will be, I do not know) entirely to piety, to Christ. I see life, even when it is long, as evanescent and dwindling ... Therefore I have resolved, content with my mediocrity (especially now that I have learned as much Greek as suffices me), to apply myself to meditation about death and the training of my soul. I should have done so before and have husbanded the precious years when they were at their best” (*Erasmus*, Huizinga, p. 59).

Erasmus died in 1536 in Basel, Switzerland, among his Protestant friends (Edward Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, p. 195). There is a famous painting of Erasmus sitting with these friends, the original of which is in the Erasmus Museum in Brussels. I saw it on a visit there in April 2003.

Erasmus’ work was rejected by the Catholic Church. His books were castigated and burned throughout Europe.

In England, Erasmus’ writings were publicly burned in May 1520.

In France, the Sorbonne burned French translations of Erasmus’ work that had been made by Louis de Berquin. On April 17, 1529, Berquin himself was burned at the stake.

In Spain, Reformers were called “Erasmistas.”

In 1535, Emperor Charles V made it a capital offense to use Erasmus’ *Colloquies* in the schools.

On July 1, 1523, the Belgium 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.

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).

Much that can be said about Erasmus can also be said about John Wycliffe and William Tyndale. These are the fathers of the English Bible, but neither of them formally left the Catholic Church. Both were ordained Catholic priests to their death. Wycliffe continued to exercise the office of a priest in Lutterworth until his death in 1384. Before Tyndale was martyred in 1536 outside of the castle walls in Vilvoorde, Belgium, the authorities excommunicated him and disbarred him from the priesthood. Of course, both men had long rejected most of Rome’s dogmas, and the same is true of Erasmus.

It is also important to note that there is no comparison between the situation with Erasmus and what we find in the field of modern textual criticism and the modern Bible versions today. Erasmus edited the Greek New Testament on his own. He was not doing that work in any official capacity in the Catholic Church nor did he have Rome’s backing but rather was criticized for it and his work was condemned in the strongest terms. On the other hand, the Roman Catholic Church has accepted modern textual criticism and the modern Bible versions with open arms. In 1965, Pope Paul VI authorized the publication of a new Latin Vulgate, with the Latin text conformed to the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament (Michael de Semlyen, *All Roads Lead to Rome*, p. 201). In 1987 a formal agreement was made between the Roman Catholic Church and the United Bible Societies that the critical Greek New Testament will be used for all future translations, both Catholic and Protestant (*Guidelines for International Cooperation in Translating the Bible*, Rome, 1987, p. 5). Most of the translations produced by the United Bible Societies are “interconfessional,” meaning they have Roman Catholic participation and backing.

3. While it is true that Erasmus was weak and problem-laden, he is the exception rather than the rule in the lineage of the Traditional Text.

The modern version defenders who make an issue of Erasmus need to take a closer look at their own field. Modern textual criticism is founded upon the writings of hundreds of men more unsound in the faith than Erasmus. The influential names in the field of textual

criticism include **UNITARIANS** such as Johann Wettstein, Edward Harwood, George Vance Smith, Ezra Abbot, Joseph Thayer, and Caspar Gregory; **LIBERAL RATIONALISTS** such as Johann Semler, Johann Griesbach, Bernhard Weiss, William Sanday, William Robertson Smith, Samuel Driver, Eberhard Nestle, James Rendel Harris, Hermann von Soden, Frederick Conybeare, Fredric Kenyon, Francis Burkitt, Henry Wheeler Robinson, Kirsopp Lake, Gerhard Kittel, Edgar Goodspeed, James Moffatt, Kenneth Clark, Ernest Colwell, Gunther Zuntz, J.B. Phillips, William Barclay, Theodore Skeat, George Kilpatrick, F.F. Bruce, George Ladd, J.K. Elliott, Eldon Epp, Brevard Childs, Bart Ehrman, C.H. Dodd, Barclay Newman, Arthur Voobus, Eugene Nida, Jan de Waard, Kurt Aland, Barbara Aland, Matthew Black, Allen Wikgren, Bruce Metzger, and Johannes Karavidopoulos; and **TRADITIONALIST ROMAN CATHOLICS** such as Richard Simon, Alexander Geddes, Johann Hug, and Carlo Martini. For documentation of the theological position of these and many other men in the field of modern textual criticism see “The Modern Bible Version’s Hall of Shame,” available from Way of Life Literature.

To raise the issue of Erasmus as a means of discounting the theological liberalism that is an intimate associate of modern textual criticism is to strain at gnats and swallow camels (Mat. 23:24). Those who do so strain at the gnat of Erasmus, who was admittedly weak in the faith but was also an exception in the field of the Received Text, and swallow the camel of the fact that theological modernism, skepticism, and unitarianism is THE RULE among the fathers of modern textual criticism.

4. It is also important to understand that Erasmus did not create a Greek text through principles of modern textual criticism; he merely passed on the commonly received text.

“Hence in the editing of his Greek New Testament text especially Erasmus was guided by the common faith in the current text. And back of this common faith was the controlling providence of God. ... Although not himself outstanding as a man of faith, in his editorial labors on this text he was providentially influenced and guided by the faith of others” (Edward F. Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, 4th edition, p. 199). Westcott & Hort themselves said that Erasmus merely published the text commonly held as Received “without selection or deliberate criticism”; and they said

further that the choices of the 16th century editors were “arbitrary and uncritical” (Hort, Introduction to the New Testament in the Original Greek).

MYTH: ERASMUS’ GREEK NEW TESTAMENT WAS DONE HASTILY AND ONLY FOR MONEY.

“It is customary for naturalistic critics to make the most of human imperfections in the Textus Receptus and to sneer at it as a mean and almost sordid thing. These critics picture the Textus Receptus as merely a money-making venture on the part of Froben the publisher. Froben, they say, heard that the Spanish Cardinal Ximenes was about to publish a printed Greek New Testament text as part of his great Complutensian Polyglot Bible. In order to get something on the market first, it is said, Froben hired Erasmus as his editor and rushed a Greek New Testament through his press in less than a year’s time” (Edward Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, p. 203).

ANSWER:

1. To look at the history of the Bible only through skeptical eyes and to see only weak men, is to fail to see the God of history and preservation. “But those who concentrate in this way on the human factors involved in the production of the Textus Receptus are utterly unmindful of the providence of God. For in the very next year, in the plan of God, the Reformation was to break out in Wittenberg, and it was important that the Greek New Testament should be published first in one of the future strongholds of Protestantism by a book seller who was eager to place it in the hands of the people and not in Spain, the land of the Inquisition, by the Roman Catholic Church, which was intent on keeping the Bible from the people” (Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, p. 203).

2. To what extent Erasmus’ motive in working for Froben was financial only the Lord knows, but it is obvious that his motive went beyond the financial. He had been working on the Greek New Testament for some time and had expressed his desire to see it in print and to see it translated into the common languages so that the people could have the Word of God. In the Latin preface to his New Testament, Erasmus said: “Christ wishes his mysteries to be published as widely as possible. I would wish all women to read

the gospel and the epistles of St. Paul, and I wish that they were translated into all languages of all Christian people, that they might be read and known, not merely by the Scotch and the Irish, but even by the Turks and the Saracens. I wish that the husbandman might sing parts of them at his plow, that the weaver may warble them at his shuttle, that the traveller may with their narratives beguile the weariness of the way.”

3. The errors that were in the first edition of the Erasmus Greek New Testament were corrected in later editions and are therefore a non-issue today and should not enter the textual debate. “God works providentially through sinful and fallible human beings, and therefore His providential guidance has its human as well as its divine side. And these human elements were evident in the first edition (1516) of the Textus Receptus. For one thing, the work was performed so hastily that the text was disfigured with a great number of typographical errors. These misprints, however, were soon eliminated by Erasmus himself in his later editions and by other early editors and hence are not a factor which need to be taken into account in any estimate of the abiding value of the Textus Receptus” (Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, p. 202).

MYTH: ERASMUS USED A MERE HANDFUL OF MANUSCRIPTS.

That Erasmus used only a handful of manuscripts to create the first edition of his Greek New Testament is the standard line that is given by textual critics and parroted by those who support textual criticism. Consider the following three examples. Kenyon was an influential textual critic, and Carson and Wallace are New Evangelicals who defend textual criticism.

Frederic Kenyon -- “Erasmus used only a handful of MSS...” (*The Text of the Greek Bible*, p. 155).

D.A. Carson -- “Although Erasmus published a fourth and fifth edition, we need say no more about them here. Erasmus’s Greek Testament stands in line behind the King James Version; yet IT RESTS UPON A HALF DOZEN MINUSCULE MANUSCRIPTS, none of which is earlier than the tenth century. ... the textual basis of the TR is a small number of haphazardly and relatively late minuscule manuscripts” (D.A. Carson, *The King James Version Debate*, 1979, pp. 35-36).

Daniel Wallace -- “[Erasmus] only used half a dozen, very late MSS for the whole New Testament any way” (*Why I Do Not Think the King James Bible is the Best Translation Available Today*).

ANSWER:

1. Erasmus had knowledge of many manuscripts other than those he used for his first edition. Erasmus “began studying and collating NT MSS and observing thousands of variant readings in preparation for his own edition” (Eldon Jay Epp, “Decision Points in New Testament Textual Criticism,” *Studies in The Theory and Method of New Testament Textual Criticism*, edited by Epp and Gordon Fee, p. 18; quoting Bentley 1983: 35, 138). “It is well known also that Erasmus looked for manuscripts everywhere during his travels and that he borrowed them from everyone he could. Hence although the Textus Receptus was based mainly on the manuscripts which Erasmus found at Basel, it also included readings taken from others to which he had access. It agreed with the common faith because it was founded on manuscripts which in the providence of God were readily available” (Edward Hills, *The King James Bible Defended*, p. 198).

2. Erasmus knew about the variant readings that are known to modern textual critics.

As Frederick Nolan observed: “With respect to Manuscripts, it is indisputable that he [Erasmus] was acquainted with every variety which is known to us; HAVING DISTRIBUTED THEM INTO TWO PRINCIPAL CLASSES, one of which corresponds with the Complutensian edition [the Received Text], and the other with the Vatican manuscript [corresponding to the modern critical text]. And he has specified the positive grounds on which he received the one and rejected the other. The former was in the possession of the Greek church, the latter in that of the Latin; judging from the internal evidence he had as good reason to conclude the Eastern church had not corrupted their received text as he had grounds to suspect the Rhodians from whom the Western church derived their manuscripts, had accommodated them to the Latin Vulgate. One short insinuation which he has thrown out, sufficiently proves that his objections to these manuscripts lay more deep; and they do immortal credit to his sagacity. In the age in which the Vulgate was formed, the church, he was aware, was infested with Origenists and Arians; an affinity between any manuscript and that version,

consequently conveyed some suspicion that its text was corrupted" (Nolan, *Inquiry into the Integrity of the Greek Vulgate, or Received Text of the New Testament*, London, 1815, pp. 413-15).

"For the first edition Erasmus had before him ten manuscripts, four of which he found in England, and five at Basle. ... The last codex was lent him by John Reuchlin ... (and) 'appeared to Erasmus so old that it might have come from the apostolic age.' He was aware of Vaticanus in the Vatican Library and had a friend by the name of Bombasius research that for him. He, however, rejected the characteristic variants of Vaticanus which distinguishes itself from the Received Text. (These variants are what would become the distinguishing characteristics of the critical text more than 350 years later.)" (Preserved Smith, *Erasmus: A Study of His Life, Ideals, and Place in History*, 1923). Erasmus was given 365 select readings from Vaticanus. "A correspondent of Erasmus in 1533 sent that scholar a number of selected readings from it [Codex B], as proof [or so says that correspondent] of its superiority to the Received Text" (Frederic Kenyon, *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts*, 1895; S.P. Tregelles, *On the Printed Text of the Greek Testament*; cited from Hills).

Erasmus discussed these variants in his notes. "*Indeed almost all the important variant readings known to scholars today were already known to Erasmus more than 460 years ago and discussed in the notes (previously prepared) which he placed after the text in his editions of the Greek New Testament.* Here, for example, Erasmus dealt with such problem passages as the conclusion of the Lord's Prayer (Matt. 6:13), the interview of the rich young man with Jesus (Matt. 19:17-22), the ending of Mark (Mark 16:9-20), the angelic song (Luke 2:14), the angel, agony, and bloody seat omitted (Luke 22:43-44), the woman taken in adultery (John 7:53-8:11), and the mystery of godliness" (1 Tim. 3:16) (Edward Hills, pp. 198-199).

3. Erasmus also had the textual evidence from the writings of ancient church leaders and from ancient Bible translations. "Nothing was more important at the dawn of the Reformation than the publication of the Testament of Jesus Christ in the original language. Never had Erasmus worked so carefully. **'If I told what sweat it cost me, no one would believe me.'** **HE HAD COLLATED MANY GREEK MSS. of the New Testament,**

and WAS SURROUNDED BY ALL THE COMMENTARIES AND TRANSLATIONS, by the writings of Origen, Cyprian, Ambrose, Basil, Chrysostom, Cyril, Jerome, and Augustine. ... When a knowledge of Hebrew was necessary, he had consulted Capito, and more particularly Ecolampadius. Nothing without Theseus, said he of the latter, making use of a Greek proverb” (J.H. Merle D’Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, New York: Hurst & Company, 1835, Vol. 5, p. 157).

4. Erasmus knew that the manuscripts he selected reflected the reading of the common text, and he was guided by this “common faith.”

“Long before the Protestant Reformation, the God-guided usage of the Church had produced throughout Western Christendom a common faith concerning the New Testament text, namely, a general belief that the currently received New Testament text, primarily the Greek text and secondarily the Latin text, was the True New Testament Text which had been preserved by God’s special providence. It was this common faith that guided Erasmus and the other early editors of the *Textus Receptus*. ...

“In Erasmus’ day [the common] view occupied the middle ground between the humanistic view and the scholastic view. Those that held this view acknowledged that the Scriptures had been providentially preserved down through the ages. They did not, however, agree with the scholastic theologians in tying this providential preservation to the Latin Vulgate. On the contrary, along with Laurentius Vallas and other humanists, they asserted the superiority of the Greek New Testament text. This common view remained a faith rather than a well articulated theory. No one at that time drew the logical but unpalatable conclusion that the Greek Church rather than the Roman Church had been the providentially appointed guardian of the New Testament text. But this view, though vaguely apprehended, was widely held, so much so that it may justly be called the common view. Before the Council of Trent (1546) it was favored by some of the highest officials of the Roman Church, notably, it seems, by Leo X, who was pope from 1513-1521 and to whom Erasmus dedicated his New Testament. Erasmus’ close friends also, John Colet, for example, and Thomas More and Jacques Lefevre, all of whom like Erasmus sought to reform the Roman Catholic Church from within, likewise adhered to this common view. Even the scholastic theologian Martin Dorp was finally persuaded by Thomas More to adopt it. In the days of Erasmus, therefore, it was commonly believed by well informed Christians that the original New

Testament text had been providentially preserved in the current New Testament text, primarily in the current Greek text and secondarily in the current Latin text. Erasmus was influenced by this common faith and probably shared it, and God used to providentially to guide Erasmus in his editorial labors on the *Textus Receptus*. ...

“But if Erasmus was cautious in his notes, much more was he so in his text, for this is what would strike the reader’s eye immediately. Hence in the editing of his Greek New Testament text especially Erasmus was guided by the common faith in the current text. And back of this common faith was the controlling providence of God. For this reason Erasmus’ humanistic tendencies do not appear in the *Textus Receptus* which he produced. Although not himself outstanding as a man of faith, in his editorial labors on this text he was providentially influenced and guided by the faith of others. In spite of his humanistic tendencies Erasmus was clearly used of God to place the Greek New Testament in print, just as Martin Luther was used of God to bring the Protestant Reformation in spite of the fact that, at least at first, he shared Erasmus’ doubts concerning Hebrews, James, Jude and Revelation” (Edward F. Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, 4th edition, pp. 193, 197, 199).

5. This entire issue is a smokescreen.

First, what could it possibly matter that Erasmus used only a few select manuscripts for his Greek New Testament, when the textual critics know full well that these manuscripts represented then and still represent today the vast majority of extant Greek manuscripts and lectionaries? Charles Ellicott, the chairman of the English Revised Version committee, admitted that Erasmus’ “few” manuscripts represent the “majority.” “The manuscripts which Erasmus used differ, for the most part, only in small and insignificant details from the bulk of the cursive manuscripts. The general character of their text is the same. By this observation the pedigree of the Received Text is carried up beyond the individual manuscripts used by Erasmus. ... That pedigree stretches back to a remote antiquity. The first ancestor of the Received Text was at least contemporary with the oldest of our extant manuscripts, if not older than any one of them” (Charles John Ellicott, *The Revisers and the Greek Text of the New Testament*, by Two Members of the *New Testament Company*, 1882, pp. 11, 12). Obviously, therefore, the exact number of manuscripts that Erasmus used has no relevance to the issue whatsoever. Yet we continually read the following type of statement from those who defend the modern

versions: “This approach to the question, however, ignores the thousands of manuscripts that Erasmus did not consider. Some of those might actually contain the words originally penned by the apostles” (Robert Milliman, “Translation Theory and Twentieth-Century Versions,” *One Bible Only?* edited by Roy Beacham and Kevin Bauder, 2001, p. 135). How such a thing could be written with a straight face, I do not know. This type of thing is why we titled our first book on this subject in the 1980s “Myths about Modern Bible Versions.” By the way, Milliman’s statement is another blatant denial of preservation. If the words of God were not available to the Reformation editors and translators, that means they were hidden away from common use by the churches for at least 1,500 years. What type of “preservation” is that?

Second, if to base a Greek New Testament upon a few manuscripts is in actuality something that should not be done, why do the textual critics support the Critical Text when it is based largely on a mere handful of manuscripts? The United Bible Societies Greek New Testament, the latest edition of the Westcott-Hort Text, repeatedly questions and omits verses, portions of verses, and individual words with less textual authority than even the Trinitarian statement of 1 John 5:7. Most of the significant omissions are made on the authority of Aleph (Sinaiticus) and B (Vaticanus) (sometimes both together and sometimes one standing alone), and a bare handful of similar manuscripts and versions. For example, the word “fasting” is removed from the Westcott-Hort Text, the Nestles’ Text, the UBS Text, and all of the modern versions on the authority of its omission in Aleph, B, two minuscules (0274, 2427), one Old Latin, and the Georgian version. The entire last 12 verses of the Gospel of Mark are omitted or seriously questioned on the authority of only three Greek manuscripts, Aleph, B, and the minuscule 304 (plus some witness by various versions that were influenced by the Alexandrian Text). Sometimes, in fact, the modern textual critics don’t have even this much “authority” for their changes. For example, the UBS Greek N.T. puts Matthew 21:44 in brackets on the “authority” of only one three Greek manuscripts, one uncial (the terribly unreliable D) and two minuscules.

6. Concerning the preservation of the Scriptures, our faith is not in man, but in God. Even if the Reformation editors had fewer resources than those of more recent times, we know that the God

who controls the times and the seasons was in control of His Holy Word (Dan. 2:21). The infallible Scripture was not hidden away in some monastic dungeon or a dusty corner of the Pope's library at the headquarters of Apostasy. The infallible Scriptures were being published, read, and taught by God's people.

“At Marquette Manor Baptist Church in Chicago (1984), Dr. [Stewart] Custer said that God preserved His Word ‘in the sands of Egypt.’ No! God did not preserve His Word in the sands of Egypt, or on a shelf in the Vatican library, or in a wastepaper bin in a Catholic monastery at the foot of Mt. Sinai. God did not preserve His Word in the ‘disusing’ but in the ‘using.’ He did not preserve the Word by it being stored away or buried, but rather through its use and transmission in the hands of humble believers. At latest count, there were 2,764 cursive manuscripts (MSS). Kenyon says, ‘... An overwhelming majority contain the common ecclesiastical [Received] text.’ ... Kenyon is prepared to list only 22 that give even partial support to the [modern critical] text. ... Are we to believe that in the language in which the New Testament was originally written (Greek), that only twenty-two examples of the true Word of God are to be found between the ninth and sixteenth centuries? How does this fulfill God's promise to preserve His Word? ... We answer with a shout of triumph God has been faithful to His promise. Yet in our day, the world has become awash with translations based on MSS similar to the twenty-two rather than the [more than] two-and-a-half thousand” (Jack Moorman, *Forever Settled*, 1985, pp. 90-95).

For more about Erasmus and the Received Text see “Should 1 John 5:7 Be in the Bible Since It Has Little Support Among the Greek Manuscripts?”

MYTHS PERTAINING TO TEXTUAL CRITICISM

MYTH: MODERN TEXTUAL CRITICISM IS A SCIENCE THAT SHOULD BE USED BY GOD'S PEOPLE.

Those who support the modern Bible versions accept the findings of modern textual criticism. They use the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament and the Nestles New Testament, which were founded upon the principles of modern textual criticism, and they lean upon the research and theories of men such as Bruce Metzger and Kurt Aland. They would have us believe that modern textual criticism is a “safe science” that should be used by God’s people.

Textual criticism is the application of modern theories to the recovery of ancient documents. The theories of biblical textual criticism were initially developed over a period of roughly 100 years beginning the late 1700s. During that introductory period its popularity was limited to textual scholars, for the most part, while it was strongly resisted by Bible believers in general. It began to be popularized with the publication of the Westcott-Hort Greek New Testament in 1881. Today modern textual criticism is used in most Bible colleges and seminaries, including in many fundamentalist ones. It is used at Bob Jones University, Central Baptist Theological Seminary, Detroit Baptist College and Seminary, Tennessee Temple University, Liberty University, and many others.

Modern textual criticism claims that the Greek Received Text that was published in the Protestant Reformation is corrupt and has a special dislike for it. F.J.A. Hort is typical when he described the Received Text as “VILLAINOUS” and “VILE” (*Life and Letters of Fenton John Anthony Hort*, Vol. 1, p. 211). Textual critic Ernest Colwell observed that Hort’s goal was to dethrone the Received Text (Colwell, *Scribal Habits in Early Papyri, The Bible in Modern Scholarship*, Abingdon, 1965, p. 370). 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).

ANSWER:

1. We reject modern textual criticism because its goal is unscriptural.

The goal of modern textual criticism was described by Constantine Tischendorf 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 was lost prior to the 19th century.

The very title of Bruce Metzger’s book -- *The New Testament’s Transmission, CORRUPTION, AND RESTORATION* -- describes modern textual criticism’s principle that the Scriptures *were not* divinely preserved, because they must allegedly be recovered after having been lost and corrupted for 1,500 years.

Thus, modern textual criticism is built upon the premise that the original text of the New Testament needed to be restored in the 19th century and it does not claim to be able to do this with certainty.

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 of its favor toward Egyptian manuscripts.

Modern textual criticism favors two Greek manuscripts (Sinaiticus and Vaticanus) and a small number of others of similar character above the majority. This handful of Egyptian or Alexandrian (named after Alexandria, Egypt) manuscripts preferred by modern textual critics were called by John Owen in the 17th century “the spurious brood” and by John Burgon in the 19th century the “little handful of suspicious documents.” Since the discovery of the Egyptian papyri in the 20th century, the number of Alexandrian manuscripts has increased; but compared to the vast number that support the Traditional text, they still represent a very tiny minority.

The Vaticanus 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. The home of this manuscript 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. 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.

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. 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 even features one entire room filled with skulls!

Vaticanus (Codex B) or Sinaiticus (Codex Aleph), either individually or together, are the source of most of the omissions and glaring changes in the modern versions. Following are a few of these from the Gospels. These readings are still found in the Nestle's text and the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament and the vast majority of these textual corruptions are followed by the New American Standard Version and the New International Version.

- Matthew 5:22 -- "without a cause" omitted in Aleph and B (thus making Jesus into an evil man because He got angry at times, though never without a cause)
- 6:13 -- "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen" omitted in Aleph and B
- 9:13 -- "to repentance" omitted in Aleph and B
- 17:21 -- "Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting" omitted in Aleph and B
- 18:11 -- "For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost" omitted in Aleph and B
- 27:34 -- "vinegar" is changed to "wine" in Aleph and B (thus destroying the fulfillment of the prophecy of Psalm 69:21)

- Mark 1:2 -- “the prophets” is changed to “Isaiah the prophet”
 Aleph, B (thus creating an error in Scripture)
- 2:17 -- “to repentance” omitted in Aleph, B
- 9:29 -- “fasting” omitted in Aleph and B
- 9:44, 46 “Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.” verses omitted in Aleph, B
- 9:45 -- “into the fire that never shall be quenched” omitted in Aleph, B
- 16:9-20 -- entire last 12 verses of Mark’s Gospel omitted in Aleph and B
- Luke 1:28 -- “blessed art thou among women” omitted in Aleph, B
- 2:14 -- “peace, good will toward men” is changed to “peace among men in whom he is well pleased” in Aleph and B
- 4:4 -- “every word of God” omitted in Aleph, B
- 4:8 -- “and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan” omitted in Aleph and B
- 4:18 -- “to heal the brokenhearted” omitted in Aleph, B
- John 3:15 -- “should not perish, but” omitted in Aleph, B
- 4:42 -- “the Christ” omitted in Aleph, B
- 7:8 -- “yet” omitted in Aleph (thus causing Jesus to tell a lie)
- 7:53 - 8:11 -- These 12 verses omitted in Aleph and B

The Vaticanus and Sinaiticus (and the other manuscripts which display a similar nature) originated in Egypt, a hotbed of theological heresy. After examining heretical readings in early Egyptian manuscripts, Dr. Edward Hills concluded: “Thus we see that it is unwise in present day translators to base the texts of their modern versions on recent papyrus discoveries or on B (Vaticanus) and Aleph (Sinaiticus). For all these documents come from Egypt, and Egypt during the early Christian centuries was a land in which heresies were rampant. So much was this so that, as Bauer (1934) and van Unnik (1958) have pointed out, later Egyptian Christians seem to have been ashamed of the heretical past of their country and to have drawn a veil of silence across it. This seems to be why so little is known of the history of early Egyptian Christianity. In view, therefore, of the heretical character of the early Egyptian Church, it is not surprising that the papyri, B, Aleph, and other manuscripts which hail from Egypt are liberally sprinkled with heretical readings” (*The King James Version Defended*, p. 134).

The Vaticanus and Sinaiticus (as well as the other Alexandrian manuscripts) contain many readings that denigrate the full deity of Jesus Christ and give evidence that they are representatives of manuscripts that were corrupted by heretics. “The Sabellian and Arian controversies raged in the 3rd and 4th centuries and the copies now held in such high repute among scholars were written in the 4th and 5th centuries. The hostility of these documents to the Trinitarian doctrine impels the mind to the conclusion that their omissions and alterations are not merely the chance errors of transcribers, but the work of a deliberate hand. When we remember the date of the great Trinitarian contest in the Church, and compare it with the supposed date of these documents, our suspicion becomes much more pronounced. ... The so-called oldest codices agree with each other in omitting a number of striking testimonies to the divinity of Christ, and they also agree in other omissions relating to Gospel faith and practice” (Robert Dabney, “The Doctrinal Various Readings of the New Testament Greek,” *Southern Presbyterian Review*, April 1871).

Following are a few examples:

Matthew 19:17 -- “Why callest thou me good?” is changed to “Why do you ask me about what is good?” in both Aleph and B

Luke 23:42 -- “Lord” changed to “Jesus” in Aleph and B, thus destroying this powerful reference to Christ’s deity.

John 1:18 -- “the only begotten son” changed to “the only begotten God” in Aleph and B. [John Burgon proved that this reading, which appears in only five Greek manuscripts, could be traced to the heretic Valentinus who denied the Godhead of Jesus Christ by making a distinction between the Word and the Son of God (Burgon and Miller, *Causes of Corruption*, pp. 215, 216). “The Gnostics said that Christ was ‘the Beginning,’ the first of God’s creation, and Valentinus referred to Him as ‘the Only-begotten God’ and said that He was the entire essence of all the subsequent worlds (*Aeons*)” (Jay Green, *The Gnostics, the New Versions, and the Deity of Christ*, 1994, p. 74). In the Received Text there is no question that the Word is also the Son and that both are God. The Word is God (Jn. 1:1); the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us (Jn. 1:14); the Word is the Son (Jn. 1:18). By changing Jn. 1:18 to “the only begotten

- God,” Valentinus and his followers broke the clear association between the Word and the Son.]
- 1:27 -- “is preferred before me” omitted in Aleph, B
 - 3:13 -- “who is in heaven” omitted in Aleph and B
 - 9:38 -- “Lord, I believe. And he worshipped Him...” omitted in Aleph (thus removing this powerful and incontrovertible confession of Christ as God)
 - 1 Corinthians 15:47 -- “the Lord” omitted in Aleph, B
 - 1 Timothy 3:16 -- “God” is omitted and replaced with “who” in the Sinaiticus (the Vaticanus does not contain this epistle)
 - 1 John 4:3 -- “confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh” changed to “confesseth not Jesus” in B [Every false spirit will “acknowledge Jesus” in a general sense, even Unitarians, Mormons, and Jehovah’s Witnesses, but the spirit of antichrist will not “confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh,” meaning that Jesus Christ is the very Messiah, the very God manifest in the flesh, promised in Old Testament prophecy.]

Not only do the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus disagree with the vast majority of other extant manuscripts, but they also disagree with one another in thousands of places! There are 3,036 differences in the Gospels alone, not counting minor errors such as spelling (Herman Hoskier, *Codex B and Its Allies*, vol. II, p. 1). If these two witnesses were put on a witness stand in a court of law, they would be rejected. Not only do they disagree together against the vast majority of other witnesses, but they also disagree with one another as much as they disagree with the majority!

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).

Biblical "common sense" informs us that these manuscripts owe their amazing survival to the fact that they are so corrupt. "Nay, who will venture to deny that those codices are indebted for their preservation *solely* to the circumstance, that they were long since recognized as the depositories of Readings which rendered them utterly untrustworthy? ... It must further be admitted, (for this is really not a question of opinion, but a plain matter of fact,) that it is unreasonable to place confidence in such documents" (John Burgon, *The Revision Revised*, pp. 30, 31).

3. We reject modern textual criticism because its theories are strange and unscriptural.

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

Therefore, while not all of the following principles are held by any one textual critic, these are standard principles that have been promoted by prominent textual critics.

Some of the chief principles of modern textual criticism examined:

The following are a few of the strange principles of modern textual criticism. For a more thorough study see “The Modern Bible Version Question-Answer Database.” There we deal with genealogy and text families, conflation, ---

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: EARLY CHRISTIANS WERE NOT CAREFUL ABOUT THE TEXT OF THE NEW TESTAMENT. “Textual purity, as far as can be judged from the extant literature, attracted hardly an interest. There is no evidence to show that care was generally taken to choose out for transcription the exemplars having the highest claims to be regarded as authentic, if indeed the requisite knowledge and skill were forthcoming” (Westcott and Hort, Introduction to *The New Testament in the Original Greek*, p. 9). “Until the beginning of the fourth century the text of the New Testament developed freely. ... They [scribes] also felt themselves free to make corrections in the text, improving it by their own standards of correctness, whether grammatically, stylistically, or more substantively. This was all the

more true of the early period, when the text had not yet attained canonical status...” (Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 69).

COMMENT:

This is a complete denial that the New Testament is the infallibly-inspired and divinely-preserved Word of God, and it flies in the face of what we know about Bible-believing Christians of all ages. Hort was a skeptic when it came to the text of Scripture. We see that Kurt and Barbara Aland paint the same strange picture of the transmission of the New Testament books.

This was not the way that true believers treated the New Testament writings. They received the Gospels and epistles as Scripture and were exceedingly careful about how they handled them (i.e., 1 Thess. 2:13). We document this in the book *Faith vs. the Modern Bible Versions*, under Chapter I, section A, “The doctrine of preservation authenticates the traditional Greek New Testament underlying the King James and other Reformation Bibles.”

The Spirit of God had put a solemn seal upon the New Testament (Rev. 22:18-19), warning all people against tampering with the Scripture. Only those who had no fear of God would have ignored such a warning.

Where do Hort, Aland, and other textual critics get the idea that the early Christians did not care about the New Testament writings and that they treated them haphazardly? This conclusion is based largely on the wretched spiritual condition that existed in Egypt, where the Vaticanus text originated. That area was filled with heretics who had no fear of tampering with the Holy Scriptures and with nominal Christians who had no zeal for God’s Truth. Indeed, it was this type of “Christian” who “felt themselves free to make corrections in the text.” A true, born again believer would never do such a thing. It is the Egyptian manuscripts that are particularly filled with gratuitous and heretical modifications.

As for the skill necessary to transmit the New Testament Scriptures in pure form, how much skill is required?

The chief requirements are standard literacy and holy carefulness, and the early believers had both of those in full measure. The early churches also had some men of the highest scholastic caliber, such as the apostle Paul. Further, the early churches had something

even more important than this, which is the Holy Spirit to enlighten and guide them.

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” (Terence 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, observed: “They assume everything. They prove nothing. ... the utter absence of one particle of evidence, traditional or otherwise, that it ever did take place, must be held to be fatal to the hypothesis that it did. It is simply incredible that an incident of such magnitude and interest would leave no trace of itself in history” (Burgon, *The Revision Revised*, pp. 264, 293). Burgon called Hort’s theory “an excursion into cloud-land; a dream, and nothing more” and “mere moonshine.” Frederic Cook was just as blunt: “The supposition [of a Lucian Recension] is a manifest absurdity” (*The Revised Version of the First Three Gospels Considered*, 1882, p. 202).

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 "bishoprics" and "patriarchates," a great many were not.

That being said, it is evident that Burgon turned Hort's Syrian recension theory on its head and demonstrated that if such a thing actually occurred it would provide devastating evidence AGAINST Hort's Alexandrian text. If churches actually met together in the 3rd or 4th centuries to revise the New Testament text so as to purge away any impurities that had crept in, they would surely have had the resources and understanding to accomplish such a

task. They lived only a short time after the passing of the apostles. They would have had the testimony of the apostolic churches themselves, because they still existed. They would have had the testimony of countless treasured manuscripts that have long since disappeared from the record. They would have had an intimate knowledge of the 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 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 TRADITIONAL TEXT DID NOT EXIST PRIOR TO THE MIDDLE OF THE THIRD CENTURY. “Before the middle of the third century, at the very earliest, we have no historical signs of the existence of readings, conflate or other, that are marked as distinctively Syrian by the want of attestation from groups of documents which have preserved the other ancient forms of text” (quoted from Westcott and Hort, Introduction to *The New Testament in the Original Greek*, 1881). Frederic Kenyon called this the “corner-stone” of Hort’s theory, “that readings characteristic of the Received Text are never found in the quotations of Christian writers prior to about A.D. 350” (Kenyon, *Recent Developments in the Textual Criticism of the Greek Bible*, London: Oxford University Press, 1933, pp. 7-8). The reason that this was the cornerstone of Hort’s theory was that he believed it offered irrefutable evidence that the Traditional Text was created by a revision in the fourth century, since (so he said) it does not appear in the manuscript record prior to that.

COMMENT: This is untrue, as the following evidence demonstrates.

Consider some testimonies of authorities to the existence of the Traditional Text prior to the middle of the third century:

Testimony of Bishop Charles Ellicott, chairman of the English Revised Version translation committee: “The manuscripts which Erasmus used differ, for the most part, only in small and insignificant details, from the great bulk of the cursive MSS. The general character of their text is the same. By this observation the pedigree of the Received Text is carried up beyond the individual manuscripts used by Erasmus ... That pedigree stretches back to remote antiquity. THE FIRST ANCESTOR OF THE RECEIVED TEXT

WAS AT LEAST CONTEMPORARY WITH THE OLDEST OF OUR EXTANT MSS, IF NOT OLDER THAN ANY ONE OF THEM” (Bishop Ellicott, chairman of the ERV committee, *The Revisers and the Greek Text of the N.T. by two members of the N.T. Company*, pp. 11-12).

Testimony of John Burgon: Burgon’s research into New Testament quotations from ancient church writings has never been equaled. His unpublished index of quotations from ancient fathers, which resides in the British Museum, consists of 16 thick manuscript volumes containing 86,489 references. Burgon’s research established that the Traditional Text was the prominent text of the early centuries. Some 4,383 of these 86,000 quotations were from 76 writers who died before the year 400 A.D. Jack Moorman observes: “Edward Miller carried on the work after Burgon’s death and put the material in a tabulated form showing the times a Church Father witnesses for and against the Received Text. He found the Received Text had the greater support by 2,630 to 1,753 or 3 to 2. Keeping in mind the Alexandrian and Western localities of these 76 Fathers, we have here quite a strong majority for the Received Text. Had the quotations of the Eastern Fathers been available, all indications are that the support would have been quite overwhelming. But the above evidence shows clearly also that there was a struggle over the text of Scripture in those early centuries. But, there was a clear winner!” (*Modern Bibles the Dark Secret*). Of Hort’s claim of superior antiquity for his text, Burgon replied: “You *talk* of ‘Antiquity.’ But you must know very well that you actually mean something different. You fasten upon three, or perhaps four,—on two, or perhaps three,—on one, or perhaps two,—documents of the IVth or Vth century. But then, confessedly, these are one, two, three, or four *SPECIMENS ONLY* of Antiquity,—not ‘Antiquity’ itself. And what if they should even prove to be *unfair samples* of Antiquity? ... You are for ever talking about ‘old Readings.’ Have you not yet discovered that ALL “Readings’ are ‘OLD’?” (*The Revision Revised*, pp. 243, 44). Burgon’s work has been despised, ridiculed, mischaracterized, and dismissed out of hand by modern textual critics, but it has never been refuted.

Testimony of the Trinitarian Bible Society of England: “IT MUST BE EMPHASISED THAT THE ARGUMENT IS NOT BETWEEN AN ANCIENT TEXT AND A RECENT ONE, BUT BETWEEN TWO ANCIENT FORMS OF THE TEXT, ONE OF WHICH WAS REJECTED AND THE OTHER ADOPTED AND PRESERVED BY THE CHURCH

AS A WHOLE AND REMAINING IN COMMON USE FOR MORE THAN FIFTEEN CENTURIES. The assumptions of modern textual criticism are based upon the discordant testimony of a few specimens of the rejected text recently disinterred from the oblivion to which they had been deliberately and wisely consigned in the 4th century” (*The Divine Original*, TBS article No. 13, nd, p. 7).

Testimony of Harry Sturz, who surveyed all of the available papyri to discover how many contained support for the Traditional Greek Text and published his findings in *The Byzantine Text-Type and New Testament Textual Criticism* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1984). He observes, “The papyri have now demonstrated ‘that the readings which Hort calls *Syrian* existed before the end of the fourth century.’ Byzantine readings have now been proven to be in existence by the end of the second century! ... In regard to the argument based on the silence of the Fathers, it should be observed that, contrary to the statements of WH and their followers, quotations from early Fathers *have* been found in support of Byzantine readings” (*The Byzantine Text-type*, p. 78). Jack Moorman summarizes Sturz’s findings. “He strikes a devastating blow at arguments which seek to minimize the fact that distinctive Byzantine readings do appear in the early papyri. He lists 150 Received Text readings which though not supported by the early Alexandrian and Western manuscripts are read by the mass of later manuscripts and by the early papyri. He lists a further 170 TR readings which again run counter to Vaticanus and Sinaiticus, but in this case find support from the Western manuscripts. These also are supported in the early papyri. In fact STURZ DEMONSTRATES POPYRI SUPPORT FOR A TOTAL OF 839 READINGS WHICH IN VARYING DEGREES WOULD BE CLASSED AS ‘DISTINCTLY BYZANTINE.’ As the papyri is available for only 30% of the New Testament, existing evidence allows us to reasonably project that the story would be the same for the rest of the New Testament. What is especially remarkable about this is, the papyri come from that area where the Alexandrian/shorter text was prevalent. Nearly all of the 267 uncial manuscripts move strongly to the side of the AV Text, with the same being true of the minuscules” (Jack Moorman, *Modern Bibles the Dark Secret*).

Consider some ways that textual critics have sought to undermine these facts:

One mechanism used by the textual critics to discount the aforementioned facts is to claim that Burgon and Miller were not using the most approved critical editions of “the fathers.” Dr. Edward Hills replies: “In regard to my references to the Church Fathers, I am sure that if you examine the notes to my *King James Defended* and my *Believing Bible Study* you will see that I have taken care to look up all the Burgon’s references in the most modern editions available. During the years 1950-55, I spent many weeks at this task. ... In fact, THE NEWER GERMAN EDITIONS OF THE CHURCH FATHERS DIFFER LITTLE FROM THOSE OF THE 17TH AND 18TH CENTURIES. CERTAINLY NOT ENOUGH TO AFFECT BURGON’S ARGUMENTS” (Letter from Edward F. Hills to Theodore Letis, February 15, 1980, as quoted in Letis, “Edward Freer Hills Contribution to the Revival of the Ecclesiastical Text,” unpublished M.T.S. Thesis, Emory University, 1987).

Another mechanism whereby the textual critics discount the aforementioned facts is by distinguishing between readings and texts. Admitting that individual Traditional Text readings can be found in the writings of ancient preachers prior to the third century, they claim that the Traditional Text *as a whole* or *as a text* cannot be found in the writings of any one “father.” This is a clever tactic but it is ineffective. “... in the face of substantial evidence they have been forced to a second line of defense: ‘Well, there may be Byzantine readings before 350, but there is no Byzantine Text!’ To which we would naturally reply that, given the large number of Byzantine readings, how can you have one without the other?” (Jack Moorman, *A Closer Look*, p. 7).

Another mechanism that the textual critics use at this point is to claim that the aforementioned Traditional text quotations in the writings of the early church “fathers” were added by later scribes. “... the common practice among patristic scholars is to dismiss distinctively Byzantine readings found in the writings of the Fathers unless the Father expressly comments on the significance of the Byzantine reading. This is due to the hypothesis that the scribes (who also copied the works of the Fathers as well as the New Testament manuscripts) would habitually and deliberately tend to alter the scriptural quotations of the Fathers into those with which they were familiar, namely, the Byzantine readings. ... If the Byzantine readings now summarily dismissed in the early Fathers were legitimately included, the Fathers’ overall text would be seen

to be far more 'Byzantine' than current scholarly opinion claims. This was Burgon's original contention, which was dismissed out of hand, due to his use of 'uncritical' editions of the Fathers. Current 'critical' editions, however, follow the above-mentioned practice of eliminating distinctive Byzantine readings where unconfirmed by direct comment. Were this not so, Burgon's assertion might find contemporary corroboration" (Maurice Robinson, "The Case for the Byzantine Textform: A New Approach to 'Majority Text' Theory," Southeastern Regional Meeting, Evangelical Theological Society, at Toccoa Falls College, March 8-9, 1991). M. Jacob Suggs observes: "There is little evidence of systematic revision of New Testament citations except in translated works, and this is paralleled by the practice of modern translators of theological works in quoting Biblical passages in a familiar version rather than supplying a fresh translation" ("The Use of Patristic Evidence in the Search for a Primitive New Testament Text," *New Testament Studies*, IV, No. 2, Jan. 1958, 140; cited from Sturz, *The Byzantine Text-type*, p. 79, footnote).

Consider some other important considerations in regard to the witness of the early centuries:

It is important to understand that there are no extensive early writings in existence from the area of Antioch. The vast majority of the earliest extant quotations are from Egypt and Gaul. "Supporters of the WH theory point out that Chrysostom (who flourished in the last half of the fourth century) is the earliest Father to use the Byzantine text. HOWEVER, THEY CUSTOMARILY NEGLECT TO MENTION THAT THERE ARE NO EARLIER ANTIOCHIAN FATHERS THAN CHRYSOSTOM WHOSE LITERARY REMAINS ARE EXTENSIVE ENOUGH SO THAT THEIR NEW TESTAMENT QUOTATIONS MAY BE ANALYZED AS TO THE TYPE OF TEXT THEY SUPPORT. THE SILENCE-OF-THE-FATHERS ARGUMENT HAS BEEN ASKED TO BEAR MORE WEIGHT THAN IT IS ABLE TO SUSTAIN. How can Fathers of other areas using other local text-types be expected to witness to the Antiochian text? And how could it be expected that the Antiochian text (i.e., the early form of it) can be attested by Fathers who have left little or no writings?" (emphasis added) (Harry Sturz, *The Byzantine Text-type*, pp. 80, 81).

In reality, there are very few manuscripts extant from the earliest

centuries from all regions together, far too few to make sweeping conclusions about the textual situation that existed in those earliest centuries. Maurice Robinson observes: “Were a thousand papyrus and uncial MSS extant from before the fourth century which were relatively complete and sufficiently representative of the entire Eastern empire (by the location of their discovery), perhaps one could speak with greater authority than from the 63 fragmentary papyri we currently possess from that era. The resources of the pre-fourth century era unfortunately remain meager, restricted to a limited body of witnesses. Even if the text-critical evidence is extended through the eighth century, there would be only 424 documents, mostly fragmentary” (*New Testament Textual Criticism: The Case for Byzantine Priority*).

Ordinary New Testament believers would generally have used less expensive papyri as opposed to the more expensive vellum made from animal skins. And apart from a few places with exceedingly dry climates, such as Egypt and the Judean desert, ancient papyri manuscripts simply have not survived. Only a few fragments from the first four centuries have survived even in Egypt.

Believers in the early centuries would have worn out their Scripture manuscripts quickly. This is true of believers today, but it would have been even truer then, when New Testament books were used not only for reading, study, and ministry, but also for copying.

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.

Johann 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.

MODERN TEXTUAL CRITICISM'S THEORY: BRUCE METZGER, FOLLOWING WESTCOTT AND HORT, BELIEVES THAT THE TEXT THAT IS HARSH AND VERBALLY DISSIDENT (CHARACTERIZED BY DIFFICULTIES AND CONTRADICTIONS) IS TO BE PREFERRED TO A TEXT THAT IS VERBALLY HARMONIOUS. "Since scribes would frequently bring divergent passages into harmony with one another, in parallel passages. ... that reading which involves

VERBAL DISSIDENCE is usually to be preferred to one which is verbally concordant. Scribes would sometimes: a) replace an unfamiliar word with a more familiar synonym. b) alter a less refined grammatical form or less elegant expression in accord with contemporary atticizing preferences; or c) add pronouns, conjunctions, and expletives TO MAKE A SMOOTHER TEXT” (Bruce Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*). For example, when Alexandrian manuscripts say in Matt. 1:7, 10, that Amos and Asaph were kings of Israel, as the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus do, modern textual critics assume this was the original reading, even though it is an obvious mistake, and that later this “verbal dissidence” was “harmonized” and corrected by the “editors” of the Traditional Text. And when “yet” is omitted in John 7:8 in the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, thus creating an error in the text and causing the Lord Jesus to tell a lie, many modern textual critics assume this was the original reading which later was “smoothed out” by “editors” of the Traditional Text.

COMMENT:

This principle is based on pure speculation. Modern textual critics cannot prove that the scribes who copied the Traditional Text created such alterations for such reasons.

To say that the original text of the New Testament contained mistakes such as the wrong names of kings in Matthew 1 and the omission of “yet” in John 7:8 is to deny the divine inspiration of Scripture.

In light of the nature of Scripture as the infallible Word of God, the many warnings in Scripture against heretics, and the facts of history that demonstrate the fulfillment of these warnings, it is more reasonable to assume that manuscripts that contain “disharmonious” and “dissent” readings are the product of tampering by heretics or omissions and changes by careless and/or ignorant scribes.

MODERN TEXTUAL CRITICISM’S THEORY: THE TEXTUAL CRITIC CAN USE CONJECTURE TO DETERMINE THE CORRECT READING. “Namely, as a principle of textual criticism, the reading most likely to be the original text is the one which can best explain the rise of the other readings. But while this principle is useful in many passages, it is apparent that IT DEPENDS LARGELY ON A

SUBJECTIVE EVALUATION OF THE READINGS AVAILABLE. So especially in difficult instances it needs to be supplemented with as objective criteria AS POSSIBLE” (Barbara Aland, “A Century of New Testament Textual Criticism (1898-1998),” <http://www.bibleresourcecenter.org/vsItemDisplay.dsp&objectID=BF4714BC-53F6-48EB-94FEA6BF73FD88A5&method=display>, 1998).

COMMENT:

Here we see that conjecture is a part of modern textual criticism. It is not often that they will admit this as plainly as Barbara Aland has done in this article, but it is true nonetheless. Hort used the high-sounding terms “conjectural emendation” and “intrinsic probability,” but it refers to nothing more sophisticated than guessing. In describing his father’s textual criticism, Arthur Hort observed: “The obvious method of deciding between variant readings, is for the critic to ask which the author is most likely to have written, and to settle the question BY THE LIGHT OF HIS OWN INNER CONSCIOUSNESS” (*Life of Hort*, Vol. 2, p. 248).

Barbara Aland gives an example of how this works. Note her discussion of why she believes Acts 8:37 is not Scripture: “But there is a group of manuscripts, some of them old and valuable, which add verse 37: ‘Philip said, If you believe with all your heart, you may. And he replied, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.’ In this instance it is relatively easy to decide which is the original form of the text. The dogmatic nature of verse 37 reflects the early church practice in the late 2nd century of requiring a formal interrogation of a candidate before administering baptism. It is obvious that this is an interpolation suggested by the official’s unanswered question in verse 36 (‘What is to prevent me from being baptized?’)” (Aland, “A Century of New Testament Textual Criticism (1898-1998)”). While Barbara Aland wants her readers to think that she has a firm basis for her conjecture that Acts 8:37 was a later addition to the Scriptures, it is obvious that she has nothing more than her own guess about what happened. She has NO EVIDENCE WHATSOEVER that Acts 8:37 was added by Christians in the second or third century because they wanted to fortify the book of Acts with their baptismal interrogation practices. While it might be “obvious” to the textual critic that Acts 8:37 is not part of the original book of Acts, it is just as obvious to us that it was.

What is wrong with conjecture when it comes to the Bible text?

First, it is not authoritative and can produce nothing substantial. It is an unbelieving principle that weakens the authority of Scripture and gives opportunity for unbelievers to mock its infallibility.

To think that we are left to conjecture the original text of Scripture is a blatant denial of divine preservation.

To think that Bible believers would tamper with Scripture to make it more theologically conservative is contrary to what we know about them. God has taught His people to tremble before His word (Isa. 66:5) and to fear adding to or taking away from it (Deut. 4:2; Prov. 30:6; Rev. 22:18-19). The early believers received the New Testament as the Word of God (1 Thess. 2:13; Jn. 17:8) and carefully passed it along word by word as the Word of God (Matt. 28:19-20; 2 Tim. 2:2). To believe that true Christians tampered with the Scripture would require absolute proof, and that is something that the textual critics have not given.

We know, though, that heretics *will* tamper with the Scripture, because we are told in Scripture that they do so (i.e. 2 Cor. 2:17). The only reason a Bible believer would change something in a Scripture manuscript is if he is convinced that the text or translation is corrupt and needs to be changed to conform to the original. But this is nothing like what Barbara Aland proposes that Bible believers did in regard to Acts 8:37. She is suggesting that they added something to the book of Acts that they knew was not originally a part of it just to make the book more conformable to and supportive of their doctrine.

It is therefore more reasonable to suggest, as J.A. Alexander did in 1857, that “this verse, though genuine, was omitted by many scribes, ‘as unfriendly to the practice of delaying baptism, which had become common, if not prevalent, before the end of the 3rd century’” (Alexander, *The Acts of the Apostles*, cited by Edward Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, 4th edition, p. 201).

MODERN TEXTUAL CRITICISM’S THEORY: THE ECLECTIC METHOD SHOULD BE FOLLOWED. “[By the eclectic method the editor] follows now one and now another set of witnesses in accord with what is deemed to be the author’s style or the exigencies of transcriptional hazards” (Bruce Metzger, *The Text of*

the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration, pp. 175, 176).

COMMENT:

The word “eclectic” means diverse or free, and the eclectic method of textual criticism refers to a free choice among readings based on this or that principle as preferred by the editor or translator or student. Epp defines the eclectic method as applying “the selected criteria in such a way as to ‘pick’ or ‘choose’ a reading from one or another MS and thereby arrive at a text-critical decision” (“The Eclectic Method,” *Studies in the Theory and Method of New Testament Textual Criticism*, p. 141). Most contemporary textual critics claim to use the eclectic method, and this is true for the editors of the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament, the Revised Standard Version, the New English Bible, and the New International Version. The preface to the NIV says, “The Greek text used in the work of translation was an eclectic one.” Eldon Jay Epp says, “The ‘eclectic’ method is, in fact, the 20th century method of NT textual criticism, and anyone who criticizes it immediately becomes a self critic, for we all use it, some of us with a certain measure of reluctance and restraint, others with complete abandon” (Epp, “The Twentieth Century Interlude in NT Textual Criticism,” *Studies in the Theory and Method of New Testament Textual Criticism*, p. 98).

The eclectic method focuses more on internal and conjectural criteria than external and objective ones. Influential textual critic Ernest Colwell admits: “In the last generation we have depreciated external evidence of documents and have appreciated the internal evidence of readings; but we have blithely assumed that we were rejecting ‘conjectural emendation’ if our conjectures were supported by some manuscripts. WE NEED TO RECOGNIZE THAT THE EDITING OF AN ECLECTIC TEXT RESTS UPON CONJECTURES” (Colwell, “Scribal Habits in Early Papyri: A Study in the Corruption of the Text,” *The Bible in Modern Scholarship*, edited by J.P. Hyatt, 1965, pp. 371-372). The two principles Metzger identifies as suitable to the eclectic method are “the author’s style” and “the exigencies of transcriptional hazards.” Nothing could be more subjective, more uncertain, more along the lines of guesswork, than these principles. Authors can change their style depending on the subject; determinations based on style are

extremely subjective and result in widely conflicting decisions. Some critics, for example, say that Mark 16:9-20 doesn't fit the style of the author of the rest of Mark's Gospel, but others say that it does. As for "the exigencies of transcriptional hazards," which refers to the causes for various readings, whether a scribal error or something else, it is impossible for textual critics in the 21st century to know what particular exigencies produced a certain textual reading more than a millennium and a half ago. Textual critic Albertus Klijn warns: "This method arrives at such varying results that we wonder whether editors of Greek texts and translations can safely follow this road" (Klijn, *A Survey of the Researches into the Western Text of the Gospels and Acts, part two 1949-1969*, Leiden, 1969, p. 65). For ourselves, we have no doubt that "this road" is not safe.

The eclectic method really means that the individual critic is at liberty to make his own guess based on whatever standard suits his fancy, and it offers no settled or truly objective basis upon which to determine the reading.

Those who use the eclectic method admit that it cannot produce certainty.

One scholar candidly observed that eclectic editions use documents "as drunkards use lampposts--not to light them on their way but to dissimulate their instability" (Ernest Colwell, "Hort Redivivus: A Plea and a Program," *Studies in Methodology in Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1969, p. 153).

Kenneth Clark stated: "The eclectic method cannot by itself create a text to displace Westcott-Hort and its offspring. It is suitable only for exploration and experimentation. ... The eclectic method, by its very nature, belongs to an age like ours in which we know only that the traditional theory of the text is faulty but cannot yet see clearly to correct the fault" (Clark, cited by Eldon Epp, "Decision Points in New Testament Textual Criticism," *Studies in the Theory and Method of New Testament Textual Criticism*, p. 36).

The eclectic method is not really eclectic (meaning diverse or free) but remains secretly faithful to the principles of Westcott and Hort (even though they have been refuted) and produces a New Testament that is almost identical to the W-H text of 1881 *IN SIGNIFICANT DEPARTURES FROM THE RECEIVED TEXT*.

This is evident by the fact that the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament deletes or questions almost the same number of verses as the Westcott-Hort text (WH-48, UBS-45), deletes almost the same number of significant portions of verses (WH--193, UBS 185), and deletes almost the same number of names and titles of the Lord (WH--221, UBS--212). The same is true for the RSV, NEB, and NIV. They all remove “God” from 1 Timothy 3:16; they all question or remove or seriously question the ending to Mark 16, etc. The so-called eclectic method only results in quite minor variations away from the Westcott-Hort model.

In the Introduction to the 24th edition of Nestle’s Greek New Testament, editors Erwin Nestle and Kurt Aland make the following admission: “Thus THE TEXT, BUILT UP ON THE WORK OF THE 19TH CENTURY, HAS REMAINED AS A WHOLE UNCHANGED, particularly since the research of recent years has not yet led to the establishment of a generally acknowledged N.T. text” (Erwin Nestle and Kurt Aland, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 24th edition, 1960, p. 62).

In his 1981 book *The Westcott and Hort Greek New Testament--Yesterday and Today*, Bruce Metzger makes the following plain admission: “The International committee that produced the United Bible Societies’ Greek New Testament, NOT ONLY ADOPTED THE WESTCOTT AND HORT EDITION AS ITS BASIC TEXT, BUT FOLLOWED THEIR METHODOLOGY in giving attention to both external and internal consideration.”

James Brooks observes that Bruce Metzger, one of the most prominent textual critics of this generation, has not gone much beyond Westcott and Hort: “There is nothing unique about Metzger’s theory of textual criticism. It is simply a refinement of Westcott and Hort’s theory in the New Testament in the Original Greek (1881). ... this theory is dominant today in part because of Metzger’s great influence. It was the theory employed in producing the United Bible Societies Greek text. It is the theory lying behind the Greek text used by most modern versions: The Revised Standard, the New Revised Standard, the New English Bible, the Revised English Bible, the New American Bible, the New American Standard, the Good News Bible, the New International Version...” (Brooks, *Bible Interpreters of the 20th Century*, p. 264).

We see even from this brief study that the principles of modern

textual criticism are strange and unscriptural.

It is important to understand 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).

Observe, 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).

4. We reject modern textual criticism because its rules are unsettled and constantly changing, and also because the rules are applied in different ways by individual critics.

Eldon Epp admits, "New Testament textual criticism ... IS ALWAYS IN PROCESS. Its history is a record of various discoveries, insights, methods, and distinctive achievements that provide the basis for further investigation, but WITH FEWER DEFINITIVE CONCLUSIONS OR FINAL RESOLUTIONS THAN MIGHT BE EXPECTED" ("Decision Points in Textual Criticism," *Studies in the Theory and Method of New Testament Textual Criticism*, edited by Epp and Gordon Fee, p. 17).

“Different scholars apply the canons very differently. Some place most of the weight on external criteria; others on internal. Some analyze readings starting with internal criteria, others with external. In other words, PEOPLE HAVE DIFFERENT RULES FOR USING THE RULES!” (Robert Waltz, *Canons of Criticism*, <http://www.skypoint.com/~waltzmn/CanonsOfCrit.html>).

A.E. Housman makes this telling statement: “Textual criticism is not a branch of mathematics, NOR INDEED AN EXACT SCIENCE AT ALL. ... IT IS THEREFORE NOT SUSCEPTIBLE OF HARD-AND-FAST RULES. ... A textual critic engaged upon his business is not at all like Newton investigating the motions of the planets: HE IS MUCH MORE LIKE A DOG HUNTING FOR FLEAS” (Housman, “The Application of Thought to Textual Criticism,” *Proceedings of the Classical Association*, August 1921, xviii, London, 1922, pp. 68-69; cited from Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 219). We believe that a dog hunting fleas is, truly, an apt description of modern textual criticism.

B.B. Warfield described textual criticism as a matter of general averages and probabilities, sort of like a game of chance: “All ‘canons of criticism’ are ONLY GENERAL AVERAGES, AND OPERATE LIKE A PROBABILITY BASED ON A CALCULATION OF CHANCES” (Warfield, *An Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, p. 107).

Bruce Metzger makes this amazing admission: “SINCE TEXTUAL CRITICISM IS AN ART AS WELL AS A SCIENCE, IT IS UNDERSTANDABLE THAT IN SOME CASES DIFFERENT SCHOLARS WILL COME TO DIFFERENT EVALUATIONS OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE EVIDENCE” (*The Text of the New Testament*, p. 210). Seeking to establish the original text of the Bible is art! Whereas the Bible is all about absolutes from beginning to end, art has nothing to do with absolutes! To the contrary, settling the text of Holy Scripture is not art; it is a spiritual task of determining the text inspired and preserved by God, and it can only be accomplished through faith and spiritual wisdom, based on biblical principles, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Yet one thing Griesbach, Westcott, Hort, Kenyon, Epp, Streeter, Metzger, or Aland DO NOT mention is faith, biblical principles, and the Holy Spirit! And one thing they all agree on (with their evangelical and fundamentalist disciples) is to discount

any textual principle that even hints at being “theological.” The “fideistic” or “faith” approach is rejected out of hand. No wonder nothing is settled in this field.

5. We reject modern textual criticism because its fathers and chief proponents are men who deny the infallible inspiration of Scripture.

The critical Greek text is a product of the rationalistic atmosphere of the 19th and 20th centuries, and the modern versions are further assisting the spread of apostasy because they have weakened the authority of the Bible. Most of the fathers of modern textual criticism were theological heretics, as are its chief proponents today.

We have documented this extensively in the 292-page *The Modern Bible Version Hall of Shame*, available from Way of Life Literature.

Following are a few examples. These are some of the most prominent men in the field of modern textual criticism.

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).

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 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.

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. These men 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 held that “the shorter reading (under most circumstances) is to be preferred to the more verbose.” He was the first to declare Mark 16:9-20 spurious and to omit it from the Greek New Testament (in his 1796 edition).

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.*"

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.

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, found wide acceptance.

GEORGE VANCE SMITH (1816-1902)

Smith, who was on the British committee that produced the English Revised Version New Testament (1870-81), was the Unitarian minister of St. Saviourgate Chapel, York. He denied the deity and atonement of Jesus Christ, the personality of the Holy Spirit, and the divine inspiration of Scripture. Consider just a few

of the heretical statements that issued from this man's pen.

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 Popular Theology*, 1871, 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 Popular Theology*, p. 215).

He denied the substitutionary blood 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'" (Smith, *The Bible and Popular Theology*, p. 246).

He denied the infallible inspiration of Scripture: "It [the Bible] 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. ... 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).

When an attempt was made to have Smith removed from the English Revised Version translation committee, Westcott and Hort and two other members of the committee stood by him and threatened that they would resign if Smith were removed. 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).

BROOKE FOSS WESTCOTT (1825-1901) and **FENTON JOHN ANTHONY HORT** (1828-1892)

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.

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 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 have taken up that challenge in *The Modern Bible Version Hall of Shame*. The following are just a few examples:

Consider, first, the testimony of some men who have studied the doctrines, theories, and lives of Westcott and Hort:

First we offer the testimony of Zane Hodges, who was a professor at Dallas Theological Seminary when he made the following remark. “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” (Hodges, “Rationalism and Contemporary New Testament Textual Criticism,” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, January 1971).

We also offer 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.]

“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).]

[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, who wield a vast influence in modern Bible translation work.]

[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.”]

“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.]

It is important to understand that Westcott was exceedingly clever in the pronouncement 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).

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.

EZRA ABBOT (1819-1884)

Abbot, a Harvard theology professor and one of the foremost textual critics in America, was on the American Standard Version (ASV) translation committee (1901). “He has assisted on Smith’s *Bible Dictionary*, Noyes’ *New Testament*, and many other critical

works, besides being a frequent contributor to the reviews, magazines, etc.”

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)

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.

Thayer was the assistant to Unitarian Ezra Abbot at Harvard University and succeeded him in 1884 as Bussey professor of New Testament criticism and interpretation at the Harvard Divinity School

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” (Publishers Introduction, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, page vii, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House).

EBERHARD NESTLE (1851-1913)

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 Nestle denied biblical infallibility. In his *Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism* he 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.”

THE UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES GREEK NEW TESTAMENT

The editors of the United Bible Societies (UBS) Greek New Testament further illustrate the rank apostasy that permeates the field of modern textual criticism. 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).

CARLO MARIA MARTINI (1927-)

Martini 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. He was consecrated Archbishop of Milan (the largest Catholic diocese in the world) by Pope John Paul II in January 1980 and proclaimed a Cardinal on February 2, 1983. 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. He retired as Archbishop of Milan in the summer of 2002.

Martini holds to traditional Catholic dogmas as well as 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. ... 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).

“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)

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.

Aland rejected verbal inspiration, calling it merely an "idea" (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.

Aland even claimed that the canon of Scripture is yet unsettled (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-)

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 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.

That Barbara Aland shares her late husband's modernism is evident from her writings. Consider *The Text of the New Testament*, which the Barbara co-authored with Kurt. The authors question the Pauline authorship of Colossians and state dogmatically that 1 Peter and 2 Peter "were clearly written by two different

authors” (p. 49). 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.

JOHANNES KARAVIDOPOULOS (c. 1944-)

Karavidopoulos, a professor on the theology faculty of the University of Thessaloniki in Greece, 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.

Karavidopoulos’ liberalism is evident from the following information:

According to a report by Dr. Albert Rauch, Ostkirchliches Institute, Regensburg, Karavidopoulos believes that the church is composed of “the whole creation” (“Discussion between representatives of the Deutschen Bischofskonferenz and the Russian Orthodox Church,” in Minsk, May 13-17, 1998, <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 denial of the infallible inspiration of Scripture:

“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: ... 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.)”

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.

BRUCE METZGER (1914-2007)

Metzger was one of the most influential textual critics of the twentieth century. Practically every book defending the modern versions lists his works. His writings are popular across all denominational lines, Catholic, liberal Protestant, you name it. Metzger’s works are 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). 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.

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.

Metzger’s 1997 autobiography, *Reminiscences of an Octogenarian*, omits any reference to a personal salvation experience.

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.

Metzger denied the infallible inspiration of the Bible. His modernistic view of Scripture is 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. I

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," 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.

When it comes to the apostasy and heresy that that been an intimate part of modern textual criticism and the modern Bible versions, this is only the very tip of the iceberg.

For more about Bruce Metzger's heresy see *The Modern Bible Version Hall of Shame*.

6. 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 was the preserved Word of God, today there is no real certainty where textual criticism has been accepted. The Masoretic Hebrew has been challenged by the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Septuagint, and other sources, so that some twenty to thirty thousand textual changes have been suggested for the Old Testament. The Greek Received Text has been replaced with a constantly changing, so-called "eclectic" text.

Note the following statements by prominent textual critics of the

last 100 years testifying to the gross uncertainty produced by modern textual criticism.

"[The New Testament text is more unsettled] than ever, and PERHAPS FINALLY, UNSETTLED" (Rendel Harris, *Side Lights on New Testament Research*, 1908, p. 3).

"The ultimate text, if there ever was one that deserves to be so called, IS FOR EVER IRRECOVERABLE" (F.C. Conybeare, *History of New Testament Criticism*, 1910, p. 129).

"In spite of the claims of Westcott and Hort and of von Soden, WE DO NOT KNOW THE ORIGINAL FORM OF THE GOSPELS, AND IT IS QUITE LIKELY THAT WE NEVER SHALL" (Kirsopp Lake, *Family 13, The Ferrar Group*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1941, p. vii).

"... it is generally recognized that THE ORIGINAL TEXT OF THE BIBLE CANNOT BE RECOVERED" (R.M. Grant, "The Bible of Theophilus of Antioch," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, vol. 66, 1947, p. 173).

"... the optimism of the earlier editors has given way to that SKEPTICISM WHICH INCLINES TOWARDS REGARDING 'THE ORIGINAL TEXT' AS AN UNATTAINABLE MIRAGE" (G. Zuntz, *The Text of the Epistles*, 1953, p. 9).

"In general, THE WHOLE THING IS LIMITED TO PROBABILITY JUDGMENTS; the original text of the New Testament, according to its nature, must be and remain A HYPOTHESIS" (H. Greeven, *Der Urtext des Neuen Testaments*, 1960, p. 20, cited from Edward Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, p. 67).

"... so far, the twentieth century has been a period characterized by GENERAL PESSIMISM ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF RECOVERING THE ORIGINAL TEXT BY OBJECTIVE CRITERIA" (H.H. Oliver, 1962, p. 308; cited from Eldon Epp, "Decision Points in New Testament Textual Criticism," *Studies in the Theory and Method of New Testament Textual Criticism*, p. 25).

"The primary goal of New Testament textual study remains the recovery of what the New Testament writers wrote. We have already suggested that TO ACHIEVE THIS GOAL IS WELL NIGH IMPOSSIBLE. Therefore we must be content with what Reinhold Niebuhr and others have called, in other contexts, AN 'IMPOSSIBLE POSSIBILITY'" (R.M. Grant, *A Historical Introduction to the New Testament*, 1963, p. 51).

"... every textual critic knows that this similarity of text indicates, rather, that WE HAVE MADE LITTLE PROGRESS IN TEXTUAL THEORY SINCE WESTCOTT-HORT; THAT WE SIMPLY DO

NOT KNOW HOW TO MAKE A DEFINITIVE DETERMINATION AS TO WHAT THE BEST TEXT IS; THAT WE DO NOT HAVE A CLEAR PICTURE OF THE TRANSMISSION AND ALTERNATION OF THE TEXT IN THE FIRST FEW CENTURIES; and, accordingly, that the Westcott-Hort kind of text has maintained its dominant position largely by default" (Eldon J. Epp, "The Twentieth Century Interlude in New Testament Textual Criticism," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Vol. 43, 1974, pp. 390-391).

"As New Testament textual criticism moves into the twenty-first century, it must shed whatever remains of its innocence, for nothing is simple anymore. Modernity may have led many to assume that a straightforward goal of reaching a single original text of the New Testament--or even a text as close as possible to that original--was achievable. Now, however, REALITY AND MATURITY REQUIRE THAT TEXTUAL CRITICISM FACE UNSETTLING FACTS, CHIEF AMONG THEM THAT THE TERM 'ORIGINAL' HAS EXPLODED INTO A COMPLEX AND HIGHLY UNMANAGEABLE MULTIVALENT ENTITY. Whatever tidy boundaries textual criticism may have presumed in the past have now been shattered, and its parameters have moved markedly not only to the rear and toward the front, but also sideways, as fresh dimensions of originality emerge from behind the variant readings and from other manuscript phenomena" (E. Jay Epps, "The Multivalence of the Term 'Original Text' In New Testament Textual Criticism," *Harvard Theological Review*, 1999, Vol. 92, No. 3, pp. 245-281; this article is based on a paper presented at the New Testament Textual Criticism Section, Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, Orlando, Florida, November 1998).

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 unshaken. In the case of Darwinian evolution, the chief thing that was rejected in the beginning was the doctrine of a Creator, and regardless of how devastatingly the foundational principles of Darwinian evolution are disproved, contemporary adherents of

evolution refuse to reconsider the doctrine of a Creator or any form of Intelligent Design. In the case of modern textual criticism, the chief thing that was rejected by Westcott and Hort and other early proponents was the Greek Received Text (and with it any practical doctrine of divine preservation), and regardless of how thoroughly the foundational principles of Westcott and Hort have been refuted by textual critics in the past 100 years, the grandchildren of Westcott and Hort refuse to take a new look at the Received Text. The reason is that the adherents of both disciplines refuse to admit that they must approach these subjects by faith in God and by faith alone, that they can never know the truth about creation or the Bible apart from faith in divine revelation. Any other foundation is shifting sand.

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 his or herself as to what Greek manuscript or Greek text or English translation to follow in any given instance. There is no dogmatic authority for any statement, because someone can always come up with an alternative reading. This same principle has greatly weakened the authority of Bible preaching. I recall a visit in August 2003 to Saddleback Church in southern California, where Rick Warren of “Purpose Driven Church” fame is senior pastor. I observed on the way into the auditorium that only a few people carried Bibles, and the reason became clear when I saw the bewildering multiplicity of versions that were used in the preaching. An outline of the sermon was handed out with the bulletin, and six or seven versions were quoted, most of them loose paraphrases or dynamic equivalencies such as the Living Bible, the New Living Translation, The Message, Today’s English Version, and the Contemporary English Version. It would have been impossible to have followed along in one’s Bible. The result is that the people do not bring their own Bibles and do not therefore carefully test the preaching.

THE UNCERTAINTY PRODUCED BY MODERN TEXTUAL CRITICISM HAS GIVEN AMMUNITION TO THE ENEMIES OF THE BIBLE. They recognize, even if the evangelicals and fundamentalists who have adopted textual criticism do not, that an array of conflicting texts and versions undermines the doctrine of divine inspiration and preservation. Consider two examples:

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 a myriad of imperfect, often divergent manuscripts from where the 'original' text has to be extracted by a committee of humans! Even worse, the 'best' reading is decided by voting!" (M.S.M. Saifullah and Abd ar-Rahman Robert Squires, *Textual Reliability of the New Testament*, 1999, <http://www.islamic-awareness.org/Bible/Text/Bibaccuracy.html#3>).

In fact, the Muslims who wrote this article are correct in their assessment of the findings of modern textual criticism. If modern textual criticism is true, the original text of the Bible has not been preserved. Where these Muslims go astray is in their thinking that modern textual criticism is the only genuine approach to the Bible's text.

Roman Catholic apologists also use modern textual criticism to undermine the Bible's authority. The catholicapologetics.net web site has at least seven articles that focus on this line of thought. (a) "The 'Scripture Alone' Theory, and the Ending of the Gospel of Mark." (b) "The 200 Contested Verses, and Phrases of the Protestant New Testament: A listing of two-hundred verses and phrases in just the New Testament of KJV that are contested (and in many cases rejected) by many of today's Protestant scholars, and today's modern Protestant translations." (c) "Sola which Scriptura Part 1, The KJV vs. NKJV: The NKJV makes over 100,000 word changes from the old 1611 KJV." (d) "Sola which Scriptura Part 2, The KJV vs. NIV: Which one is right? How much do they differ? Does it affect doctrine? Who changed it?" (e) "The 1611 KJV vs. the Present KJV: A Look at some of the Changes made to the text of the King James Version over the years." (f) "The KJV. vs. RV.: A short comparative look at the 1611 King James Version and the 1881 Revised Version." (g) "Here Today Gone Tomorrow: A short comparative look at some of the verses found in the 1611 King James Version which have 'disappeared' from most modern Protestant Versions of the Bible."

Consider an excerpt from the article "The 'Scripture Alone' Theory, and the Ending of the Gospel of Mark" -- "Another example, of the failure of the 'Scripture Alone' theory, is the ending of the gospel of

Mark. Many modern Protestant translations find it difficult to determine how the apostle intended his gospel to end, for example the seven editions listed below actually provide three possible endings for Mark's work. ... One ending stops with 18:8, then there are two other alternate endings, a long conclusion and a short conclusion. The long conclusion is the traditional verse 18:9-20, found in the King James Version. Then there is an alternate short conclusion, about the size of two verses. ... It is hard to hold the 'Scripture Alone' theory when there is no physical authority to look to in order to determine how the book of Mark ends. ... How can one be solely dependent on a book for spiritual guidance, when they cannot even authoritatively determine what are the physical bounds of the text itself? Thank God that as Catholics we have a visible Church to guide us with the authority to determine such matters for us."

The Roman Catholic who wrote this has a point. If modern textual criticism cannot determine the original ending of Mark's Gospel, which is a very important matter, where does this leave the doctrine of the infallible inspiration and complete authority of Scripture?

These are only two examples of how unbelievers use the work of modern textual critics to discredit the Scriptures. There is no doubt that the unbelieving principles and statements of rationalist modern textual critics (who overwhelmingly dominate the field) have given great cause for rejoicing to many unbelievers who would like nothing better than to believe that the Bible is a mere book.

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*).

The theological danger inherent within the practice of textual criticism was admitted from the liberal side by E. Jay Epps of Harvard Divinity School: “Nor (for those who choose to work within a theological framework) is textual criticism a ‘safe’ discipline -- a phrase I have heard for four decades -- that can be practiced without challenge to theological convictions or without risk to faith commitments or truth assertions. I DOUBT THAT IT EVER WAS ‘SAFE’ -- AT LEAST FOR ANY WHO HAVE THOUGHT THROUGH THE IMPLICATIONS OF OUR MYRIAD VARIATION UNITS, WITH THEIR INNUMERABLE COMPETING READINGS AND CONCEPTIONS, AS WELL AS THE THEOLOGICAL MOTIVATIONS THAT ARE EVIDENT IN SO MANY. BUT IF IT HAS BEEN A ‘SAFE’ DISCIPLINE, IT IS SAFE NO MORE. ... Any who embrace it as a vocation will find its intellectual challenges to have been increased a hundredfold by its enlarged boundaries and broadened horizons, which extend into codicology and papyrology and also into related early Christian, classical, literary, and sociological fields, all of which favor accommodation of the richness of the manuscript tradition, WITH ITS MULTIPLICITY OF TEXTS AND ITS MULTIVALENT ORIGINALS, RATHER THAN THE MYOPIC QUEST FOR A SINGLE ORIGINAL TEXT. Both broad training and knowledge, and A CAPACITY TO TOLERATE AMBIGUITY will be high on the list of requisite qualifications for its practitioners” (E. Jay Epps, “The Multivalence of the Term ‘Original Text’ In New Testament Textual Criticism,” *Harvard Theological Review*, 1999, Vol. 92, No. 3, pp. 245-281; this article is based on a paper presented at the New Testament Textual Criticism Section, Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, Orlando, Florida,

November 1998).

This is a loud warning to those who have ears to hear. What Epps did not say is that all of the many fields into which the modern textual critic is led are dominated today by theological skeptics; and the evangelical or fundamentalist who follows this course is disobeying the Bible by not separating from heretics and is in dire danger of spiritual shipwreck. “Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners” (1 Cor. 15:33).

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).

In fact, Rome has conformed its own Vulgate to the modern critical text. In 1965, Pope Paul VI authorized the publication of a new Latin Vulgate, with the Latin text conformed to the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament (Michael de Semlyen, *All Roads Lead to Rome*, p. 201). It was published in 1979 by the German Bible Society.

In 1966 the Revised Standard Version was published in a “Roman Catholic Edition.” This version included the apocryphal books inserted among the books of the Old Testament and incorporated Catholic readings such as “full of grace” in Luke 1:28. As a result,

the chief editor of the RSV, Luther Weigle, was awarded the “Papal Knighthood of St. Gregory the Great” in 1966 by Pope Paul VI (Peter Thuesen, *In Discordance with the Scriptures: American Protestant Battles over Translating the Bible*, 1999, p. 142).

Beginning in 1967, Cardinal Carlo Martini was 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 would be used for all future translations, both Catholic and Protestant (*Guidelines for International Cooperation in Translating the Bible*, Rome, 1987, p. 5). (For more about ecumenical translations see our book *Unholy Hands on God’s Holy Book*, available from Way of Life Literature.)

Conclusion of why we reject modern textual criticism:

The doctrine of divine preservation overthrows modern textual criticism. 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.

Modern textual criticism is an unsettled pseudo-science. It is a “science falsely so called” (1 Tim. 6:20).

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.

Modern textual criticism is complicated and is therefore suitable only for the scholarly elite.

Modern textual criticism has produced uncertainty, skepticism, and a weakening of the authority of the Bible, and has encouraged the back to Rome movement.

Suggestions for further reading on this topic: (1) John Burgon's exposure of the error of the Westcott-Hort theories, as contained in *The Revision Revised*, is devastating. David Otis Fuller published an abbreviated form of this in *True or False?* (2) Another critique of the Westcott-Hort textual theories is *The Identity of the New Testament Text* by Wilbur Pickering (Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1977). This is available online at <http://www.esgm.org/ingles/imenu.html>. Pickering, who has a Ph.D. in Linguistics from the University of Toronto, dismantles the principles of Westcott and Hort point by point. The research for the first edition of this book was done for a master's thesis Pickering submitted to Dallas Theological Seminary in 1968. The thesis was published in 1973 in *True or False?* (We strongly disagree with Pickering's support for the *Hodges-Farstad Majority Text* and his proposed revision of the Greek Received Text and the King James Bible, but one does not have to agree with all of Pickering's conclusions to benefit from his extensive research in this field.) (3) Edward F. Hills' *The King James Version Defended* contains a masterly refutation of modern textual criticism. (4) An excellent brief summary of the Westcott-Hort theory of textual criticism is contained in Jack Moorman's *Modern Bibles--the Dark Secret*. All of these are available from Bible for Today, 900 Park Ave., Collingswood, NJ 08108.

MYTH: THE ACTUAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE RECEIVED TEXT AND THE WESTCOTT-HORT TEXT IS SMALL AND INSIGNIFICANT.

Another of the myths perpetuated today by the defenders of the modern versions is that there is very little difference between the Received Text underlying the KJV and other Reformation versions and the Westcott-Hort Greek text underlying the modern versions. Westcott and Hort made this claim in their day, and it is widely repeated today. One of the authors of the book *From the Mind of*

God to the Mind of Man says, "... to put this 'thousandth part of the entire text' into perspective, I am looking at the last page of my Greek New Testament. It is numbered 895. Hort's estimate means that if all of the substantial variation between the families was grouped together in one place it would combine to occupy less than one page of my entire Testament" (Mark Minnick, "Let's Meet the Manuscripts," *From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man*, ed. by James B. Williams, 1999, pp. 85, 86). Thus Minnick, a fundamentalist, accepts Hort's claim and concludes that the "substantial" difference between the texts affects the equivalent of less than one page of the New Testament.

ANSWER:

In reality, the difference between the texts involves 5,604 changes totaling 9,970 Greek words. That affects 7% of the words in the TR and 45.9 pages of the Greek N.T. The omissions alone total 2,886 words, the equivalent of omitting 1 and 2 Peter!

Dr. Donald Waite made his own study of the differences between the Westcott-Hort Greek text and the Received Text and published his findings in *Defending the King James Bible*: "My own personal count, as of August 2, 1984, using Scrivener's Greek New Testament referred to above [an edition of the Received Text], was 5,604 changes that Westcott and Hort made to the Textus Receptus in their own Greek New Testament text. Of these 5,604 alterations, I found 1,952 to be OMISSIONS (35%), 467 to be ADDITIONS (8%), and 3,185 to be CHANGES (57%). In these 5,604 places that were involved in these alterations, there were 4,366 more words included, making a total of 9,970 Greek words that were involved. This means that in a Greek Text of 647 pages (such as Scrivener's text), this would average 15.4 words per page that were CHANGED from the Received Text. Pastor Jack Moorman counted 140,521 words in the Textus Receptus. These changes would amount to 7% of the words; and 45.9 pages of the Greek New Testament if placed together in one place."

Jack Moorman also did a firsthand study of the differences, counting every word of the Nestle-Aland Greek text and comparing it with the Received Text. He published this in "Missing in Modern Bibles: Is the full Story Being Told" (*Bible for Today*, 1981). He concluded that the Nestle-Aland is shorter than the Received Text by 2,886 words (934 MORE words than were omitted in the

Westcott-Hort of 1881). This is equivalent to dropping the entire books of 1 Peter and 2 Peter out of the New Testament.

Not only is the difference between the critical Greek text and the Received Text large, but the difference is also doctrinally substantial. We have covered this under the myth that “there are no significant doctrinal differences between the modern versions and the KJV.”

The position that downplays the difference between the texts and versions is a dangerous half-truth. On the one hand, it is true that a literal modern version such as the New American Standard contains most of God’s words and that one can teach basic doctrinal truth from it. In this we can see the miraculous way that God has preserved the truth even in the Alexandrian manuscripts that have been damaged by heretical assault and careless scribal corruption. On the other hand, there are significant doctrinal differences between a version based on the critical Greek text and one based on the Traditional Greek text. Again, we deal with this under the myth that “there are no doctrinal differences between the modern versions and the KJV.”

**MYTH: THE SINAITICUS MANUSCRIPT WAS NOT FOUND
IN A WASTE PAPER CONTAINER.**

A critic of the defense of the King James Bible, who is so clever that he regularly finds errors where none exist, has claimed that the idea that the Sinaiticus was discovered in a waste paper receptacle is a myth.

ANSWER:

We have the testimony of Tischendorf himself, the discoverer of the Sinaiticus. He was traveling in 1844 under the patronage of Frederick Augustus, king of Saxony, searching for manuscripts, when he visited St. Catherine’s monastery on Mount Sinai. Here he found some old manuscripts in a basket of papers intended for lighting the stove and upon examination found them to be very ancient. Here are his own words: “In visiting the library of the monastery, in the month of May, 1844, I perceived in the middle of the great hall a large and wide basket full of old parchments; and the librarian, who was a man of information, told me that TWO HEAPS OF PAPERS LIKE THESE, MOULDERED BY TIME, HAD

BEEN ALREADY COMMITTED TO THE FLAMES. What was my surprise to find amid this heap of papers a considerable number of sheets of a copy of the Old Testament in Greek, which seemed to me to be one of the most ancient that I had ever seen. The authorities of the convent allowed me to possess myself of a third of these parchments, or about forty-three sheets, all the more readily AS THEY WERE DESTINED FOR THE FIRE” (*When Were Our Gospels Written? An Argument by Constantine Tischendorf. with a Narrative of the Discovery of the Sinaitic Manuscript*, New York: American Tract Society, 1866; an excerpt of this is at <http://rosetta.reltech.org/TC/extras/tischendorf-sinaiticus.html>).

Thus, Tischendorf tells us plainly that the pages of the manuscript were found in a basket of papers intended for lighting the stove. I cannot imagine why anyone would protest against calling this a wastebasket.

Further, we have the testimony of John Burgon, who was alive when Tischendorf discovered the Sinaiticus and personally spent time at St. Catherine’s doing research into ancient manuscripts. At least three times in his writings Burgon said the manuscripts “got deposited in the waste-paper basket of the Convent” (*The Revision Revised*, 1883, pp. 319, 342; Burgon and Miller, *The Traditional Text of the Holy Gospels Vindicated and Established*, 1896, p. 12). This description of the location where Tischendorf found the Sinaiticus was published widely and was not challenged in Burgon’s lifetime.

We also have the testimony of other preachers who lived nearer to the day of Tischendorf’s discovery of the Sinaiticus. For example, the famous preacher T. DeWitt Talmage (1832-1902), in his sermon “Mending the Bible,” said: “It is a plain matter of history that Tischendorf went to a convent in the peninsula of Sinai, and was by ropes lifted over the wall into the convent, that being the only mode of admission and that he saw there in the wastebasket for kindling for the fires a manuscript of the holy Scriptures.” It is obvious that Talmage was under the impression that the Sinaiticus was discovered in a “wastebasket.”

Finally, we have the testimony of Bruce Metzger, one of the most prominent textual critics of our day. “While visiting the monastery of St. Catharine at Mount Sinai, he chanced to see some leaves of parchment in a waste-basket full of papers destined to light the

oven of the monastery” (Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 43).

MYTH: WESTCOTT AND HORT WERE THEOLOGICALLY SOUND.

The fundamentalists who defend modern textual criticism also defend Westcott and Hort, claiming that they were theologically sound.

In fact, the evidence that Westcott and Hort were dangerous heretics is overwhelming. They denied the infallible inspiration of Scripture, the sacrificial blood atonement of Christ, the Genesis account of creation, and other doctrines of the faith. We have documented this under the Myth that “modern textual criticism is a science that should be used by God’s people.”

MYTH: THERE IS NO SIGNIFICANT SUPPORT FOR THE JOHANNINE COMMA IN 1 JOHN 5:7.

1 John 5:7-8 in the Greek Received Text and the King James Bible reads: “For there are three that bear record in heaven, THE FATHER, THE WORD, AND THE HOLY GHOST: AND THESE THREE ARE ONE. AND THERE ARE THREE THAT BEAR WITNESS IN EARTH, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.”

The capitalized words, called the *Johannine Comma*, are omitted in the modern Greek texts and English versions. (The term “comma” described “a group of words isolated as a single group.”)

It would seem, in fact, that modern textual critics despise the traditional Trinitarian statement in 1 John 5:7-8 more than any other passage in the Received Text.

Bruce Metzger calls it “spurious” (*The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, p. 101). Kurt and Barbara Aland have no doubt that it is inauthentic, speaking of “the impossibility of its being at all related to the original form of the text of 1 John” (*The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions*, p. 311). This is typical of how 1 John 5:7 is treated by textual critics.

Beginning with the publication of the English Revised Version of

1881, the *Johannine Comma* has been omitted from practically every modern English translation, including the ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV, TEV, Living Bible, the Message, New Living Translation, the CEV, and the Holman Christian Standard Bible.

ANSWER:

This is one of the most important verses in the Bible on the doctrine of the Trinity and one of the most important witnesses to the full Deity of Jesus Christ; and for the following reasons I am convinced that 1 John 5:7 as it stands in the Greek Received Text and the King James Bible is divinely inspired Scripture. In fact, I am in good company, for hundreds of thousands of regenerate, Christ-loving men and women of God throughout the world (I have personally preached to many thousands of them in 15 different countries) are convinced by the Spirit of God that the *Johannine Comma* is inspired Scripture. We must not be overawed by textual scholars, regardless of how they look down upon those who do not accept their judgments. They do not possess secret knowledge nor do they have secret wisdom. They do not know anything that we cannot check for ourselves. I do not want to speak disrespectfully, for I do not despise learning (though I do despise pomposity); but it is true nonetheless that they are only men and not gods.

The very fact that they almost never mention faith or the Spirit of God in the context of these matters is most fearfully telling.

Now we will turn to our reasons for holding to 1 John 5:7.

Consider, first, **THE THEOLOGICAL ARGUMENT**. “The strength of forgery or interpolation is similarity and not uniqueness. The Trinitarian formula, ‘Father, Word, and Holy Spirit’ is unique not only for John but for all NT writers. The usual formula, ‘Father, Son, and Holy Spirit’ would have been assuredly used by a forger. [Incidentally, this argument is an antidote for rationalists who repudiate the authenticity of the Petrine authorship of 2 Peter. Peter uses a unique spelling for his name (*Sumeon*), which is also the first word of the Epistle, to demonstrate his mark of authorship. What forger would pass three dollar bills? Only the authority, the government, would attempt such a unique action.]” (Dr. Thomas Strouse, *A Critique of D.A. Carson’s The King James Version Debate*, 1980).

Another consideration is **THE GRAMMATICAL ARGUMENT**. “The omission of the Johannine Comma leaves much to be desired grammatically. The words ‘Spirit,’ ‘water’ and ‘blood’ are all neuters, yet they are treated as masculine in verse 8. This is strange if the Johannine Comma is omitted, but it can be accounted for if it is retained; the masculine nouns ‘Father’ and ‘word’ in verse 7 regulate the gender in the succeeding verse due to the power of attraction principle. The argument that the ‘Spirit’ is personalized and therefore masculine is offset by verse 6 which is definitely referring to the personal Holy Spirit yet using the neuter gender. [I. H. Marshall is a current voice for this argument: ‘It is striking that although Spirit, water, and blood are all neuter nouns in Greek, they are introduced by a clause expressed in the masculine plural ... Here in 1 John he clearly regards the Spirit as personal, and this leads to the personification of the water and the blood’ *The Epistles of John* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 1978), p. 237n.] Moreover, the words ‘that one’ (*to hen*) in verse 8 have no antecedent if verse 7 is omitted, [Marshall calls this construction ‘unparalleled,’ p. 237] whereas if verse 7 is retained, then the antecedent is ‘these three are one’ (*to hen*)” (Strouse, *A Critique of D.A. Carson’s The King James Version Debate*).

The grammatical argument has been treated lightly by modern textual critics, but its importance was understood by GREGORY NAZIANZUS (Oration XXXII: Fifth Theological Oration: “On the Holy Spirit,” A.D. 390; see Michael Maynard, *A History of the Debate over 1 John 5:7-8*), FREDERIC NOLAN (*An Inquiry into the Integrity of the Greek Vulgate or Received Text of the New Testament*, 1815), ROBERT DABNEY (“The Doctrinal Various Readings of the New Testament Greek,” 1891), THOMAS MIDDLETON (*The Doctrine of the Greek article: applied to the criticism and illustration of the New Testament*, 1833), MATTHEW HENRY (Commentary on the Whole Bible, 1706), EDWARD F. HILLS (*The King James Bible Defended: a Space-age Defense of the Historic Christian Faith*, 1956), LOUIS GAUSSEN (*The Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures*, 1934), to name a few. I take my stand with these men.

Consider, too, **THE ARGUMENT FROM THE PURPOSE OF JOHN’S WRITINGS AND OF THE NATURE OF THOSE TIMES**.

“Regarding the issue at hand, such a distinct literary/historical

coherence fully supports the inclusion of the *Johannine Comma*. The resounding theme of the Gospel of John is the divinity of Jesus Christ. Such is summed up in John 10:30, when Jesus says, 'I and my Father are one.' This same theme is prevalent in the Epistle, being concisely and clearly stated in 5:7-8. The Comma truly bears coherence with the message of John's Gospel in this sense. It serves as an occasion to introduce the doctrine of the Trinity as the original readers prepared to study the attached Gospel. Although Christ's divinity is inferred throughout the epistle, one is not confronted with such succinct declaration as is conveyed in the Comma. If this passage is omitted, it seems that the theme of John's Gospel would lack a proper introduction.

"It is interesting to note that one of the earliest allusions to the *Johannine Comma* in church history is promulgated in connection to the thematic statement made by the Lord in John 10:30. [The fact that this allusion was made less than two centuries after the completion of the New Testament serves as convincing external evidence for the authenticity of the *Johannine Comma*.] Cyprian writes around A.D. 250, 'The Lord says "I and the Father are one" and likewise it is written of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, "And these three are one."' [The *Ante-Nicene Fathers: Translations of the Writings of the Church Fathers Down to A.D. 325* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1926), 5:423.] The theological teaching of the Comma most definitely bears coherence with the overriding theme of John's Gospel. There is no reason to believe that the verse is not genuine in this sense, for it serves as a proper prelude to the theme of the Gospel which, historically speaking, most likely accompanied the Epistle as it was sent out to its original audience.

"The heresy of Gnosticism is also of notable importance with regard to the historical context surrounding the *Johannine Comma*. This 'unethical intellectualism' had begun to make inroads among churches in John's day; its influence would continue to grow up until the second century when it gave pure Christianity a giant struggle. [Robertson, 6:200] Generally speaking, Gnosticism can be described as a variety of syncretic religious movements in the early period of church history that sought to answer the question, 'What must I do to be saved?' The Gnostic answer was that a person must possess a secret knowledge. Proponents of Gnosticism claimed to possess a superior knowledge and so were called Gnostics.] One of

the major tenets of Gnosticism was the essential evil of matter; the physical body, in other words, was viewed as evil. According to this line of thought, Jesus Christ could not have been fully God and fully man, for this would have required him to possess an evil physical body.

“The seeds of the Gnostic heresy seem to be before John’s mind in his first epistle; nine times he gives tests for knowing truth in conjunction with the verb *ginosko* (to know). [1 John 2:3, 5; 3:16, 19, 24; 4:2, 6, 13; 5:2] This being said, the *Johannine Comma* would have constituted an integral component of the case the Apostle made against the false teachings of the Gnostics, especially with regard to the nature of Christ. Robertson notes that John’s Gospel was written to prove the deity of Christ, assuming his humanity, while 1 John was written to prove the humanity of Christ, assuming his deity. [Robertson, 6:201] He goes on to say, ‘Certainly both ideas appear in both books.’ If these notions are true, then the Comma is important to John’s polemic. Jesus Christ, the human Son of God, is the eternal, living Word (cf. John 1:1). The Word, along with the Father and the Holy Spirit, bears witness to ‘he that came by water and blood,’ even Jesus Christ (1 John 5:6). This assertion would have flown right into the face of Gnosticism” (Jesse M. Boyd, “And These Three Are One: A Case for the Authenticity of 1 John 5:7-8,” 1999, <http://www.ovrInd.com/Bible/casefor1john57.html>).

Consider, too, ***THE ARGUMENT FROM THE GREEK LECTIONARIES AND PRINTED BIBLES***. It is a fascinating fact that though the majority of extant Greek manuscripts do not contain 1 John 5:7, many of the lectionaries of the Greek Orthodox Church do contain it, as do the printed Greek Bibles. The lectionaries are Scripture passages organized to be read in the churches. This is an important fact, because it is not reasonable to believe that the Greek Orthodox Church would “correct” its own text from Latin.

1 John 5:7 was in the *Apostolos* or *Collection of Lessons* (**5th century**), “read in the Greek Church, out of the Apostolical Epistles, and printed at Venice, An. 1602. *Velut ab Antiquis seculis recepta Lectio*, says Selden de Synedriis, l.2, c.4. Art. 4. This Lectionary is as old as the fifth century. Vide Millii Prol. 1054, and Mr. Martin’s *Dissertation*, Part I. c. 13” (Leonard Twells, *A Critical*

Examination of the Late New Text and Version of the New Testament, 1731, II, p. 129).

1 John 5:7 was in the lectionary *Ordo Romanus* (**A.D. 730**) (Twells, II, p. 133). The Trinitarian text was to be read between Easter and Whitsuntide, “as we learn from Durandus, a writer of the fourteenth century, in his *Rationale of Divine Offices*.”

The Greek Orthodox Church’s printed New Testaments, both ancient and modern, contain 1 John 5:7. Again, it not possible to believe that they would include this on the basis of anything other than evidence from Greek manuscripts. Being keepers of the Greek language, they would despise the Latin.

Another consideration is **THE ARGUMENT FROM THE LATIN MANUSCRIPT RECORD**. The majority of Latin New Testament manuscripts from the past 900 years contain 1 John 5:7. Further, some of the most ancient also contain it. “It is not true, that the most ancient Latin MSS. Of the New Testament want the celebrated passage of 1 John 5:7. For the Bible of Charlemagne revised and corrected by the learned Alcuin, has that text by the confession of our adversaries, and they have not been able to produce an older MS. where it is missing. The only pretended one of this sort, is Mabillon’s Lectionary, which after all is not strictly a MS. of the New Testament, nor written in Latin but in a mixed language, called Teutonick-French, or Gallo-Teutonick” (Twells, II, p. 153).

THE ARGUMENT FROM THE WRITINGS OF ANCIENT CHURCH LEADERS. In “The Modern Bible Version Question-Answer Database” we give quotations from 18 writers who approved the *Johannine Comma* from the 3rd to the 10th centuries. For example, Athanasius (c. 350 A.D.) quotes it at least three times in his works (R.E. Brown, *The Anchor Bible*, Epistles of John, 1982, p. 782). “Among the works of Athanasius which are generally allowed to be genuine, is a Synopsis of this Epistle. In his summary of the fifth chapter, he seems plainly to refer to this verse, when he says, ‘The Apostle here teaches, the unity of the Son with the Father’ [Du Pin, Art. “Athanasius,” London Edition, vol. 8, p. 34]. But it would be difficult to find any place in this chapter where this unity is taught, save in the seventh verse” (*Remarks on the Authenticity of 1 John v. 7*).

Leonard Twells comments that “we find no one Latin writer complaining of this passage (which appears to have been extant in many copies from the fifth century inclusive) as an interpolation, which is a very good negative evidence, that no just objection could be made to its genuineness. The Preface of Jerome blames some translators for omitting it, but till the days of Erasmus, the insertion of it was never deemed a fault” (Twells, II, p. 138).

THE ARGUMENT FROM THE COUNCIL OF CARTHAGE.

Eugenius, spokesman for the African bishops at the Council of Carthage (485 A.D.), quoted 1 John 5:7 in defense of the deity of Jesus Christ against the Arians. The bishops, numbering three to four hundred, were from Mauritania, Sardinia, Corsica, and the Balearick Isles, and they stood in defense of the Trinity. They “pawned their lives as well as reputation, for the verity of that disputed passage” (Twells, II, p. 147). Eugenius said: “...and in order that we may teach until now, more clearly than light, that the Holy Spirit is now one divinity with the Father and the Son. It is proved by the evangelist John, for he says, ‘there are three which bear testimony in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one’” In spite of claims to the contrary by those who oppose the *Johannine Comma*, the fact that 1 John 5:7 was quoted at the fifth century Council of Carthage is a nearly irrefutable argument in favor of its apostolic authenticity. “Charles Butler, in *Horae Biblicae* [Part II, *A Short Historical Outline of the Disputes Respecting the Authenticity of the Verse of the Three Heavenly Witnesses of 1 John*, 1807], offered an interesting 12-point rebuttal to the opposers of the *Comma*. Such is a lengthy treatise and will not be employed word for word but adequately summarized. Butler pointed out that the Catholic Bishops were summoned to a conference where they most certainly expected the tenets of their faith to be attacked by the Arians (the Arians denied the deity of Jesus Christ). Therefore, they would have been very careful about what they included in their proposed confession, seeing as all power was in the hands of their angry Arian adversaries. The bishops included the *Johannine Comma* as a first line of defense for their confession of Christ’s deity. If the Arians could have argued what present-day opposers of the verse say (the *Comma* was is no Greek copy and in only a few Latin copies), what would the bishops have replied? If we are to believe that they were unable to hold out one Greek copy, no ancient Latin copy, and no ancient father where the verse could be found, THE ARIANS

COULD HAVE RIGHTLY ACCUSED THEM ON THE SPOT OF FOLLOWING A SPURIOUS PASSAGE AND BEING GUILTY OF PALPABLE FALSEHOOD. It is almost certain that these bishops would not have exposed themselves to such immediate and indelible infamy. They volunteered to include the *Comma* in their confession despite the existence of many long treatises that had been written by the ancient defenders of the Trinity in which the verse had not been mentioned. Such treatises would have served as ample evidence, but the bishops cited 1 John 5:7-8 instead. Obviously, they had no fear that any claim of spuriousness could be legitimately dashed upon them. If the verse were attacked, the bishops could have produced Greek copies, ancient Latin copies, and ancient fathers in its defense. The *Comma*, however, was not attacked by the Arians and the Catholic bishops (302 of them) were exiled to different parts of Africa, exposed to the insults of their enemies, and carefully deprived of all temporal and spiritual comforts of life. It is ludicrous to think that these men could undergo such persecution and suffering for their belief of the deity of Jesus Christ only to insert a spurious verse into God's Word as their first line of defense. THE AFRICAN BISHOPS MUST HAVE HAD WEIGHTY TESTIMONY TO THE *COMMA* IN THEIR MANUSCRIPTS. AS A RESULT, THEY WERE ABLE TO SUCCESSFULLY EMPLOY THE PASSAGE AS THEY DEFENDED THEIR FAITH BEFORE THE ARIAN ACCUSERS" (Jesse Boyd, *And These Three Are One: A Case for the Authenticity of 1 John 5:7-8 Rooted in Biblical Exegesis*, 1999).

THE ARGUMENT FROM THE ASSEMBLY GATHERED BY CHARLEMAGNE. "About the close of the eighth century, the Emperor Charlemagne assembled all the learned men that were to be found in that age, and placed Alciunus, an Englishman of great erudition, at their head; instructing them to revise the manuscripts of the Bible then in use, to settle the text, and to rectify the errors which had crept into it, through the haste or the ignorance of transcribers. To affect this great purpose, he furnished them with every manuscript that could be procured throughout his very extensive dominions. IN THEIR *CORRECTORIUM*, THE RESULT OF THEIR UNITED LABOURS, WHICH WAS PRESENTED IN PUBLIC TO THE EMPEROR, BY ALCIUNUS, THE TESTIMONY OF THE THREE (HEAVENLY) WITNESSES IS READ WITHOUT THE SMALLEST IMPEACHMENT OF ITS AUTHENTICITY. This very volume Baronius affirms to have been extant at Rome in his

lifetime,* in the library of the Abbey of Vaux-Celles; and he styles it 'a treasure of inestimable value.' [* He was born in or about A.D. 1538, and died in A.D. 1607. Du Pin confirms this account of Baronius, v. vi. p. 122. Travis p. 24.] It cannot be supposed, that these divines, assembled under the auspices of a prince zealous for the restoration of learning, would attempt to settle the text of the New Testament, without referring to the Greek original; especially since we know, that there were, at that time, persons eminently skilled in the Greek language. **THEY MUST HAVE HAD ACCESS TO PERUSE MANUSCRIPTS WHICH HAVE LONG SINCE PERISHED; AND THEIR RESEARCHES MIGHT IN ALL PROBABILITY EXTEND EVEN TO THE AGE OF THE APOSTLES.** Here, then, is evidence, that this verse has been acknowledged as a part of Scripture, during more than a thousand years" (Robert Jack, *Remarks on the Authenticity of 1 John v. 7*, <http://www.1john57.com/RJack.htm>).

THE ARGUMENT FROM ITS PRESERVATION AMONG BIBLE BELIEVERS. The Lord Jesus Christ indicated that His Words would be preserved through the process of the Great Commission, as the Scriptures were received, kept, taught, and passed on to the next generation by Bible-believing churches (Matt. 28:18-20). This is guaranteed by the Christ's power and his continual presence among the churches. When we look at church history in this light, the issue of 1 John 5:7 becomes plainer. Consider some of the versional evidence in favor of this verse:

1 John 5:7 was in the **old Latin** that was used by Bible believers in Europe. Dr. Frederick Nolan (1784-1864) spent 28 years tracing the history of the European Italic or Old Latin version and in 1815 published his findings in *An Inquiry into the Integrity of the Greek Vulgate or Received Text of the New Testament, in which the Greek manuscripts are newly classed, the integrity of the Authorised Text vindicated, and the various readings traced to their origin*. Nolan believed that the old Latin got its name Italic from the churches in northern Italy that remained separated from Rome and that this text was maintained by separatist Waldensian believers. He concluded that 1 John 5:7 "was adopted in the version which prevailed in the Latin Church, previously to the introduction of the modern Vulgate" (Nolan, *Integrity of the Greek Vulgate*, pp. xvii, xviii).

1 John 5:7 was in the **Latin "vulgate"** that had a wide influence

throughout the Dark Ages. The Catholic Church used it, but so did many non-Catholic believers. Bruce Metzger observes that the oldest manuscript of the Jerome vulgate, Codex Fuldensis (A.D. 546), does not include the Johannine Comma; but this fact is overwhelmed by other evidence. For one, we have seen that Jerome himself believed 1 John 5:7 was genuine Scripture and testified that heretics had removed it from some manuscripts. Second, 1 John 5:7 is found in the vast majority of extant Latin manuscripts, 49 out of every 50, according to Scrivener. Third, 1 John 5:7 is found in many of the most ancient Latin manuscripts, such as Ulmensis (c. 850) and Toletanus (988). The *Johannine Comma* is found “in twenty-nine of the fairest, oldest, and most correct of extant Vulgate manuscripts” (Maynard, *A History of the Debate over 1 John 5:7-8*, p. 343).

1 John 5:7 was in the **Romaunt or Occitan** New Testaments used by the Waldenses dating back to the 12th century. This was the language of the troubadours and men of letters in the Dark Ages. It was the predecessor of French and Italian. The Romaunt Bibles were small and plain, designed for missionary work. “This version was widely spread in the south of France, and in the cities of Lombardy. It was in common use among the Waldenses of Piedmont, and it was no small part, doubtless, of the testimony borne to truth by these mountaineers to preserve and circulate it” (J. Wylie, *History of Protestantism*, vol. 1, chapter 7, “The Waldenses”). The following is from Justin Savino <dojustly@sbcglobal.net>, May 11, 2005: “The Zurich codex [of the Romaunt New Testament] I have that is similar to the Dublin a Grenoble (or so I am told) does have 1 John 5:7. The direct quote is “Car trey son que donan testimoni al cel lo payre e lo filh e lo sant spirit e aquesti trey son un,” translated, “but three are there that give testimony in heaven the father and the son and the holy spirit and these three are one.”

1 John 5:7 was in the **Tepl**, which is an old German translation used by Waldenses from the 14th through the 15 centuries. Comba, who wrote a history of the Waldenses, said the Tepl was a Waldensian translation (Comba, *Waldenses of Italy*, pp. 190-192). The Tepl’s size identifies it with the small Bibles carried by the Waldensian evangelists on their dangerous journeys across Europe.

1 John 5:7 was in the old **French** translations. A translation of the

whole Bible in **French** first appeared in the 13th century, and “a much used version of the whole Bible was published in 1487 by Jean de Rely” (Norlie, *The Translated Bible*, p. 52).

1 John 5:7 was in the old **German** translations, which first appeared in the 13th and 14th centuries. A complete German Bible appeared before the invention of printing (Norlie, p. 53). There were at least 12 different editions of the Bible into German before the discovery of America in 1492. The first printed German Bible appeared in 1466 (Price, *The Ancestry of Our English Bible*, 1934, p. 243). These were Latin-based versions.

1 John 5:7 was in the **Spanish** Bibles, beginning with the one printed in Valencia in 1478 by Bonifacio Ferrer (M’Crie, *History of the Reformation in Spain*, p. 191).

It is probable that 1 John 5:7 was in the **Bohemian** or **Czech** Bible printed by the Brethren in 1488.

1 John 5:7 stood uncontested in **English** Bibles for 500 years. The first English New Testament, completed by John Wycliffe and his co-laborers in 1380, contained this verse. The *Johannine Comma* was in the Tyndale New Testament of 1526, the Coverdale of 1535, the Matthew’s of 1537, the Great Bible of 1539, the Geneva of 1557, the Bishops of 1568, and the King James Bible of 1611. The first English Bible of any importance to remove the verse was the Revised Version of 1881 and the first English Bible which had any chance of superseding the KJV to remove 1 John 5:7 was the New International Version of 1973 and this version has still not taken over the sales of the King James Bible. From the time of the British Empire to the present, English has been a prominent world language. It is the international language in these modern times, the language of commerce, aviation, and science. The witness of the English Bible, therefore, has great significance.

Thus we see that the Trinitarian statement of 1 John 5:7 comes down to us by the hands of Bible believers and churches that held the apostolic faith at great cost through the Dark Ages, through the Protestant Reformation, up to our very day. In light of Matthew 28:19-20, this is a strong witness to its apostolic authenticity.

THE ARGUMENT FROM THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THOSE TIMES. The following is excerpted from Robert Lewis Dabney,

“The Doctrinal Various Readings of the New Testament Greek,” *Discussions: Evangelical and Theological*, Vol. 1, 1891, p. 350-390). This first appeared in the *Southern Presbyterian Review*, April 1871: “We must also consider the time and circumstances in which the passage was written. John tells his spiritual children that his object is to warn them against seducers (2.26), whose heresy was a denial of the proper Sonship and incarnation (4.2) of Jesus Christ. We know that these heretics were Corinthians and Nicolaitans. Irenaeus and other early writers tell us that they all vitiated the doctrine of the Trinity. Cerinthus taught that Jesus was not miraculously born of a virgin, and that the Word, Christ, was not truly and eternally divine, but a sort of angelic ‘Aion’ associated with the natural man Jesus up to his crucifixion. The Nicolaitans denied that the ‘Aion’ Christ had a real body, and ascribed to him only a phantasmal body and blood. It is against these errors that John is fortifying his ‘children’ and this is the very point of the disputed 7th verse. If it stands, then the whole passage is framed to exclude both heresies. In verse 7 he refutes the Corinthian by declaring the unity of Father, Word and Spirit, and with the strictest accuracy employing the neuter HEN EISIN to fix the point which Cerinthus denied--the unity of the Three Persons in One common substance. He then refutes the Nicolaitans by declaring the proper humanity of Jesus, and the actual shedding, and application by the Spirit, of that water and blood of which he testifies as on eyewitness in the Gospel.

THE ARGUMENT FROM THE SILENCE OF 1500 YEARS OF CHURCH HISTORY. “It is an observation, we apprehend, of considerable importance, on this part of the subject, that till we descend to modern times, no objection was ever advanced against the authenticity of the verse in question. Jerome complains of the omission of it by unfaithful translators; and declares, that the best Greek manuscripts of his time contained it; for he appeals, as we have seen, in behalf of his version, to the authority of these manuscripts. Jerome died A.D. 420, and ever since his days, the verse has not only maintained its place in the Scriptures, but has been uniformly quoted and referred to, by writers of the first eminence for learning and integrity, in every succeeding age. If we should suppose for a moment, that it is spurious, is it not wonderful that this was never discovered till modern times? Is it not wonderful, that during the period of one thousand four hundred years, which intervened between the days of Praxeas and

the age of Erasmus, not a single author can be mentioned who ever charged this verse with being an interpolation or forgery. Had it been, in any of those ages, even suspected to be spurious, would its adversaries, especially the Arians, have been merely silent when it was produced against them? Would they not have exclaimed aloud against those who quoted it? Would they not have filled the Christian world with invectives against them, for their falsehood and impiety, in thus attempting to corrupt the Word of God? That the Arians in those times never pretended to deny the authenticity of the verse in question, is a phenomenon which should be accounted for by those who contend that it is spurious” (*Remarks on the Authenticity of 1 John v. 7*, <http://www.1john57.com/RJack.htm>).

THE ARGUMENT FROM THE FACT THAT IT WAS HERETICS AND UNBELIEVERS WHO WERE AT THE FOREFRONT OF THE CALL FOR THE REMOVAL OF 1 JOHN 5:7 IN THE 17TH TO THE 19TH CENTURIES. We have seen that there was no serious challenge to the authenticity of 1 John 5:7 throughout the church age until the 19th century, but who was it in the 19th century that was calling so loudly for its removal from the Bible? It was theological modernists and Unitarians who were at the forefront of the call for the removal of “God” from 1 Timothy 3:16 and the *Johannine Comma* from 1 John 5:7. Does this not speak loudly in favor of these passages? We have documented this history extensively in *The Modern Bible Version’s Hall of Shame*.

Terence Brown, the former editorial secretary of the Trinitarian Bible Society of London, England, made this observation: “The last century has witnessed a steady drift away from the deity of Christ and towards ‘unitarianism’. It is not surprising that scholars who have been caught up in this tide of unbelief should welcome the support of these unreliable documents” (Brown, *God Was Manifest in the Flesh*, Trinitarian Bible Society, nd).

One of the first to attack 1 John 5:7 was an Arian named Sandius, in 1670.

The next attack came from the pen of Roman Catholic priest Richard Simon in the book *Histoire Criticque du Vieux Testament* (*Critical History of the Old Testament*), published in 1678. Simon was a forerunner of German higher criticism, denying that Moses was the author of the Pentateuch.

Another attack upon 1 John 5:7 came from the pen of the famous historian Edward Gibbon (1737-94) in *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776, 1788). He argued that Christians added the Trinitarian statement and other things to the New Testament centuries after it was first written. Gibbon was a skeptic after the fashion of Voltaire and did not believe in the divine inspiration of the Scriptures.

The modernist Johann Semler published an attack upon 1 John 5:7 entitled, *Historical and Critical Collections, relative to what are called the proof passages in dogmatic theology*, Vol. I. on 1 John v. 7.

The Unitarians loved the critical Greek text from the earliest days of modern textual criticism. When the Unitarian Book Society was formed, one of its main objects was the publication of an 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” (Wilbur, *A History of Unitarianism*, p. 339), such as “God” in 1 Tim. 3:16 and the Trinitarian statement in 1 John 5:7.

Officials at Harvard College in 1809 published an American edition of Griesbach’s critical Greek N.T., because its text criticism was “a most powerful weapon to be used against the supporters of verbal inspiration” (Theodore Letis, *The Ecclesiastical Text*, p. 2). This was about the time that Harvard capitulated to Unitarianism. Thus, the enemies of Biblical inspiration understood in that day that modern textual criticism weakens key doctrines and undermines the authority of the Bible.

In the 17th to 19th centuries the lines were clearly drawn, and those who believed the Bible and stood for evangelical Bible doctrine were on the side of 1 John 5:7, while those who were heretical in doctrine and/or agnostic in faith that were aligned against it. There were exceptions, but this was definitely the rule.

The battle was only lost in the 20th century when “Christianity” was dramatically weakened by the onslaught of end-times heresy and compromise.

WHY DID THIS TRINITARIAN TESTIMONY DROP OUT OF MOST EXTANT GREEK MANUSCRIPTS? The omission in the Greek manuscripts was probably brought about by the heresy of Sabellianism or Arianism.

Dr. Edward F. Hills argued that the omission arose during the Sabellian controversy. "In the second place, it must be remembered that during the 2nd and 3rd centuries (between 220 and 270, according to Harnack), the heresy which orthodox Christians were called upon to combat was not Arianism (since this error had not yet arisen) but Sabellianism (so named after Sabellius, one of its principal promoters), according to which the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit were one in the sense that they were identical. Those that advocated this heretical view were called Patripassians (Father-sufferers), because they believed that God the Father, being identical with Christ, suffered and died upon the cross, and Monarchians, because they claimed to uphold the Monarchy (sole-government) of God. It is possible, therefore, that the Sabellian heresy brought the *Johannine comma* into disfavor with orthodox Christians. The statement, these three are one, no doubt seemed to them to teach the Sabellian view that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit were identical. And if during the course of the controversy manuscripts were discovered which had lost this reading in the accidental manner described above, it is easy to see how the orthodox party would consider these mutilated manuscripts to represent the true text and regard the *Johannine comma* as a heretical addition. In the Greek-speaking East especially the *comma* would be unanimously rejected, for here the struggle against Sabellianism was particularly severe. Thus it was not impossible that during the 3rd century amid the stress and strain of the Sabellian controversy, the *Johannine comma* lost its place in the Greek text but was preserved in the Latin texts of Africa and Spain, where the influence of Sabellianism was probably not so great" (Edward Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, pp. 212, 213).

It is also possible that the Arians corrupted this passage of Scripture.

CONCLUDING POINT: THERE IS A STRANGE HYPOCRISY TO THE CLAIM BY TEXTUAL CRITICS THAT 1 JOHN 5:7 HAS SLIGHT TEXTUAL AUTHORITY. Whereas the Received

Text does contain a few readings that have small support in the Greek manuscripts (but are represented broadly in the Latin), the Critical Greek Text contains HUNDREDS of readings that have small support in both the Greek and the Latin manuscripts! One of the principles of Westcott and Hort was this: “A few documents are not, by reason of their paucity, appreciably less likely to be right than a multitude opposed to them” (Introduction to the Westcott-Hort Greek New Testament, 1881, p. 45).

The United Bible Societies Greek New Testament, the latest edition of the Westcott-Hort text, repeatedly questions and omits verses with far less textual authority than the Trinitarian statement of 1 John 5:7. Most of the significant omissions are made on the authority of Aleph and B (sometimes both together; sometimes one standing alone), and a bare handful of similar manuscripts and versions.

For example, the word “fasting” is removed from Mark 9:29 in the Westcott-Hort text, the Nestles’ text, the UBS text, and all of the modern versions on the “authority” of its omission in Aleph, B, two minuscules (0274, 2427), one Old Latin, and the Georgian version.

The entire last 12 verses of the Gospel of Mark are omitted are seriously questioned on the “authority” of only three Greek manuscripts, Aleph, B, and the minuscule 304 (plus some slight witness by versions that were influenced by the Alexandrian Text).

The UBS text puts Matthew 21:44 in brackets on the “authority” of only one uncial (the terribly unreliable D), one minuscule, plus 7 Old Latin and one Syriac manuscripts. This is flimsy textual authority, to say the least.

Sometimes, in fact, the modern textual critics don’t have even this much “authority” for their changes. 104 times in the book of Matthew, the 3rd edition of the UBS Greek N.T. prints a reading that either is “found in no manuscript (34 times) or is found in only one Greek manuscript of the more than 5,300 existing” (Wilbur Pickering, *Some Relevant Considerations for New Testament Textual Criticism*, from his web site, <http://www.esgm.org/ingles/imenu.html>).

I, for one, believe the apostle John wrote the Trinitarian statement in 1 John 5:7 under divine inspiration.

A recommended resource for further study is Michael Maynard, *A History of the Debate over 1 John 5:7-8: a tracing of the longevity of the Comma Johanneum, with evaluations of arguments against its authenticity* (Tempe, AZ: Comma Publications, 1995).

**MYTH: ERASMUS PROMISED TO INSERT THE
JOHANNINE COMMA IF A GREEK MANUSCRIPT WAS
PRODUCED AND CHALLENGED EDWARD LEE TO FIND A
MANUSCRIPT THAT INCLUDED THIS PASSAGE**

There are two popular myths regarding Erasmus and 1 John 5:7 that are parroted by modernists, evangelicals, and even fundamentalists today who defend the modern versions against the KJV.

The first myth is that Erasmus promised to insert the verse if a Greek manuscript were produced. This is stated as follows by Bruce Metzger: “Erasmus promised that he would insert *the Comma Johanneum*, as it is called, in future editions if a single Greek manuscript could be found that contained the passage. At length such a copy was found--or made to order” (Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, 1st and 2nd editions).

The second myth is that Erasmus challenged Edward Lee to find a Greek manuscript that included 1 John 5:7. This originated with Erika Rummel in 1986 in her book *Erasmus' Annotations* and was repeated by James White in 1995 (*The Truth about the KJV-Only Controversy*).

In *A History of the Debate over 1 John 5:7,8*, Michael Maynard records that H.J. de Jonge, the Dean of the Faculty of Theology at Rijksuniversiteit (Leiden, Netherlands), has refuted both myths. de Jonge, a recognized specialist in Erasmian studies, refuted the myth of a promise in 1980, stating that Metzger's view on Erasmus' promise “has no foundation in Erasmus' work. Consequently it is highly improbable that he included the difficult passage because he considered himself bound by any such promise.” He has also refuted the new myth of a challenge (which Rummel devised in reaction to the burial of the promise myth). In a letter of June 13, 1995, to Maynard, de Jonge wrote:

I have checked again Erasmus' words quoted by Erika Rummel and her comments on them in her book *Erasmus' Annotations*. This is what Erasmus writes [on] in his *Liber tertius quo*

respondet ... Ed. Lei: Erasmus first records that Lee had reproached him with neglect of the MSS. of 1 John because Er. (according to Lee) had consulted only one MS. Erasmus replies that he had certainly not used only one ms., but many copies, first in England, then in Brabant, and finally at Basle. He cannot accept, therefore, Lee's reproach of negligence and impiety.

'Is it negligence and impiety, if I did not consult manuscripts which were simply not within my reach? I have at least assembled whatever I could assemble. Let Lee produce a Greek MS. which contains what my edition does not contain and let him show that that manuscript was within my reach. Only then can he reproach me with negligence in sacred matters.'

From this passage you can see that Erasmus does not challenge Lee to produce a manuscript etc. What Erasmus argues is that Lee may only reproach Erasmus with negligence of MSS if he demonstrates that Erasmus could have consulted any MS. in which the *Comma Johanneum* figured. Erasmus does not at all ask for a MS. containing the *Comma Johanneum*. He denies Lee the right to call him negligent and impious if the latter does not prove that Erasmus neglected a manuscript to which he had access.

In short, Rummel's interpretation is simply wrong. The passage she quotes has nothing to do with a challenge. Also, she cuts the quotation short, so that the real sense of the passage becomes unrecognizable. She is absolutely not justified in speaking of a challenge in this case or in the case of any other passage on the subject (emphasis in original) (de Jonge, cited from Maynard, p. 383).

Jeffrey Khoo observes further: "Yale professor Roland Bainton, another Erasmian expert, agrees with de Jonge, furnishing proof from Erasmus' own writing that Erasmus' inclusion of 1 John 5:7f was not due to a so-called 'promise' but the fact that he believed 'the verse was in the Vulgate and must therefore have been in the Greek text used by Jerome'" (Jeffrey Khoo, *Kept Pure in All Ages*, 2001, p. 88).

Edward F. Hills, who had a doctorate in textual criticism from Harvard, testifies: "...it was not trickery that was responsible for the inclusion of the *Johannine Comma* in the Textus Receptus, but the usage of the Latin speaking Church" (Hills, *The King James Version Defended*).

In the 3rd edition of *The Text of the New Testament* Bruce Metzger corrected his false assertion about Erasmus as follows: "What is

said on p. 101 above about Erasmus' promise to include the *Comma Johanneum* if one Greek manuscript were found that contained it, and his subsequent suspicion that MS 61 was written expressly to force him to do so, needs to be corrected in the light of the research of H. J. DeJonge, a specialist in Erasmian studies who finds no explicit evidence that supports this frequently made assertion" (Metzger, *The Text of The New Testament*, 3rd edition, p. 291, footnote 2). The problem is that this myth continues to be paraded as truth by modern version defenders.

MYTH: IT IS 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 A.T. ROBERTSON AND B.B. WARFIELD IN THIS ARENA.

ANSWER:

The Modernists, Unitarians, and heretics are the rule in this field, whereas the evangelicals are the exception. We have documented this extensively in the 295-page book *The Modern Bible Version Hall of Shame*, available from Way of Life Literature, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143.

Further, evangelicals did not invent modern textual criticism; they borrowed it from the skeptics. Presbyterian leader Robert Dabney warned that evangelicals who accepted textual criticism adopted it "from the mint of infidel rationalism" (Dabney, "The Doctrinal Various Readings of the New Testament Greek," *Discussions Evangelical and Theological*, pp. 361; this first appeared in the *Southern Presbyterian Review*, April 1871).

Though they are not the inventors of modern textual criticism, evangelicals such as Samuel Tregelles have acted as popularizers of textual criticism. In our book *For Love of the Bible* we have shown that Bible believers in general were very resistant to modern textual criticism from the time of its first appearance in the late 18th century throughout the 19th. Tregelles became a much-needed "evangelical face" for modern textual criticism in England, helping to popularize it among Bible believers who were leery of the theological modernists and Unitarians who dominated the field. Bruce Metzger observed: "In England the scholar who, at the middle of the nineteenth century, was most successful in drawing

British preference away from the Textus Receptus was Samuel Prideaux Tregelles” (*The Text of the New Testament*, 1968, p. 127). In America it was Charles Hodge, B.B. Warfield, and A.T. Robertson who became the evangelical faces in popularizing modern textual criticism.

In the book *The Modern Version Hall of Shame* we have included studies on Samuel Tregelles, B.B. Warfield, Charles Hodge, A.T. Robertson, and other evangelical textual critics.

MYTH: IT DOESN'T MATTER IF THE INFLUENTIAL NAMES IN MODERN TEXTUAL CRITICISM ARE SKEPTICS.

The authors of the book *From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man*, who are fundamentalists associated with Bob Jones University, claim that the skepticism that has dominated the field of modern textual criticism since its inception does not matter. “... a textual critic may be an unbeliever when it comes to the Bible’s doctrinal truths. But when it comes to the Bible’s text--to this question of the Bible’s words--a textual critic is initially little more than a reporter” (*From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man*, p. 71)

ANSWER:

First, the Bible warns that unbelievers do not have spiritual discernment, and it is impossible to know the truth pertaining to the Scripture apart from such discernment (1 Cor. 2:14; 2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:2). The statement in *From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man* would be true if we were talking about a secular book, but the Bible is a spiritual Book and can only be handled properly by spiritual people.

Further, God demands that His people separate from heretics and apostasy (Rom. 16:17; 2 Cor. 6:14-17; 2 Tim. 3:5; 2 John 10-11). Why would the Lord give such instruction and then raise up heretics and apostates to lead His people in the most crucial and foundational matters pertaining to the Bible?

Any attempt to bring men such as Erasmus into this subject on the side of the Traditional Text is a smokescreen because, though Erasmus was admittedly weak in faith (though not as weak as some have made out), men such as this were in the minority in the transmission of the Traditional Greek text.

MYTHS PERTAINING TO THE MODERN ENGLISH VERSIONS

MYTH: THE NEW KING JAMES BIBLE IS MERELY AN UPDATE OF THE KING JAMES BIBLE.

I wish we could recommend the New King James Version (NKJV), because I have great sympathy with the plight of those who read English as a second language and have trouble with the antiquation of the King James. As missionaries in South Asia we have worked closely with such people for many years and many personal friends fall into this category, and the difficulty they have with the King James is very real. Yet I cannot recommend the NKJV for the following reasons:

ANSWER:

1. The New King James Version (NKJV) is a deception.

The editors and translators of the NKJV claim that they are standing in the tradition of the men who originally produced the Authorized Version and who slightly revised it in the 18th century, that they are only making minor updates and that they remain firmly committed to the same Greek and Hebrew texts as that underlying the original King James Bible. The advertisements for the NKJV would have its readers believe that there are no textual changes and that the men who produced it truly love the old King James Bible. The Statement of Purpose issued by Thomas Nelson, publishers of the New King James Bible New Testament (1979), makes the following claim:

“Not to add to, take from, nor alter the communication intended by the original translators, but to convey that communication in 20th century vocabulary and usage.”

This says to me that the translators and producers of the NKJV are committed to PRECISELY the same text as that underlying the King James Bible, but this is not the case, for the translators of the New King James Version were *not* committed to the Received Text and the KJV.

We have corresponded with the executive editor of the Old Testament portion of the NKJV, Dr. James Price. In April 1996 he

admitted to me that he is not committed to the Received Text and that he supports the modern critical text in general:

With men like this involved; yea in charge; it is not possible that the New King James Bible could be merely a simple revision of the KJV. I do not know of one man involved with the translation of the NKJV who has a conviction about the absolute authority of the Old and New Testament texts underlying the KJV.

Dr. Price told me that the NKJV translators did not solely follow the Masoretic Hebrew text in the Old Testament of the NKJV but that they introduced textual changes. This is born out in the Preface to the NKJV, which says the New King James Bible modifies the Masoretic Hebrew with the Septuagint, the Latin Vulgate, “a variety of ancient versions,” and the Dead Sea Scrolls (*New King James Bible*, Preface).

At least some of the editors of the NKJV are committed to the so-called “Majority Text,” which makes significant departures from the Greek Received Text of the Reformation Bibles.

In 1982, Thomas Nelson published “The Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text.” The editors, Zane Hodges and Arthur Farstad, were also key players in the New King James Version project. There are almost 1,900 differences between the Received Text and the Hodges-Farstad Majority Text. The deletion of 1 John 5:7 is an example. The translators of the Authorized Version accepted this passage as inspired Scripture and they placed it in the English Bible. The editors of the NKJV, on the other hand, do not believe 1 John 5:7 is Scripture, and they have omitted the passage from the Hodges-Farstad Majority Text, together with dozens of other portions of Scripture and hundreds of words. They have also cast great doubt upon this verse in the NKJV with an inaccurate marginal note. These men are definitely not committed to the Received Text or the King James Bible. Their goal is to modify it to bring it into line with their particular theories of textual criticism, which err by taking into consideration only the Greek manuscript evidence and ignoring the three other important sources of evidence, ancient translations, writings of ancient church leaders (the “church fathers”), and ancient lectionaries.

The Hodges-Farstad textual modifications were not actually introduced into the text of the New King James Bible, but the fact

that such men are its authors is a loud warning to those who believe the KJV Received Text is the preserved Word of God.

(A list of the omissions and changes proposed by the “majority text” view can be found in the back of the *Interlinear Bible* by Jay Green. A good refutation of the majority text position is available in Jack Moorman’s book *The Majority Text*, which is published by Bible for Today, 900 Park Ave., Collingswood, NJ 08108. 800-564-6109, BFT@BibleForToday.org.) See also our study on the Majority Text in “Faith vs. the Modern Bible Versions” and the article “Examining the Hodges-Farstad Majority Greek Text,” available in the Bible Version section of the Apostasy Database at the Way of Life web site, <http://www.wayoflife.org>.

2. The NKJV makes thousands of unnecessary changes.

There are an estimated 100,000 changes, averaging 80 per page. This was probably done for copyright purposes.

3. The NKJV makes many erroneous departures from the King James Bible. Following are some examples:

MATTHEW 7:14

KJV “Because STRAIT is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.”

NKJV “Because narrow is the gate and DIFFICULT is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.”

The word “difficult” in the NKJV (and “narrow” in the KJV) is a translation of the Greek word “thilbo.” Strong’s Concordance defines it as “to crowd (literally or figuratively).” In the KJV, this Greek word is translated “afflict,” “narrow,” “throng,” “suffer tribulation,” “trouble.” When referring to a path, it means that one’s way is restricted. Regardless of how it could be translated in other passages, it is the context of a word that always defines its meaning, and the context of Matthew 7:14 is salvation. We know from other passages that salvation is not difficult. Jesus said that to be saved one must come as a child (Lk. 18:17); but if salvation were difficult, as the NKJV says, it would not be possible for a little child to be saved. The Bible describes salvation in terms of coming (Mat. 11:28), drinking (Jn. 4:10), eating, (Jn. 6:35), and taking a gift (14 times in the N.T., e.g., Eph. 2:8-9). These are not difficult things.

As the KJV rightly says, the gate to salvation is strait and narrow. The terms are basically synonyms, referring to the truth that the sinner must humble himself and put his trust in Jesus Christ alone, that there is only one narrow way to God. The world at large despises this One Way and follows the broad road to destruction.

The NKJV translation creates doctrinal error by making the reader think that salvation is a difficult thing. That fits in with the false gospels that are preached by so many groups today. They teach that the sinner must trust Christ PLUS do many other things. Contrary to the warning in Romans 11:6, they intermingle works with grace, law with faith. That does indeed create a difficult salvation, because the sinner must do many things or he will not ultimately be saved, but it is a false gospel. The door that Jesus opened for us with His own death and blood is strait and narrow, but praise God, not difficult. All the sinner must do is enter in by faith; he must simply reach out his hand and receive the Gift (Eph. 2:8-9) that the Savior has purchased for him. The erroneous NKJV translation also fits in with a "Lordship Salvation" doctrine that confuses justification with practical sanctification, salvation with discipleship.

MATTHEW 20:20

KJV "Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, **WORSHIPPING HIM**, and desiring a certain thing of him."

NKJV "Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Him with her sons, **KNEELING DOWN** and asking something from Him."

In this connection, the translators of the NKJV commit the same strange error as the translators of the NIV. The Greek word translated worship in this verse is "proskuneo," which is the same word translated "worship" in other passages referring to the worship of Jesus Christ. In the KJV, it is never translated anything other than worship. Eleven times in the KJV, the Gospels tell us that Christ was worshipped (Mt. 2:11; 8:2; 9:18; 14:33; 15:25; 20:20; 28:9,17; Mk. 5:6; Lk. 24:52; Jn. 9:38). This, of course, is indisputable evidence that Jesus Christ is God, because only God can be worshipped (Ex. 34:14; Is. 42:8; Mt. 4:10; Acts 14:11-15; Rev. 19:10). (There are two verses in the KJV that say that someone "knelt before" Christ--Mt. 17:14; Mk. 1:40)--but in those verses a different Greek word is used, the word "gonupeteo.")

The modern versions weaken this testimony to Christ's deity by translating only some of the "proskuneo" passages with the term "worship." The NIV, for example, removes almost half of this witness to Christ's deity, changing "worship" to "kneel before" in Mt. 8:2; 9:18; 15:25; 20:20; Mk. 5:6. The NKJV does not go as far, only removing one of these witnesses to Christ's deity. But WHY, WHY, WHY remove any of them? It is the same Greek word. It means to worship! This change in the NKJV is unnecessary and wrong and is a move toward the undependable and weaker direction of the modern versions.

JOHN 1:3

KJV: "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."

NKJV: "All things were made THROUGH Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made."

"In the New Testament where creation is linked to Jesus Christ, in every instance, the New King James Version translates the Greek preposition 'dia' as 'through' instead of 'by.' See John 1:3, 10; 1 Cor. 8:6; Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:16; and Heb. 1:2. There is a fine line between the two, but there certainly is a nuance of distinction. Implied is that Jesus Christ was involved in creation but was not the Creator. This is again an area of subjective choice of words in translation, but it has profound implications" (David Sorenson, *Touch Not the Unclean Thing*, p. 243).

1 CORINTHIANS 1:18

KJV: "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God."

NKJV: "... but to us who are BEING saved it is the power of God."

This change wrongly implies that salvation is a process.

HEBREWS 2:16

KJV - "For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham" (Hebrews 2:16).

NKJV - "For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham" (Hebrews 2:16).

This change weakens the doctrine of Christ. The Greek says nothing about giving aid to. The Greek word is *epilambanomai*,

which means to lay hold of, to seize, to catch, to take.

HEBREWS 3:16

KJV “For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses.”

NKJV “For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses?”

This change in the NKJV creates an error in the Bible, because the Old Testament plainly teaches that not all of the Israelites rebelled and provoked God. The KJV is right in its teaching here and the NKJV is wrong.

REVELATION 1:18

KJV “I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of HELL and of death.”

NKJV “I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of HADES and of Death.”

This is one of the strangest changes that have been made in the NKJV. In 11 different verses, the NKJV replaces the word “hell” with “hades,” as follows:

- Mat. 5:22 -- hell fire (gehenna)
- Mat. 5:29 -- hell (gehenna)
- Mat. 5:30 -- hell (gehenna)
- Mat. 10:28 -- hell (gehenna)
- Mat. 11:23 -- Hades
- Mat. 16:18 -- Hades
- Mat. 18:9 -- hell fire (gehenna)
- Mat. 23:15 -- hell (gehenna)
- Mat. 23:33 -- hell (gehenna)
- Mk. 9:43, 45, 47 -- hell (gehenna)
- Lk. 10:15 -- Hades
- Lk. 12:5 -- hell (gehenna)
- Lk. 16:23 -- Hades
- Acts 2:27 -- Hades
- Acts 2:31 -- Hades
- 1 Cor. 15:55 -- Hades
- James 3:6 -- hell (gehenna)
- 2 Pet. 2:4 -- hell (tartaroo)
- Rev. 1:18 -- Hades

Rev. 6:8 -- Hades
Rev. 20:13 -- Hades
Rev. 20:14 -- Hades

The latter is simply a transliteration of the Greek word, of course. It can be argued that it is not an error to use the actual Greek word instead of translating it, but that is not the point. The point is that there is no reason to change the word from *hell* to *hades*. English speaking people know very well what hell is, but far fewer of them know what *hades* is. The word “hades” has been translated “hell” in the standard Received Text English Bibles since the days of John Wycliffe in the late 1300s. The change to “hades” does not make the Bible clearer. In this connection, the NKJV is certainly not easier to understand or read than the KJV. The New Testament uses three terms for hell, *gehenna*, *tartaroo*, and *hades*. *Gehenna* is a figurative reference to the burning of garbage in the valley of Hinnom, a valley of Jerusalem. *Tartaroo*, which is used only in 2 Pet. 2:4, refers to a chamber of hell in which rebellious angels are incarcerated, “the deepest abyss of Hades” (Strong). *Hades*, the most common New Testament word for hell, can refer to the grave (Acts 2:27, 31; 1 Cor. 15:55) but also refers to the burning hell, as is evident in Luke 16:23, when the rich man died and “in hell [*hades*] he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.”

The change from *hell* to *hades* plays into the hands of those who are watering down the doctrine of eternal, fiery hell. The Jehovah’s Witnesses, for example, who deny that hell is a place of eternal fiery punishment, prefer the term *hades*. So do the Seventh-day Adventists. In fact, many “evangelicals” are also denying or questioning the doctrine of hell.

REVELATION 19:8

KJV: “And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.”

NKJV: “... for the fine linen is the righteous ACTS of the saints.”

This change would give support for the erroneous “Baptist bride” doctrine, that the bride of Christ is composed only of believers who are obedient and faithful (this is applied particularly to the realm of New Testament church polity, so that only believers who are

members of a Baptist church qualify), that the righteousness spoken of here is the believer's own righteousness. In fact, though, the believer has no true righteousness that will stand before God except that which is given to him in Christ (1 Cor. 1:30). In the King James Bible the Greek word "dikaoima," which is used in Rev. 19:8, is never translated "righteous acts." When applied to the believer, it refers to his "justification" by which he is declared righteous because of Christ. It describes the righteousness which is given in Christ. *Dikaoima* is the word translated "righteous" in Romans 5:16-18.

These are only a few examples of the significant changes that have been made throughout the New King James Version.

4. The NKJV deletes the important distinction between the second person pronoun singular and plural (thee, thou, thy, thine vs. ye, you, your). Therefore, the NKJV gives up accuracy for modernity.

The Hebrew and Greek languages make a distinction between the singular and plural of the second person pronouns. The King James Bible maintains this distinction by the consistent use of thee, thou, thine, ye and you. The pronouns beginning with "T" are always singular (i.e., thee, thou, thine), and the pronouns beginning with "Y" are always plural (i.e., ye, you, your).

Consider the following testimony about this:

"It is often asserted or assumed that the usage of the AV represents the speech of 300 years ago, and that now, three centuries later, it should be changed to accord with contemporary usage. But this is not at all a correct statement of the problem. The important fact is this. THE USAGE OF THE AV IS NOT THE ORDINARY USAGE OF THE EARLY SEVENTEENTH CENTURY: IT IS THE BIBLICAL USAGE BASED ON THE STYLE OF THE HEBREW AND THE GREEK SCRIPTURES. The second part of this statement needs no proof and will be challenged by no one. It is undeniable that where the Hebrew and Greek use the singular of the pronoun the AV regularly uses the singular, and where they use the plural it uses the plural. Even in Deuteronomy where in his addresses, and apparently for rhetorical and pedagogical effect, Moses often changes suddenly, and seemingly arbitrarily, from singular to plural or from plural to singular, the AV reproduces the style of the text with fidelity. THAT IS TO SAY, THE USAGE OF THE AV IS STRICTLY BIBLICAL" (Oswald T. Allis, "Is a Pronominal Revision of the Authorized Version

Desirable?" See the Bible Version section of the End Times Apostasy Database at the Way of Life Literature web site -- <http://www.wayoflife.org>).

We can see the importance of this with the following example from the New Testament:

JOHN 3:7

KJV "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again."

NKJV "Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'"

In the KJV, the English reader can discern that both a singular and a plural Greek pronoun are used in this verse. Jesus was saying, "Marvel not that I said unto thee [singular, referring to Nicodemus], Ye [plural, referring to all of the nation Israel and all people in general] must be born again."

Because of the changes that were made in the NKJV toward the end of sounding contemporary, this meaning is lost to the English reader in both the Old and New Testaments.

See the myth that "the King James Bible is too difficult to understand."

5. The most significant problem that we have with the New King James Version is that it is a bridge to the modern versions.

In reality, the New King James Version is simply a bridge to the modern versions. Those who move away from the standard King James Bible to the New King James are lulled into a sense of security that they have moved merely to an updated and improved King James, but actually they are being brainwashed to be weaned away from the King James altogether and to accept the modern versions.

Kirk DiVietro, Pastor of Grace Baptist Church in Franklin, Massachusetts, attended one of the Thomas Nelson planning meetings that prepared the way for the publication of the New King James. He testified to me that the Thomas Nelson representative plainly stated that their goal with the NKJV was to create a bridge to the modern versions, to break down the resistance of those who still revere the KJV. Following is Bro. DiVietro's testimony as he gave it to me by e-mail on January 9,

2005: “Over 20 years ago I attended a pre-publication meeting of the NKJV held by the Thomas Nelson people and hosted by the Hackman’s Bible Bookstore in Allentown, PA. I am personal friends with the owners who took great delight in seating me next to the brother of the main translator of the NIV. The meeting was attended by over 300 college professors and pastors. At the meeting we were treated to a slide presentation of the history of the English Bible and in particular the King James Bible and its several revisions. During the presentation of the NKJV the Thomas Nelson representative made a statement which to the best of my memory was, ‘We are all educated people here. We would never say this to our people, but we all know that the King James Version is a poor translation based on poor texts. But every attempt to give your people a better Bible has failed. They just won’t accept them. So we have gone back and done a revision of the King James Version, a fifth revision. Hopefully it will serve as a transitional bridge to eventually get your people to accept a more accurate Bible.’ Because of the years, and because I did not write it down, I cannot give you the speaker’s name and I cannot promise you that this is word for word correct, but the meeting so seared my spirit that I have never picked up and opened a NKJV. I can tell you that this is absolutely the substance and nearly the exact words of what was said.”

The footnotes in the NKJV are based on the Nestle-United Bible Society critical Greek text and thus create exactly the same kind of doubt you find in the modern versions. It tempts the readers to discount the authority of the passages questioned in footnotes. It also accustoms Bible students to the philosophy of textual neutrality, of picking and choosing between the readings of competing texts and versions.

Though the editors of the NKJV claim they are honoring the Received Text with their New King James Bible, they have given credibility to the corrupted UBS text by placing its doubt-producing readings in the margin of their version.

(The following study is based on the margin of the New King James Version, Thomas Nelson, copyright 1984.)

44 ENTIRE VERSES ARE QUESTIONED IN THE MARGIN OF THE NKJV ON THE BASIS OF THE UNRELIABLE UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES TEXT

Matthew 17:21; 18:11; 21:4; 23:14; 24:6
Mark 7:16; 9:44; 9:46; 11:26; 15:28; 19:9-20
Luke 17:36; 22:43; 22:44; 23:17
John 5:4; 7:53--8:11
Acts 8:37; 15:34; 24:7; 28:29
Romans 16:24
1 John 5:7, 8

PORTIONS OF 95 OTHER VERSES ARE QUESTIONED IN THE MARGIN OF THE NKJV ON THE BASIS OF THE UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES TEXT

MATTHEW

5:22 NU omits “without a cause”
5:27 NU omits “to those of old”
6:13 NU omits “For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.”
9:13 NU omits “to repentance”
9:35 NU omits “among the people”
10:3 NU omits “Lebbaeus, whose surname was”
10:8 NU omits “raise the dead”
12:35 NU omits “of his heart”
13:51 NU omits “Jesus said to them”
15:8 NU omits “draw near to Me with their mouth, And”
18:29 NU omits “at his feet”
19:20 NU omits “from my youth”
20:7 NU omits “and whatever is right you will receive”
20:16 NU omits “For many are called, but few chosen”
20:22 NU omits “and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with”
20:23 NU omits “and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with”
22:13 NU omits “take him away, and”
23:3 NU omits “to observe”
25:13 NU omits “in which the Son of Man is coming”
26:60 NU omits “false witnesses”
27:35 NU omits “that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet: They divided My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots.”

MARK

- 1:2 NU omits "Isaiah the prophet"
- 1:14 NU omits "of the kingdom"
- 2:17 NU omits "to repentance"
- 3:5 NU omits "as whole as the other"
- 3:15 NU omits "to heal sicknesses and"
- 4:4 NU omits "of the air"
- 6:11 NU omits "Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city"
- 6:36 NU omits "bread; for they have nothing to eat"
- 7:2 NU omits "they found fault"
- 9:29 NU omits "and fasting"
- 9:45 NU omits "into the fire that shall never be quenched"
- 9:49 NU omits "and every sacrifice will be seasoned with salt"
- 10:24 NU omits "for those who trust in riches"
- 11:10 NU omits "in the name of the Lord"
- 12:4 NU omits "and at him they threw stones"
- 12:30 NU omits "This is the first commandment"
- 12:33 NU omits "with all the soul"
- 13:14 NU omits "spoken of by Daniel the prophet"
- 14:19 NU omits "And another said, 'Is it I?'"
- 14:27 NU omits "because of Me this night"
- 14:70 NU omits "and your speech shows it"

LUKE

- 1:28 NU omits "blessed are you among women"
- 1:29 NU omits "when she saw him"
- 1:78 NU omits "shall visit"
- 4:4 NU omits "but by every word of God"
- 4:8 NU omits "Get behind Me, Satan"
- 4:18 NU omits "to heal the brokenhearted"
- 4:41 NU omits "the Christ"
- 5:38 NU omits "and both are preserved"
- 6:10 NU omits "as whole as the other"
- 6:45 NU omits "treasure of his heart"
- 7:10 NU omits "who had been sick"
- 7:31 NU omits "And the Lord said"
- 8:45 NU omits "and those with him"
- 8:45 NU omits "and You say, 'Who touched Me?'"
- 8:54 NU omits "put them all out"
- 9:54 NU omits "just as Elijah did"

9:55 NU omits “and said, ‘You do not know what manner of spirit you are of’”
9:56 NU omits “For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men’s lives but to save them”
10:35 NU omits “when he departed”
11:2 NU omits “Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven”
11:4 NU omits “But deliver us from the evil one”
11:11 NU omits “bread from any father among you, will he give you a stone? Or if he asks for”
11:29 NU omits “the prophet”
11:44 NU omits “scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites”
11:54 NU omits “that they might accuse Him”
17:3 NU omits “against you”
17:9 NU omits “him? I think not”
19:5 NU omits “and saw him”
20:23 NU omits “Why do you test Me?”
20:30 NU omits “took her as wife, and he died childless”
22:30 NU omits “in My kingdom”
22:31 NU omits “And the Lord said”
22:64 NU omits “struck Him on the face and”
22:68 NU omits “Me or let Me go”
22:23 NU omits “and of the chief priests”
23:34 NU omits “Then Jesus said, Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do”
23:38 NU omits “written and in letters of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew”
24:1 NU omits “and certain other women with them”
24:42 NU omits “and some honeycomb”

JOHN

3:13 NU omits “who is in heaven”
3:15 NU omits “not perish but”
4:42 NU omits “the Christ”
5:3 NU omits “waiting for the moving of the water”
5:16 NU omits “and sought to kill Him”
6:11 NU omits “to the disciples, and the disciples”
6:22 NU omits “which His disciples had entered”
6:47 NU omits “in Me” 8:6 NU omits “as though He did not hear”
8:9 NU omits “being convicted by their conscience”
8:10 NU omits “and saw no one but the woman”
8:59 NU omits “through the midst of them, and so passed by”

9:11 NU omits “the pool of”
10:26 NU omits “as I said to you”
11:41 NU omits “from the place where the dead man was lying”
12:1 NU omits “who had been dead”
17:12 NU omits “in the world”
19:16 NU omits “and led Him away”

ACTS

2:23 NU omits “have taken”
2:37 NU omits “to the church”
7:30 NU omits “of the Lord”
7:37 NU omits “Him you shall hear”
9:5 NU omits “It is hard for you to kick against the goads”
10:6 NU omits “will tell you what you must do”
10:21 NU omits “who had been sent to him from Cornelius”
10:32 NU omits “When he comes, he will speak to you”
15:24 NU omits “saying, ‘You must be circumcised and keep the law”
17:5 NU omits “who were not persuaded”
18:21 NU omits “I must by all means keep this coming feast in Jerusalem”
21:8 NU omits “who were Paul’s companions”
21:25 NU omits “that they should observe no such thing, except”
22:9 NU omits “and were afraid”
22:20 NU omits “to his death”
24:6 NU omits “and wanted to judge him according to our law”
24:8 NU omits “commanding his accusers to come to you”
24:15 NU omits “of the dead”
24:26 NU omits “that he might release him”
25:16 NU omits “to destruction”

ROMANS

1:16 NU omits “of Christ”
3:22 NU omits “and on all”
8:1 NU omits “do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit”
8:26 NU omits “for us”
9:31 NU omits “of righteousness”
9:32 NU omits “of the law”
10:15 NU omits “preach the gospel of peace”
11:6 NU omits “But if it is of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise

work is no longer work”

14:6 NU omits “and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it. He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks; and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks”

14:21 NU omits “or is offended or is made weak”

15:24 NU omits “I shall come to you”

15:29 NU omits “of the gospel”

1 CORINTHIANS

5:7 NU omits “for us”

6:20 NU omits “and in your spirit, which are God’s”

9:18 NU omits “of Christ”

10:23 NU omits “for me”

10:28 NU omits “for ‘The earth is the Lord’s, and all its fullness’”

11:24 NU omits “Take, eat”

11:29 NU omits “in an unworthy manner”

15:47 NU omits “the Lord”

2 CORINTHIANS

8:4 NU omits “that we would receive”

12:11 NU omits “in boasting”

13:2 NU omits “I write”

GALATIANS

3:1 NU omits “that you should not obey the truth”

3:17 NU omits “in Christ”

4:7 NU omits “through Christ”

EPHESIANS

3:9 NU omits “through Jesus Christ”

3:14 NU omits “of our Lord Jesus Christ”

4:17 NU omits “rest of the”

5:30 NU omits “of His flesh and of His bones”

PHILIPPIANS

3:16 NU omits “rule, let us be of the same mind”

COLOSSIANS

1:2 NU omits “and the Lord Jesus Christ”

1:14 NU omits “through His blood”
2:2 NU omits “both of the Father and”
2:11 NU omits “of the sins”

1 THESSALONIANS

1:1 NU omits “from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ”

2 THESSALONIANS

2:4 NU omits “as God”

1 TIMOTHY

2:7 NU omits “in Christ”
3:3 NU omits “not greedy for money”
3:16 NU replaces “God” with “Who”
4:12 NU omits “in spirit”
5:4 NU omits “good and”
5:16 NU omits “man or”
6:5 NU omits “from such withdraw yourself”
6:7 NU omits “and it is certain”

2 TIMOTHY

1:11 NU omits “of the Gentiles”

HEBREWS

1:3 NU omits “by Himself”
2:7 NU omits “And set him over the works of Your hands”
3:6 NU omits “firm to the end”
8:12 NU omits “and their lawless deeds”
10:9 NU omits “O God”
10:30 NU omits “says the Lord”
11:11 NU omits “she bore a child”
11:13 NU omits “were assured of them”
12:20 NU omits “or thrust through with an arrow”

JAMES

4:4 NU omits “adulterers and”

1 PETER

1:22 NU omits “through the Spirit”

4:1 NU omits “for us”

4:14 NU omits “On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified”

1 JOHN

2:7 NU omits “from the beginning”

4:3 NU omits “Christ has come in the flesh”

5:13 NU omits “and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God”

5:7 NU, M “omit the words from in heaven (v. 7) through on earth (v. 8). Only 4 or 5 very late mss. contain these words in Greek.” This footnote does not present the truth about this text. The Trinitarian statement is found in roughly 20 Greek manuscripts. Further, it is found in the vast majority of the Latin manuscripts. It has also been in the Waldensian Bibles (the Italic, the Romaunt, and the Tepl, for example) throughout the church age, and it has been in the English Bible for 620 years. This is a crucial point, for it is through the Bible believing churches and through the process of the Great Commission that God has preserved the Scriptures in this age (Mat. 28:19-20; 2 Tim. 2:2).

REVELATION

1:8 NU omits “the Beginning and the End”

1:11 NU omits “I am the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last, and”

1:11 NU omits “which are in Asia”

1:20 NU omits “which you saw”

4:3 NU omits “And He who sat there was”

5:14 NU omits “Him who lives forever and ever”

11:1 NU omits “And the angel stood”

11:17 NU omits “and who is to come”

14:8 NU omits “is fallen, that great city, because”

14:12 NU omits “here are those”

15:2 NU omits “over his mark”

16:5 NU omits “O Lord”

16:7 NU omits “another from”

16:14 NU omits “of the earth and”

19:1 NU omits “the Lord”

21:6 NU omits “It is done”

21:24 NU omits “of those who are saved”

Those who use the New King James Bible are therefore subjected to the same onslaught of potential doubt as those who use the New International Version or some other modern edition of the Bible. Many claim that the critical notes that question the authenticity of the Bible text are not harmful to readers. We believe this is nonsense. I saw the fruit of this questioning in my own life before I was grounded in the issue of God's Preserved Scripture and before I understood the unbelieving foundation of modern textual criticism. Before I went to Bible School I read my Bible carefully, word by word, and I did not doubt or question even one tittle. After I completed a course in New Testament Greek and was taught by a professor that the Received Text and the KJV "are not based on the most dependable scholarship," I found myself questioning large portions of the Bible.

I would like someone to explain to me how such confusion builds strong Christian lives and churches.

WHAT ABOUT THE MARGIN IN THE KING JAMES BIBLE? Some modern version defenders point to the marginal notes in the 1611 KJV and claim that it is inconsistent for King James Bible defenders to make something of the critical textual notes in the modern versions while ignoring the ones in the original KJV. James White does this in his popular but misguided book *The King James Only Controversy* (p. 77). This is a comparison of monkeys and trees, though. Both the 1611 KJV and the modern versions have marginal notes, but the nature of those notes is very different. The textual notes in the 1611 KJV were not critical after the fashion of the ones in the modern versions. The marginal notes in the 1611 KJV did not cast continual doubt upon the text, as those in the modern versions do. In testifying of the marginal notes in the modern versions, Jay Green, a biblical scholar and Bible translator, says:

"Deceitful footnotes often throw doubt on the words of the text, such as may be found at Mark 1:1; Romans 9:5, etc. Worse, yet, in other places when words that witness to the Godhead of Christ are removed from the text, seldom is there a footnote to call attention to it. And when there is a footnote purporting to give evidence for the change, a false impression is often given by an incomplete presentation of the facts" (Jay Green, Sr., *The Gnostics, The New Versions, and the Deity of Christ*, Lafayette, Indiana: Sovereign Grace Publishers, 1994, p. 5).

To pretend that the marginal notes in the 1611 KJV are the same in

nature as those of the modern versions is to confuse the issue.

Thus, therefore, the New King James Version is simply a bridge to the modern versions.

The New King James Version is not an improvement over the King James and is not merely another slight revision after the fashion of earlier revisions. Be wise and beware and stand by the old KJV. It's hard to read, you say? It's really not that hard. Most of the words are one or two syllables, and it has a very small vocabulary. The reading level of the King James Bible, in fact, is not that much different from the New International Version. If you will devote to the KJV the serious study that it deserves, you will soon find that it is not that difficult. Many tools are available to assist you in this task, including the *Way of Life Encyclopedia of the Bible & Christianity*, available from Way of Life Literature.

As the late Evangelist Lester Roloff said, "We don't need to re-translate the Bible; we need to re-read and re-study the excellent one we have." To this we say, Amen.

MYTH: THE NEW AMERICAN STANDARD VERSION IS BASICALLY THE SAME AS THE KING JAMES EXCEPT FOR UPDATED LANGUAGE.

The New American Standard Bible (NASB or NASV) is a revision of the 1901 American Standard Version and was produced by a team of translators working with the Lockman Foundation, the publisher of the Amplified Bible. The NASB was produced as a more conservative counterpart to the Revised Standard Version., which was published in 1946 (NT) and 1952 (whole Bible). Work began on the NASB in 1959 and the New Testament was issued in 1963 and the complete Bible in 1971. The original foreword to the New Testament stated, "It has been the purpose of the Editorial Board to present to the modern reader a revision of the American Standard Version in clear and contemporary language." A similar statement appears in the preface to the 2002 *NASB Thinline Bible* that is in my library.

ANSWER:

1. The New American Standard Version is basically a literal translation like the King James Bible, and as such

it is superior to the modern dynamic equivalencies such as the New International Version.

2. In spite of its largely conservative approach to translation technique and the evangelicalism of its translators (as opposed to the rank theological liberalism of the translators who produced the Revised Standard Version), the NASB cannot be trusted because it is built upon the unsound scholarship of liberals and Unitarians.

The NASB is built upon the English Revised Version of 1885 and the American Standard Version of 1901 (which was the American edition of the English Revised). At least three Christ-denying Unitarians were on these translation committees (George Vance Smith, Ezra Abbot, and Joseph Henry Thayer). The committees also included many men of modernistic views, such as Philip Schaff (twice brought to trial for heresy), William Robertson Smith (who was evicted from the Free Church Theological College for his modernism), B.F. Westcott and F.J.A. Hort (both of whom denied the infallible inspiration of Scripture and Christ's substitutionary atonement and believed in evolution), and Anglican Broad Church members William Moulton, George Milligan, R.C. Trench, Edward Bickersteth, Benjamin Kennedy, A.P. Stanley, Robert Payne Smith, William Humphrey, and John Vaughan.

3. In spite of its basically conservative, literal approach to translation methodology, the NASV cannot be trusted because it is based on the corrupt Greek New Testament that was produced through the skeptical pseudo-science of modern textual criticism.

The NASV is based on the corrupt critical Greek New Testament as opposed to the Greek Received Text underlying the Reformation Bibles. The critical Greek New Testament is built upon a handful of strange manuscripts from Alexandria, Egypt, which was a hotbed of theological heresy in the centuries following the apostles. Frederick Scrivener, a prominent textual scholar of the 19th century, testified, "It is no less true to fact than paradoxical in sound, that THE WORST CORRUPTIONS TO WHICH THE NEW TESTAMENT HAS EVER BEEN SUBJECTED, ORIGINATED WITHIN A HUNDRED YEARS AFTER IT WAS COMPOSED; and that Irenaeus and the African Fathers, and the whole Western, with a

portion of the Syrian Church, used far inferior MSS. to those employed by Stunica, or Erasmus, or Stephens, thirteen centuries later, when moulding the Received Text” (Scrivener, *A Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament*, II, 4th edition, 1894, pp. 264, 265).

Not only do the manuscripts preferred by modern textual critics (chiefly the Vaticanus and the Sinaiticus) disagree in thousands of places from the vast majority of other extant manuscripts, they also disagree among themselves in thousands of places.

The modern critical Greek New Testament is built upon the strange and unbelieving principle that the alleged purest text of apostolic Scripture (the Alexandrian or Egyptian as represented by the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus manuscripts) was set aside in the fourth century and was replaced with an artificially created recension (the Traditional or Byzantine text) that was formed by conflating various extant texts, and that it was the impure recension that became the Bible of the churches for 1,500 years of church history until the alleged best text was recovered in the 19th century through the principles of modern textual criticism. This was a foundational principle of Westcott and Hort (the Lucian Recension) and it has remained foundational to modern textual criticism into the 21st century, even though it flies in the face of any scriptural and reasonable doctrine of divine preservation.

The omissions alone in the critical Greek text equate the deletion of the entire books of 1 and 2 Peter from the modern version New Testaments.

The NASV omits outright or casts serious doubt upon 43 entire verses in the New Testament. It omits outright the following sixteen: Matthew 17:21; Mark 7:16; 9:44, 46; 11:26; 15:28; Luke 17:36; 23:17; 24:40; John 5:4; Acts 8:37; 15:34; 24:7; 28:29; Romans 16:24; 1 John 5:7. It further casts serious doubt upon another twenty-seven verses (Matthew 18:11; 23:14; Mark 16:9-20; Luke 24:12; John 7:53-8:11) by putting them in brackets or by separating them from the previous passages and adding footnotes that discredit their authority.

The NASV also omits a significant portion of another 174 verses, not including those it casts doubt upon with marginal notes.

The NASV, following the critical Greek text, weakens key doctrines

of the Bible. An example is the doctrine of Christ's deity. The omissions and changes in the NASV do not result in the complete removal of this doctrine, but they do result in an overall weakening of it.

Consider the following examples:

Mark 9:24 -- The father's testimony that Jesus is "Lord" is omitted.

Mark 16:9-20 -- This glorious passage is bracketed, signifying that it is not considered apostolic Scripture. A footnote says, "Later mss add vv 9-20," clearly implying that it is not authentic. With this omission, the Gospel of Jesus Christ according to Mark ends with no resurrection or glorious ascension and with the disciples fearful and confused.

Luke 23:42 -- The thief's testimony that Jesus is "Lord" is omitted.

John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18 -- "only begotten Son" changed to "one and only"

John 1:27 -- "is preferred before me" is omitted

John 3:13 -- "which is in heaven" is omitted, thus removing this powerful witness to Christ's omnipresence

John 6:69 -- "thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God" is changed to "you are the Holy One of God," thus destroying this powerful witness that Jesus is the very Christ, the Son of God, a doctrine that was under fierce assault in the early centuries.

John 8:59 -- "but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by" is replaced with "but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple," thus destroying the miracle of this scene. Whereas the Greek Received Text teaches here that Jesus supernaturally went out through the midst of the angry crowd that was trying to kill Him, the modern versions have Jesus merely hiding Himself.

Acts 8:37 -- The eunuch's glorious testimony that Jesus Christ is the Son of God is bracketed and a footnote says, "Early mss do not contain this verse," signifying that it is not apostolic Scripture.

Romans 14:10 -- "Christ" changed to "God"; the "judgment seat of Christ" identifies Jesus Christ directly with Jehovah God (Isaiah

45:23), whereas the “judgment seat of God” does not.

1 Cor. 15:47 -- “the Lord” is omitted

Eph. 3:9 -- “by Jesus Christ” is omitted

1 Tim. 3:16 -- “God” is omitted, thus removing one of clearest references to Jesus Christ as God in the New Testament

1 John 5:7 -- The glorious Trinitarian confession is omitted, even though it has more manuscript and versional evidence than most of the Alexandrian readings preferred by modern textual critics, including many of those listed above. For example, the omission of Mark 16:9-20 is supported by only three Greek manuscripts of the hundreds that are extant and that contain this passage.

The same can be demonstrated for the doctrine of the virgin birth, the blood atonement, the ascension, and ecclesiastical separation. All of these are weakened in the modern versions.

The NASV further attacks the doctrine of fasting. Though the word “fasting” is not removed entirely from the modern versions, the doctrine that fasting is a crucial element of spiritual warfare is removed. In this context the NASV omits the entire verse of Mat. 17:21, plus the word “fasting” in Mk. 9:29; Acts 10:30; 1 Cor. 7:5; 2 Cor. 6:5; and 2 Cor. 11:27.

For a more thorough study of the doctrinal issue in the NASV and other modern versions based on the critical Greek text see the question “Is it true that there are no significant doctrinal differences between the modern versions and the KJV?”

MYTH: THE NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION IS A DEPENDABLE TRANSLATION.

The New International Version is becoming popular even among some fundamentalist churches. Since it was produced by “evangelicals” it is considered safe.

ANSWER:

1. The New International Version was first envisioned by the National Association of Evangelicals and the Christian Reformed Church in the early 1960s and was eventually produced by a team of 100 “evangelical scholars” who began work in about 1966. The

translators represented a wide variety of denominations, including Anglican, Assemblies of God, Baptist, Brethren, Christian Reformed, Church of Christ, Evangelical Free, Lutheran, Mennonite, Methodist, Nazarene, Presbyterian, and Wesleyan. This should sound a large warning to those who understand what has happened within evangelicalism since the late 1950s. For one thing, evangelicalism has renounced separation and has thus become deeply infected by the liberalism that is in the schools that evangelicals often attend and the books that they use.

In 1976, Carl Henry warned: “A GROWING VANGUARD OF YOUNG GRADUATES OF EVANGELICAL COLLEGES WHO HOLD DOCTORATES FROM NON-EVANGELICAL DIVINITY CENTERS NOW QUESTION OR DISOWN INERRANCY and the doctrine is held less consistently by evangelical faculties. ... Some retain the term and reassure supportive constituencies but nonetheless stretch the term’s meaning” (Carl F.H. Henry, past senior editor of *Christianity Today*, “Conflict over Biblical Inerrancy,” *Christianity Today*, May 7, 1976).

In the last book he wrote before he died, Francis Schaeffer warned in 1983: “WITHIN EVANGELICALISM THERE ARE A GROWING NUMBER WHO ARE MODIFYING THEIR VIEWS ON THE INERRANCY OF THE BIBLE SO THAT THE FULL AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE IS COMPLETELY UNDERCUT” (Schaeffer, *The Great Evangelical Disaster*, 1983, p. 44).

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

Consider the example of Bruce Metzger, one of the foremost textual critics of the twentieth century. He has been upheld by

Christianity Today as an evangelical scholar and his books are used by practically every evangelical Bible translator. Yet Metzger's modernism is evident in the notes to the *New Oxford Annotated Bible RSV* (1973), which he co-edited with Herbert May. It first appeared in 1962 as the *Oxford Annotated Bible* and was the first Protestant annotated edition of the Bible to be approved by a Roman Catholic authority. It was given an imprimatur in 1966 by Cardinal Cushing, Archbishop of Boston. Metzger wrote many of the rationalistic notes in this volume and put his editorial stamp of approval on the rest. Consider some excerpts:

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

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." (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.”

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 on 2 Peter: “The tradition that this letter is the work of the apostle Peter was questioned in early times, and internal indications are almost decisive against it. ... Most scholars therefore regard the letter as the work of one who was deeply indebted to Peter and who published it under his master’s name early in the second century.” [Note: Those who believe this nonsense must think the early Christians were liars and fools and the Holy Spirit was on vacation.]

(8) Notes from “How To Read The Bible With Understanding”:
“The opening chapters of the Old Testament deal with human origins. They are not to be read as history ... These chapters are followed by the stories of the patriarchs, which preserve ancient traditions now known to reflect the conditions of the times of which they tell, though they cannot be treated as strictly historical. ... it is not for history but for religion that they are preserved ... When we come to the books of Samuel and Kings ... Not all in these books is of the same historical value, and especially in the stories of Elijah and Elisha there are legendary elements. ... We should always remember the variety of literary forms found in the Bible, and should read a passage in the light of its own particular literary character. Legend should be read as legend, and poetry as poetry, and not with a dull prosaic and literalistic mind.”

Thus, the fact that the New International Version was produced by “evangelical scholars” does not mean that it is sound.

2. The New International Version is based on the corrupt critical United Bible Societies Greek New Testament as opposed to the Greek Received Text underlying the Reformation Bibles.

The omissions alone in the critical Greek text equate the deletion of the entire books of 1 and 2 Peter from the modern version New Testaments.

The NIV omits or casts serious doubt upon 41 entire verses in the New Testament. It omits outright the following seventeen: Matthew 17:21; 18:11; 21:44; 23:14; Mark 7:16; 9:44, 46; 11:26; 15:28; Luke 17:36; 23:17; Jn. 5:4; Acts 8:37; 15:34; 24:7; 28:29; Romans 16:24; 1 John 5:7. It further casts serious doubt upon another 24 verses (Mk. 16:9-20; Jn. 7:53-8:11) by separating them from the previous text and by adding footnotes that discredit their textual authority.

The NIV omits a significant portion of another 174 verses, not including those it casts doubt upon with marginal notes.

The NIV, following the critical Greek text, weakens key doctrines of the Bible. An example is the doctrine of Christ's deity. The omissions and changes in the NASV do not result in the complete removal of this doctrine, but they do result in an overall weakening of it. Consider the following examples:

Mark 9:24 -- the father's testimony that Jesus is "Lord" omitted.

Mark 16:9-20 -- This glorious passage is set apart from the rest of the book and a footnote says, "The most reliable early manuscripts and other ancient witnesses do not have Mark 16:9-20," implying that it is not authentic. With this omission, the Gospel of Jesus Christ according to Mark ends with no resurrection and ascension and with the disciples fearful and confused.

Luke 23:42 -- The thief's testimony that Jesus is "Lord" omitted.

John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18 -- "only begotten Son" changed to "one and only"

John 1:27 -- "is preferred before me" omitted

John 3:13 -- "which is in heaven" omitted, thus removing this powerful witness to Christ's omnipresence

John 6:69 -- "thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God" is changed to "you are the Holy One of God," thus destroying this powerful witness that Jesus is the very Christ, the Son of God, a doctrine that was under fierce assault in the early centuries.

John 8:59 -- "but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by" is replaced with "but Jesus hid Himself, slipping away from the temple

grounds,” thus destroying the miracle of this scene. Whereas the Received Text and the King James Bible teaches here that Jesus supernaturally went out right through the midst of the angry crowd that was trying to kill Him, the modern versions have Jesus merely hiding Himself.

Acts 8:37 -- the eunuch’s glorious testimony that Jesus Christ is the Son of God is omitted

Romans 14:10 -- “Christ” changed to “God”; the “judgment seat of Christ” identifies Jesus Christ directly with Jehovah God (Isaiah 45:23), whereas the “judgment seat of God” does not.

1 Corinthians 15:47 -- “the Lord” omitted

Ephesians 3:9 -- “by Jesus Christ” omitted

1 Timothy 3:16 -- “God” omitted, thus removing one of clearest references to Jesus Christ as God in the New Testament

1 John 5:7 -- The glorious Trinitarian confession is omitted, even though it has more manuscript and versional evidence than most of the Alexandrian readings preferred by modern textual critics, including many of those listed above. For example, the omission of Mark 16:9-20 is supported by only three Greek manuscripts of the hundreds that are extant and that contain this passage.

The same can be demonstrated for the doctrine of the virgin birth, the blood atonement, the ascension, and ecclesiastical separation. All of these are weakened in the modern versions.

The NIV further attacks the doctrine of fasting. Though the word “fasting” is not removed entirely from the modern versions, the crucial doctrine that fasting is a part of spiritual warfare is removed. In this context the NIV omits the entire verse of Mat. 17:21, plus the word “fasting” in Mk. 9:29; Acts 10:30; 1 Cor. 7:5; 2 Cor. 6:5; and 2 Cor. 11:27.

3 Not only is the NIV based on a corrupt Greek text but also it is a loose dynamic equivalency translation.

This is admitted in the Preface to the NIV: “The first concern of the translators has been the accuracy of the translation and its fidelity to the THOUGHT of the biblical writers. ... they have striven for MORE THAN A WORD-FOR-WORD TRANSLATION.” They go on to

give an example of how they have given “dynamic” renderings. “Because for most readers today the phrase ‘the LORD of hosts’ and ‘God of hosts’ have little meaning, this version renders them ‘The LORD Almighty and God Almighty’” (NIV Preface, p. vi). They admit that “Lord of hosts” is the exact translation, but they change this for the sake of “the readers.” This is dynamic equivalency. Instead of translating literally and then educating the readers to understand the literal rendering, the dynamic equivalency translator believes he has the authority to change God’s words.

The following example of dynamic equivalency in the NIV is from Dr. D.A. Waite’s book *Defending the King James Version*: “[The NIV is so inferior] when it comes to the Words of God. [For example 2 Sam. 19:12 has ‘ye are my bones and my flesh.’] The word ‘bone’ in Hebrew is *etsem* and ‘flesh’ is *basar*. The NIV renders that expression ‘flesh and blood.’ Now, the word ‘blood’ is *dam*, not *etsem*. Blood is blood and bones are bones, but the NIV translators don’t care. They’re giving the THOUGHT. They say, ‘Those stupid Hebrews, they say “flesh and bones.” Don’t they know any better? Don’t they know it should be “flesh and blood”? So we’re going to translate it “flesh and blood.”’ ... Now, here’s the thing: Whenever someone says, ‘The King James Bible says this, but the NIV makes it a little plainer,’ you don’t know whether it really is plainer or just a fairy tale, because the NIV translators don’t stick to the WORDS of God. What the NIV says is not necessarily what the Hebrew or Greek says.”

Consider Matthew 5:18, which is a New Testament example of dynamic equivalency in the NIV:

KJV “For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.”
NIV “I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.”

The Greek word translated “jot” in the KJV is *iota*, which is the eighth letter of the Hebrew alphabet, and “tittle” is from the Greek *keraiia*, referring to a tiny part of a Hebrew letter. The term “jots and tittles” has become a part of the common English language because it has been in the English Bible for more than six centuries. At least “tittle” has. The first English Bible, the Wycliffe, had “one letter or one tittle.” William Tyndale changed this to “one jot or

one title” in 1525. The translators of the KJV in 1611 left this intact. Many people whose mother tongue is English who have never opened a Bible are familiar with the term “every jot and tittle.” Thus, there was no reason for the NIV translators to change this into their less literal and clumsier rendering.

Further, because of this change the reader of the NIV cannot see that the Lord Jesus was talking specifically about the Hebrew language. This is an important matter; because this verse shows that Christ gave His blessing to the Hebrew text, exalting its authority in every detail. It also shows that Christ was not using a Greek translation (i.e., the Septuagint). Yet none of this is evident in the NIV because they have chosen to interpret rather than translate.

The NIV is so filled with this type of thing that the English reader can never know if he is reading a true rendering of the Hebrew and Greek or merely a translator’s interpretation.

4. The NIV has a heretical translation of Micah 5:2.

KJV “But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.”

NIV “But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.”

This, of course, is a messianic prophecy. When the wise men from the east inquired about the birth of the Messiah, it was because of this verse that the Jewish leaders knew that He would be born in Bethlehem (Matt. 2:1-6).

First of all we see that the NIV has changed “thousands of Judah” to “clans of Judah.” The Hebrew word here, “eleph,” is used in 391 verses and ALWAYS means “thousands.”

The most serious error in the NIV translation of Micah 5:2, though, is in the last part of the verse which says “whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.” Whereas the KJV tells us in Micah 5:2 that Jesus Christ is from everlasting, the NIV says he had an origin

in ancient times. An origin means a beginning. That is the ancient heresy of Arianism, which is held today by the Jehovah's Witnesses and many other cults.

Does the Hebrew allow for the New International Version rendering of Micah 5:2? The verse could POSSIBLY be translated that way except for one thing, and that is its Messianic nature.

The word translated "everlasting" is "owlam," which is the common Hebrew word for everlasting in the Old Testament. It is translated "for ever" (Gen. 3:22), "always" (Gen. 6:3), "everlasting" (Gen. 9:16), "perpetual" (Gen. 9:12), "never" (Jud.2:1), "ever more" (2 Sam. 22:51), "without end" (Is. 45:17), "eternal" (Is. 60:15), "continuance" (Is. 64:5).

"Owlam" is translated "ancient times" once in the KJV (Ps. 77:5). Why, then, did the KJV translators not translate it "ancient times" in Micah 5:2? It is the context that defines words in the Bible, and the context of Micah 5:2 requires "everlasting." In fact, of the 414 verses that contain "owlam," only a handful has a sense of anything other than everlasting. More than 90% of the time, the word is unequivocal in its reference to everlasting.

Even more significantly, "owlam" is the Hebrew word that describes the eternity of God. For example,

God himself is *owlam* (Ps. 102:12)
God's rule is *owlam* (Ps. 66:7)
God's throne is *owlam* (Ps. 93:2)
God's mercy is *owlam* (Ps. 100:5)
God's truth is *owlam* (Ps. 117:2)
God's righteousness is *owlam* (Ps. 119:142)
God's judgments are *owlam* (Ps. 119:150)
God's name is *owlam* (Ps. 72:17; 135:13)
God's kingdom is *owlam* (Ps. 145:13)

With this in mind, we see how false the NIV rendering of Micah 5:2 is. Knowing that the verse refers to the Son of God, it naturally requires the translation of everlasting or eternal or for ever.

Then there is the word "origins" in the New International Version edition of Micah 5:2. Is that an acceptable translation? This is the Hebrew word "mowtsaah," meaning to descend or proceed from, and it could mean *origin* -- IF it referred to someone other than the

Messiah. Knowing, though, that it is a direct reference to Jesus Christ, it is false to translate it as “origins.”

All of this is similar to the situation with Isaiah 7:14. In the 1950s, Bible believers charged the translators of the Revised Standard Version with heresy when they translated “almah” as “young woman” in Isaiah 7:14, and they were right in so doing. Though the Hebrew word “almah” itself could possibly be translated “young woman” in some instances, it cannot be translated “young woman” in Isaiah 7:14 for the simple fact that the verse clearly describes the virgin birth of Jesus Christ, as we see in Matt. 1:23. The King James Bible translators and their predecessors rendered “almah” as “maid” or “damsel” three times of the seven it is used, but in Isaiah 7:14 they had no doubt that it should be “virgin.” The context determines the translation.

The New International Version is not a dependable and godly translation. That it is so deemed by so many evangelicals merely demonstrates the lack of discernment that predominates within evangelicalism today.

5. The NIV removes “hell” entirely from the Old Testament, replacing it with “grave” or “death.”

The Old Testament word translated “hell” in the King James Bible is “sheol.” It has more than one meaning. Most frequently it refers to the dwelling place of the spirits of the dead. It is translated “hell” 56 times in the King James Bible. The same word also refers to the grave at times and is translated “grave” in 29 verses in the KJV (Gen. 37:35; 42:38; 44:29, 31; 2 Ki. 2:6, 9; Job 7:9; 14:13; 17:13; 31:13; 24:19; Ps. 6:5; 30:3; 31:17; 49:14, 15; 88:3; 89:48; 141:7; Prov. 1:12; 30:16; Ecc. 9:10; Song 8:6; Is. 14:11; 38:10, 18; Ezek. 31:15; Hos. 13:14) and “pit” in three verses (Num. 16:30, 33; Job 17:16).

The New International Version makes no distinction between *sheol* as hell or *sheol* as the grave and always translates *sheol* as grave or death. This is a great error.

Consider some examples:

Deuteronomy 32:22

KJV “For a fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn into the

lowest hell...”

NIV “For a fire has been kindled by my wrath, one that burns to the realm of death below.”

Comment: Fire does not burn in the “realm of death” in any sense other than in hell, so why not translate it as hell?

Job 11:8

KJV “It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell: what canst thou know?”

NIV “They are higher than the heavens -- what can you do? They are deeper than the depths of the grave -- what can you know?”

Comment: The grave is not deep in comparison with heaven. Job is not referring to the grave but to the depths of hell.

Psalms 9:17

KJV “The wicked shall be turned into Hell, and all the nations that forget God.”

NIV “The wicked return to the grave, all nations that forget God.”

Comment: Psalm 9:17 describes God’s judgment upon the wicked. The judgment is not merely death and the grave but eternal hell.

Psalms 55:15

KJV “Let death seize upon them, and let them go down quick into hell.”

NIV “Let death take my enemies by surprise; let them go down alive to the grave.”

Comment: There is nothing special about going down into the grave. That is the lot of all men, including the author of this Psalm. The judgment that the Psalmist is describing is not mere death and the grave but eternal hell.

Proverbs 5:5

KJV “Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on hell.”

NIV “Her feet go down to death; her steps lead straight to the grave.”

Comment: This is progressive parallelism. The Proverb describes God’s judgment upon immorality, leading first to death and from

there to eternal hell.

Proverbs 9:18

KJV "...her guests are in the depths of hell."

NIV "...her guests are in the depths of the grave."

Comment: The grave has no "depths." This describes the judgment of hell for those who pursue immorality.

Proverbs 15:24

KJV "The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath."

NIV "The path of life leads upward for the wise to keep him from going down to the grave."

Comment: To translate this as the grave results in nonsense. The way of life does not keep one out of the grave, for "it is appointed unto men once to die" (Heb. 9:27). The way of life refers to salvation, and it keeps the sinner out of hell, just as the KJV says.

Isaiah 5:14

KJV "Therefore hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure..."

NIV "Therefore the grave enlarges its appetite and opens its mouth without limit."

Comment: It is not the grave that is enlarged; how can the grave enlarge itself? It is hell beyond the grave that is enlarged because of man's stubborn hold to sin and rejection of God's salvation.

These are only a few examples of how the NIV removes hell entirely from the Old Testament. This plays into the hands of those who are watering down the doctrine of eternal, fiery hell. The Jehovah's Witnesses, for example, who deny that hell is a place of eternal fiery punishment, treat these Old Testament passages after the same fashion as the NIV. So do the Seventh-day Adventists. In fact, many "evangelicals" are also denying or questioning the biblical doctrine of hell. In 1993 Billy Graham said: "When it comes to a literal fire, I don't preach it because I'm not sure about it. When the Scripture uses fire concerning hell, that is possibly an illustration of how terrible it's going to be--not fire but something worse, a thirst for God that cannot be quenched" (Graham,

interview with Richard Ostling, *Time* magazine, Nov. 15, 1993). Robert Schuller says: "And what is 'hell'? It is the loss of pride that naturally follows separation from God--the ultimate and unfailing source of our soul's sense of self-respect" (Schuller, *Self-Esteem: The New Reformation*, 1982, pp. 14-15). Others who deny the biblical doctrine of hell are Clark Pinnock, Herbert Vander Lugt of the Radio Bible Class (*What Does the Bible Say about Hell*, 1990), F.F. Bruce, Richard Quebedeaux, Kenneth Kantzer (former editor of *Christianity Today*), John R.W. Stott, George Ladd of Fuller Seminary, and J.I. Packer.

6. The NIV removes the term "sodomite" from the Bible.

The Hebrew word "qadesh" is translated "shrine prostitute" in Deut. 23:17 and 1 Kings 14:24; 15:12; 22:46; and 2 Kings 23:7 in the New International Version; whereas this word is translated "sodomite" in the King James Bible.

The translation "male temple prostitutes" is an interpretation, as is "sodomite." According to Strong's, the Hebrew word "qadesh" means "a (quasi) sacred person, i.e. (techn.) a (male) devotee (by prostitution) to licentious idolatry." In the Authorized Version this Hebrew word is translated "sodomite" and "unclean." The term "sodomite" was brought over from the Geneva Bible, because the translators understood that the sin described in these passages is associated with the moral perversion of old Sodom. Many older Bible dictionaries connect sodomy with homosexuality in general. Eadie (1872) defines Sodomite as "not dwellers in Sodom, but practisers of unnatural lust--the sin of Sodom. This sin was consecrated in many Eastern kingdoms." The *People's Bible Encyclopedia* by Charles Randall Barnes (1903) says: "The sodomites were not inhabitants of Sodom, nor their descendants, but men consecrated to the unnatural vice of Sodom (Gen. 19:5; comp. Rom. 1:27) as a religious rite." Note that Barnes associates the sin of sodomy with the homosexuality described in Romans 1:27. Hastings (1898) says: "The term 'Sodomite' is used in Scripture to describe offences against the laws of nature which were frequently connected with idolatrous practices." Note that Hastings did not claim that the offences against the laws of nature were restricted solely to idolatrous temple worship.

The term "sodomy" in these passages doubtless did refer, at least in part, to homosexuality associated with immoral pagan religions,

but IT WAS NOT LIMITED TO THAT. **The problem with the NIV translation is that it LIMITS this sin to that particular connection rather than allowing the larger meaning of homosexual activity in general.** It creates the illusion that the practice of sodomy in the Old Testament and the sin of Sodom itself were limited to male prostitution and plays right into the hands of those today who are trying to excuse their sin by claiming that the Bible only forbids homosexual prostitution rather than homosexuality in general.

7. The NIV confuses Satan with Jesus Christ in Isaiah 14:12.

KJV “How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!”

NIV “How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations.”

The Hebrew word translated “Lucifer, son of the morning” in the KJV and “morning star, son of the dawn” in the NIV is “halal.” According to Strong’s Concordance, it means “to be clear (orig. of sound, but usually of color); to shine; hence, to make a show, to boast; and thus to be (clamorously) foolish; to rave; causatively, to celebrate; also to stultify.” In the KJV this Hebrew word is translated boast, celebrate, commend, glory, give (light), be (make, feign self) mad (against), give in marriage, (sing, be worthy of) praise, rage, renowned, shine.” This Hebrew word is never translated “morning star” or “star” in the King James Bible, because that is not what it means.

Satan is not the morning star, but Jesus Christ is. Twice in Scripture Jesus Christ is referred to as a star. The prophecy in Numbers 24:17 describes the Messiah as “a Star out of Jacob.” The Hebrew word for *star* here is “kawkab,” which is always translated *star* or *stargazer*. In Revelation 22:16 the Lord Jesus describes Himself as “the bright and morning star.” The Greek word here is “aster,” which is the standard word for star.

Thus the KJV, by accurately translating the Hebrew and Greek, maintains a clear distinction between Satan who is Lucifer, the boastful shining one, and Jesus Christ, the bright and morning star.

To mistranslate Isaiah 14:12 as “morning star,” as the NIV does, creates great confusion.

For a more extensive study of the New International Version see Jack Moorman’s *Modern Bibles: The Dark Secret*, which is available from Plain Paths Publishers (P.O. Box 830, Columbus, NC 28722, <http://www.plainpath.org>, 828-863-2736, plain@juno.com).

CONCLUSION

There is a serious doctrinal issue pertaining to Bible texts and versions, and we must be careful not to accept commonly held myths, such as the idea that the differences between the texts and versions are not large nor significant and that the differences do not affect doctrine.

While we can thank the Lord that sound doctrine in general can be taught from Bible texts and versions in general, this does not mean that one version is as theologically sound as another. We must remember the principal of the sword. The Bible is likened to a sword (Heb. 4:12). This Sword is a part of our spiritual weaponry against the devil (Eph. 6:17). To be effective, a sword must be sharp. While Bible texts or translations in general, even Roman Catholic ones, contain the doctrine of the Christian faith in a broad sense, this does not mean that any one text or version is as effective and sharp as another. Who would think highly of a soldier who does not care if his sword is sharp so long as he has a sword? To say that a text that omits the equivalent of the books of 1 and 2 Peter is as effective as one that has all of these words is ridiculous. I am convinced that the Hebrew Masoretic and the Greek Received Text is the very sharpest Sword.

This is not a light matter. A battle is raging. There are spiritual enemies in high places. Truth is being cast to the ground. It is difficult enough to win the battle when we have the sharpest sword and the most complete armor. Woe unto that Christian whose sword is dull! And yet we have come upon an entire generation of Christians who are slashing away at their spiritual enemies with dull swords, and if a bystander tries to warn them of the folly of this, they rail upon him as divisive and mean-spirited!

