

LIBERTY BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

**A BALANCED BIBLICAL APPROACH TO THE KING JAMES ONLY
CONTROVERSEY**

**A Thesis Project Submitted to
Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree**

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY

A.B. Brown

Lynchburg, Virginia

April 7, 2010

LIBERTY BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

THESIS PROJECT APPROVAL SHEET

GRADE

MENTOR, Dr. Homer Massey
Associate Professor of Religion
Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary

READER, Dr. David Wheeler
Associate Professor of Evangelism
Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	vii
INTRODUCTION.....	viii - x
KJO Movement based upon unbiblical assumption of exclusive divine approval	viii - ix
KJO advocates assume extended use means exclusive divine approval	viii - ix
Four natural human tendencies help explain why some cling to the KJV	ix - x
KJO Movement based upon circular reasoning	ix - x
Only resolution to KJO controversy is submission to authority of Scriptures.....	x
 CHAPTER ONE “The Humanity of the Translation Controversy”	 1-14
Mankind’s natural resistance to change makes changing translations more difficult.....	1
The continuing evolution of language creates a need for contemporary translations	1 – 2
KJV revised in 1762 and 1769 due to changes in the Language	2
Publication of the Defined King James Bible recognizes changes in language	3
Resistance to change led many to cling to Septuagint rejecting the Vulgate in A.D. 406...4 - 7	4 - 7
Resistance to change led many to cling to their Vulgate and reject Greek text in 1516....	9 – 10
The Longer a translation is used, the stronger the resistance to change	9
Humans crave a sense of comfort and security brought by traditional translations.....	10
Factors minimizing resistance to the KJV.....	11 – 12
Early Resistance to the KJV	10 – 11
Factors that Reduced Resistance to the KJV	11 - 12
Conclusion - The Church has Fought and Won the Translation Battle Before.....	12 - 14
 CHAPTER TWO “The Myth of the Sacred Halo”	 15 – 65
Linguistic Evolution demands either Revisions or Modern Translation.....	15
Definition of the Sacred Halo Syndrome	15 - 16
Five Assumptions of those Afflicted with the Sacred Halo Syndrome.....	18 - 19
The Pure Hands Hypothesis of David Sorenson and Other KJV Advocates	18 – 19
False “Logic of Faith” Assumptions of Edwin Hills	19 – 20
A Historical Time Line of the King James Translation	20 - 21
A Brief History of the King James Translation.....	21 – 35
The futile attempt to canonize the translators of the KJV.....	35 – 39
Erasmus does not qualify for sainthood	39 - 52
The tilted halo of King James I	52 – 57
The tilted halo of the texts underlying the KJV	57 – 62
Summary and Conclusions.....	62 - 65
 CHAPTER THREE “Making Mountains out of Molehills”	 66 – 114
KJO/TR advocates’ exaggerations of differences between the TR and MC Text	66

TR gained sacred halo status due to extended use for almost 400 years	67
Fundamentalist Movement birthed under use of MCT	67 - 70
Nineteen editions of the TR denies defacto canonical status of TR.....	70 – 71
Availability of thousands of Greek texts led to recognition of imperfection of TR	72
Ten percent Greek NT in Koine Greek not understood by TR or KJV people.....	73 – 76
Brief history of TR	77 – 87
Defenders of TR	87 – 90
A Brief History of the Modern Critical Text (MCT)	90 -93
Differences between MCT and the TR.....	93 – 108
What the comparison of MCT and TR reveals	108 – 112
Textual problem in every instance where MCT dropped a reading	108
Without autographs nobody can know for certain which reading is correct.....	109
No doctrine jeopardized by the dropped readings.....	109
No discernable plot to deny any doctrine of the faith	109
No wholesale deletion of verses from MCT	109
Unethical to slander those who differ on the validity of questionable readings ...	109 – 110
Text of KJV does not designate TR as being the text of God’s choice.....	110
Problem with some modern translations is the philosophy of translators.....	110
Neither text is a corrupt text.....	111 – 112
Text not the real issue, a backdoor approach to KJO.....	112
Implication of the preceding facts	112 – 113
Conclusion of analysis, differences grossly exaggerated by KJO/TR advocates.....	113 - 114
 CHAPTER FOUR “Fighting for the Holy Book in an Unholy Manner”	 115 – 145
KJO advocates have adopted unholy philosophy of casuistry	115
KJO advocates have adopted a harsh critical attitude toward opposition	115 – 121
KJO advocates have adopted a policy of unholy exaggerations	121 - 127
Unholy exaggeration about the omission of the names Satan and Lucifer	121 – 123
Unholy exaggerations about the corruption of the MCT	124 – 127
Unholy exaggerations about textual omissions	127 - 130
Unholy cultic “me-only” mindset	130 – 132
Unholy practice of willful deception.....	132 – 134
Unholy exaggerations about MCT denial of the doctrine of Hell.....	134 – 136
Unholy exaggerations of the MCT denial of the blood of Christ.....	136 – 137
Unholy tactic of attacking the person instead of his position.....	137 – 141
The holy practice of listening to the other side	141 – 145
Summary and conclusion	145
 CHAPTER FIVE “Who Makes the Rules?”	 146 – 174
First major concern about the KJO movement - Dual Authority	148 - 161
KJO debate revolves around the sole and supreme authority of the Bible.....	146 - 148
John Hus martyred because of his belief in the sole authority of Scriptures	147 – 151
Hus influenced Martin Luther on complete supremacy of Scripture	150
History of the Church determined by her stance on sole authority	151 - 153

Protestant Reformation was a return to the supreme authority of the Bible	151
Impossible to maintain orthodoxy apart from sole authority of Scriptures.....	152
Early church started road to Catholicism when she accepted a dual authority	152 - 156
The depraved heart of fallen man guarantees his abuse of dual authority	153
Mass influx of pagans threatened unity and control of church	153
Church responded to threatened loss of unity and control in three ways.....	153 - 156
Church wrote great orthodox creeds to guarantee doctrinal unity	153 - 154
Church created an unbiblical liturgy, the mass, for unity and control	153 - 155
Church created unbiblical hierarchy for unity and control.....	154 - 155
Acceptance of dual authority opened door to other man-made doctrines.....	155 - 156
KJO movement has, by practice, accepted deadly doctrine of dual authority	156 - 157
Inspired translation is a man-made doctrine not found in Scripture	157
Exclusive preservation via TR and KJV a man-made unbiblical doctrine.....	157
Jesus' major problem with the Pharisees was their doctrine of dual authority	158 - 161
Dual authority removes God as the sole authority over His Church.....	159
Dual authority replaces God's Word as His sole voice to His Church	159
Dual authority denies God's omniscience.....	159 - 160
Dual authority denies God's absolute omnipotence.....	160
Dual authority denies the complete sufficiency of the Scriptures.....	160
Dual authority gives dangerous authority and control to men	160
Dual authority is dangerous because moves from grace toward works	160 - 161
Second concern about KJO movement – Disregard of Scripture's moral authority	161 - 164
KJO unethical practices reflect a disregard for moral authority of Scriptures.....	161
Doctrine controls deeds, belief determine behavior, and precepts regulate practice	162
Rejection doctrinal authority results in rejection of moral authority	162
Rejection of moral authority of Scriptures poses several dangers	163 - 164
Third major concern about the KJO movement is their cultic mindset.....	164 - 174
Cults operate with a closed mind	165 - 168
Cults are antagonistic toward those who oppose them.....	168 - 169
Cults have a dual authority.....	169 - 170
Cults ignore the established rules of interpretation.....	170 - 173
Cults manifest a "me-only" mentality.....	173
Cults manifest little regard for the great orthodox creeds of the church.....	173 - 174
 CHAPTER SIX "So What?"	 175 - 190
The title of this work suggests allowing the Bible to resolve the issue	175
The title of this chapter means "so what does the Bible say?"	175
Key to resolving the issue is submission to the authority of the Bible	175 - 176
Christian truth is a living truth that demands responses.....	177 - 178
Christian truth always demands validation from the Scriptures	177
Christian truth always a response of submission by man to its demands	177
The two basic demands of truth, validation and submission are inseparable.....	177
Modern translations must be validated from Scripture	177 - 178
Does your modern translation deny any fundamentals of the faith?.....	178
Does it use debased language to the extent that it loses respect and authority.....	178

Is it a legitimate translation or an interpretive commentary?	178
Were its translators theologically sound?.....	178
Would I want this to be the only translation my child ever heard or used?	178
Am I willing to admit any positive contributions of my KJO friends?.....	178
Is my attitude toward my KJO brethren biblical	178
Have I been intimidated by KJO advocates into not using a modern translation?....	178
KJO beliefs and practices must be validated from Scriptures.....	178 – 184
Does the Bible validate the perpetual and exclusive use of the KJV?	178 - 179
Does the Bible validate that longevity equals divine approval?	180
Does the Bible validate the providential preservation of the KJV and TR?	180 - 181
Does the Bible validate the superiority of the KJV and TR?	181
Does the Bible validate all variants in KJV or TR were in the autographs?....	181 - 182
Does the Bible validate the unethical practices of KJO advocates?	182
Does the Bible validate attacking the person instead of his position?	182 - 184
KJO advocates are guilty of irrational reasoning	185 - 187
Error by the right is just as dangerous as error by the left.....	187
A lie told by the right is just as wicked as a lie told by the left.....	187
Slander by the right is just as sinful as slander by the left	187
Truth is a straight line which favors neither the right nor the left.....	187
Many intimidated into silence by KJO peers	188
Silence not always golden, sometimes it is yellow	188
Some silenced by fear of loss of position, popularity, and income.....	188
Silence strengthens and emboldens KJO advocates.....	188
Church has fought this battle on previous occasions and remained orthodox	189 - 190
APPENDIX A “English Translations Preceding the King James Translation”	191 - 200
APPENDIX B “The Alexandrian Text”.....	201 - 204
APPENDIX C “The Byzantine Text”	205 - 209
APPENDIX D “The Superiority of the Textus Receptus”.....	210 - 223
APPENDIX E “The False Doctrine of Plenary Preservation”	224 – 237

Abstract

This study is designed to approach the present translation controversy from a biblical perspective by demonstrating that, by creating King James Only doctrines not found in the Scriptures, King James Only advocates deny both the sole authority and the complete sufficiency of the Scriptures. Their unbiblical assumptions about the King James translation and its underlying texts transform the debate from a debate over translations into a critical doctrinal debate over their acceptance of a dual authority created by their man-made doctrines and their refusal to submit to both the moral and doctrinal authority of the Scriptures.

Introduction

“There is an idea abroad today in some circles of fundamentalism that any translation other than the beloved King James is a fraud, a fake, an imposter sailing under a false title when called ‘the Word of God.’”¹ King James Only advocates view themselves as the end-times remnant called by God to save the Church by saving it from modern translations and modern critical Greek texts, which they view as deceptive tools of the Devil to destroy the Church. Here is how one King James Only advocate voiced it,

I believe this Book will always be the unsurpassable pre-eminent English version of the Holy Bible and no other can ever take its place. To seek to dislodge this Book from its rightful pre-eminent place is the act of the enemy, and what is attempted to put in its place is an Intruder - an imposter - a pretender - a usurper.²

One will never understand their fervency and adamancy over the continued and perpetual use of the King James translation until he understands that they view their beloved translation and its underlying texts as having a sacred halo surrounding them which no modern text or translation can ever possess. King James Only advocates accept without question their foundational assumption that their beloved translation and its underlying texts are the texts and translation of God’s choice to the exclusion of all others.

They base this assumption of divine approval primarily upon their extended use. Thus, longevity equals divine approval. These two assumptions are viewed as truisms that are to be accepted without question or biblical validation since neither are found in the Scriptures.

¹ Robert L. Sumner, “Bible Translations,” *The Biblical Evangelist*, January, 1979.

² Ian R. K. Paisley, *My Plea for the Old Sword* (Greenville, South Carolina: Emerald House, 1997), 11.

There are some natural human explanations in regards to why people naturally cling to a translation which has been in use for almost four hundred years. It was these same natural human tendencies that also gave rise to the battles that were waged when the transition was made from the Septuagint to the Latin Vulgate in A.D. 406 and from the Vulgate to the Textus Receptus in 1516.

First of all, *man is born with a natural resistance to change*. Second, it will be shown that *the longer a practice or belief has been held, the more tenaciously it will be clung to and the stronger will be the resistance to change*. When applied to the translation issue it means that the longer a translation has been in use, the higher it will be venerated, and the stronger will be the resistance to changing to a more contemporary translation.

Third, *human beings also naturally crave a sense of comfort and security*. This is especially true in critical matters of their lives. And, the more critical the issue is, the more certainty is demanded. The longer a tradition or a translation has been in place the more people feel comfortable and secure with it. This one factor helps to explain the deep love and loyalty to the King James Bible and the strong resistance to changing from it to a more contemporary translation.

Another human explanation for the tendency to cling to the King James translation is what this author calls *the sacred halo syndrome*. This has to do with the natural tendency of man to allow his deep emotional attachment to a long-standing tradition to take the place of rational thought and make emotional decisions assigning to the King James translation and its underlying texts a mystical aura of immutable perfection that no other text or translation can ever possess.

This sacred halo syndrome is very evident in their circular reasoning. They begin by making an emotional decision that the translation of their choice is also the translation of God's choice. Although they have no biblical basis for this assumption, they nevertheless accept it as a truism and many have a belligerent attitude toward who do not also accept their unfounded assumption.

Because it is the translation of God's choice, it has a special providential preservation that other texts and translations do not and cannot have. Then, because they have been exclusively providentially preserved, the Textus Receptus and the King James translation are the exclusive texts and translation chosen by God to preserve the message of the autographs. Based upon these assumptions, none of which have a biblical basis, they continue their circular reasoning by assuming that all other texts and translations are both corrupt and unnecessary.

It appears that out of this sacred halo syndrome King James Only advocates have also assumed that God has granted them a special privilege to violate biblical ethics and doctrines and distort what their opposition says and then attack them personally instead of their position. They exaggerate the corrupt nature of all modern texts and translations. In response to their exaggerations, there will be a comparison given between the Textus Receptus and the Modern Critical Text which will demonstrate that the charges of corruption are grossly over exaggerated.

In their creation of unbiblical doctrines to demand the continued and exclusive use of the King James translation, King James Only advocates have created a dual authority for their movement. The final two chapters will be a discussion of the sole and supreme authority of the Scriptures and their total sufficiency as these two critical doctrines relate to the deadly doctrine of dual authority.

The only possible realistic resolution to the entire debate is the willingness of both sides to bow to the sole and supreme authority of the Scriptures and allow Jesus, who is the Head of His Church, to resolve the controversy through what His Word says or does not say about the translation/text issue.

Chapter One

THE HUMANITY OF THE TRANSLATION CONTROVERSY

One of the problems with Christians is that, even after they have been regenerated and indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and even after they have been justified and sanctified, they continue to act much like real genuine human beings. One of the things common to the human race is that human beings are naturally resistant to change. Most pastors will readily testify that this resistance to change may be natural to the human race, but it is especially true of Christians. Breaking with tradition in a local church (the way it has always been done) is like pulling teeth without Novocain.

All men are creatures of habit, and habit is doing the same thing in the same way over and over again until it becomes accepted and expected behavior. Long standing habits become tradition. Tradition eventually carves deep ruts that provide a sense of comfort and security. People become comfortable with a tradition and the longer a tradition is in place the more deeply ingrained it becomes and the more difficult it is to change.

A part of man's natural resistance to change is due to the fact that he is aware that he lives in a constantly changing world. Therefore, he looks for things on which he can anchor his life that are not subject to change. It is these unchanging traditions that help bring to him a sense of comfort and security. It is like the old proverb, "Everybody is in favor of progress. It's the change they don't like."

One of the constantly changing things in our world is human language. D.A. Carson gives two major influences in the rapid evolution of the English language as it relates to the inclusive language debate, which has to do with the use of gender free terms. He writes,

For reasons still to be advanced, I am persuaded that in the Western English-speaking countries we are undergoing changes in the area of grammatical gender that are deep, fairly widespread, and probably not reversible. What has brought them about? Here I shall mention two factors, apart from the tensions in the language already present and straining for relief. Doubtless there are others. First, there is no downplaying the importance of the feminist influence. Second, we cannot deny, I think that some of the pressure for change springs from a profound abandonment of the Bible's worldview, the Bible's culture, the Bible's story line, as that has been mediated to us by the various English Bibles.¹

The English language is now evolving more rapidly than ever. This modern phenomenon is certainly influenced by the two things that Carson mentions, but even more influential is the rapid increase of technology and the resulting technological terminology that is presently being infused into our language. The word "mouse" has taken on a whole new meaning since the advent of computers. The word "cursor" is readily understood by the younger generations as a part of their language. The words "gigabites" and "megabites" are modern technological terms unheard of by the general populace just a few years ago.

The list of new terms widely used and understood by the technologically savvy generations of Americans today sometimes makes it difficult for grandparents to effectively communicate with their grandchildren. Computers have forever changed our world and our language.

However, language has always evolved. It just evolved slower. An excellent illustration of the evolving nature of language is seen in the many changes between the time of the publication of the original King James in 1611 and the revisions that were made in the 1762 Cambridge and 1769 Oxford editions, which is the edition of the King James that is commonly used today. Of these changes, James White wrote, "The KJV that is carried by the average KJV Only advocate today looks very different than the edition that came off the press of Robert Barker in 1611."²

¹ D. A. Carson, *The Inclusive Language Debate* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 187,189.

² James R. White, *The King James Only Controversy* (Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers,

The John 3:16 translation in the original 1611 edition reads, “For God so loued y world, that he gaue his only begotten Sonne: that whosoeuer beleeueth in him, should not perish, but haue euerlasting life.” The absence of the article “the” before the word “world” represents a linguistic change. The spelling and pronunciation are radically different. These changes do not begin to match the immense changes in the English language between 1769 and the present. The advent of the technological revolution during the last forty years has more radically altered the English language than at any time in history.

It is this constant evolution of the English language that creates the demand for translations using contemporary twenty-first century language which the younger generations understand. One of the best proofs of the evolution of our language is provided by a strong King James Only advocate, D. A. Waite, who has published a King James Bible called *The Defined King James Bible*. He says that there are 618 archaic, obsolete, and difficult words in the King James translation which he defines or gives the contemporary equivalent in footnotes. This Bible is an unintentional admission by King James Only advocates of the evolution of the English language and the need to revise the King James translation which they do in footnotes but refuse to put these words in the text itself.

It is the essential nature and message of the Christian Bible that dictates the translation of this, the world’s most important Book, into every language on planet earth. Bible translation is and has always been vital to the propagation of the Christian religion. On the other hand, false religion has historically sought to keep the Bible in the hands of professional religionists to enhance their power and their control over the minds of the masses that they seek to suppress and oppress. Deceitful power-hungry men have long sought to use religion to control the masses, and spiritual ignorance is a vital key in their ability to suppress them.

This has been a driving factor in motivating godly men to translate and make the Bible available to the masses of mankind. Therefore, church history testifies to the fact that since her earliest days the Church has been involved in translating the Word of God into other languages and in creating newer translations when the evolution of human language created the need for a more contemporary translation.

However, history also reveals that the Church has almost always met with resistance when she has moved to replace a long-standing translation with a more contemporary translation. The present translation controversy is not new to the Church of Jesus Christ. She has fought and won this battle before while remaining true to Jesus and His Word. History reveals that in every instance a long-standing translation was replaced it met with strong resistance.

This natural human reluctance to giving up a long-standing translation is seen in the opposition to the introduction of the Latin Vulgate in A.D. 406 as a replacement for the Septuagint, which had been in use by the Church for four hundred years. Greek had become the international language of the day and many Jews in Egypt no longer spoke Hebrew and needed their Hebrew Scriptures translated into Greek . This was done in around 250 B.C.

This Greek translation quickly became the standard text of Greek speaking Jews and when many of them were saved, they brought their Septuagint into the Christian Church with them. Of its popularity, Eugene Peterson wrote, “As it turned out, this Greek translation was the Bible of the first Christian church, their ‘authorized’ version.”³

The best testimony to the extensive use of the Septuagint by the early Church is the fact that it is quoted by various authors of the New Testament, even in places where it disagrees with the traditional Hebrew text. Concerning the extensive use of the Septuagint by the authors of the New Testament, Peterson wrote,

3. Eugene H. Peterson, *Eat This Book* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2006), 126.

When Paul wrote his letters to the newly formed Christian communities and quoted from the Bible . . . he almost always quoted from this Greek translation. When Mark wrote his groundbreaking Gospel, he made 68 distinct references to the Old Testament of which 25 are exact or nearly exact quotations from the Greek translation.⁴

In reference to Paul's use of the Septuagint, Zahn wrote, "He is perfectly familiar with the LXX, and follows it in most of his quotations from the OT."⁵

Just like today with the King James Version, due to the extended use of the Septuagint, some Christians had come to believe that it was an inspired translation. The story was circulated that seventy or seventy-two translators met together and then separated to their individual workplace to translate. Then, when they had finished and met together to compare their completed translations, they found that each individual translator had miraculously produced a translation that was exactly alike all the other translations. Over the centuries this traditional text had eventually acquired a mystical aura of immutable perfection in the early church.

Due to the rise and dominion of the Roman Empire, by the fifth century, Greek had ceased to be the international language of the times. Of this Benson Bobrick wrote, "Meanwhile, the Roman empire had supplanted the empire of Alexander the Great, and imposed its language and culture on Christian communities throughout its vast domains."⁶ Therefore, by the fifth century, much of the Western Church was speaking Latin. This change in languages demanded a change in translations.

By the second century A.D., the Church had already produced a number of Latin translations. Apparently, some of these translations were translated by men who were not proficient as translators which resulted in a number of corrupted texts at a relatively early

⁴. Ibid, 126,127.

⁵. Theodor Zahn, *Introduction to The New Testament*, vol. 1, trans. John Trout et al. (Minneapolis: Klock & Klock Christian Publishers, reprint 1953), 52.

⁶. Benson Bobrick, *Wide As The Waters, The Story of The English Bible and The Revolution It Inspired* (New York: Rockefeller Center, 2001), 14.

stage in the transmission process of the biblical text. Aland and Aland say that both Augustine and Jerome complained about these corrupt translations. They wrote,

Augustine complained, for example, in his *De doctrina christiana* (in a passage apparently written before 396/397) that anyone obtaining a Greek manuscript of the New Testament would translate it into Latin, no matter how little he knew of either language (ii.16). This agrees with Jerome's complaint about the variety of texts found in the Latin manuscripts of his time (ca. 347-419/420).⁷

These early Latin texts are referred today as the Old Latin. By the middle of the fourth century, church leaders recognized that the text had been corrupted by poor translators and careless copyists. Thus, the text needed to be restored. Concerning this need to restore the text, Bobrick wrote,

By the middle of the fourth century several variants were in circulation and the overall corruption of the text had become intolerable to Church authorities. About 382 A.D. Pope Damasus therefore invited Eusebious Hieronymus (afterward known as St. Jerome) to revise it. And this he undertook to do . . . Jerome began his revision at once . . . but then in 391 abandoned this procedure altogether and decided to translate directly from the original tongues. In 404, after many years of labor, he at last came forth with a substantially new and idiomatic Latin translation of the whole.⁸

Jerome, who was the Erasmus of his day, was one of the few men competent in both Greek and Hebrew and therefore well-qualified to make a contemporary translation. Bobrick described his scholastic skills as follows,

No one was more qualified. Born in northern Italy in 346, Jerome had been schooled in the classical rhetorical tradition of Rome, traveled through Gaul, Thrace, and Asia Minor, and for many years lived as a hermit in the Syrian Desert, where he acquired knowledge not only of Hebrew but of Chaldee, which is the Semitic language of southern Babylonia. At some point, he also studied in Byzantium with scholars of the Eastern Church. With this deep knowledge of all things Biblical, he was the outstanding biblical scholar of his day."⁹

In some places he followed the Hebrew text when it differed from the Septuagint and in

⁷. Kurt Aland, and Barbara Aland, *The Text of The New Testament*, trans. Enroll F. Rhodes, Second ed. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishers, 1989), 187.

⁸. Bobrick, *Wide As The Waters*, 14,15.

⁹. Ibid.

other places he followed the Greek text of the Septuagint. In the story of Jonah, the Hebrew word for “gourd” is difficult. Jerome translated it as “caster-oil plant,” which was in keeping with the Palestinian interpretation of the Hebrew word.

The replacement of the traditional Septuagint word “gourd,” with “caster-oil plant” caused a near riot in North Africa, where the famous Augustine was bishop. He wrote to Jerome and did not object to his use of the term “caster-oil plant” because it was an inaccurate translation of the Hebrew word; he rejected it because it was unfamiliar. Ultimately, Augustine based his objection upon tradition established by the Septuagint.

The Septuagint had been used long enough for it to become the traditional text of the Western Church. Therefore, Jerome’s Latin translation would be judged by how closely it paralleled the traditional text, and not on how accurately it translated the Hebrew and Greek texts. Anyone vaguely familiar with the present day King James Only controversy has heard that same reasoning in rejecting modern translations. They do not reject the language of modern translations because it does not accurately translate the message of the Greek or Hebrew texts, they reject it because it does not agree with the language of the King James translation with which they are familiar. (One wonders why the Church would bother making a translation which had to parallel the translation it was supposed to replace.)

Concerning the early resistance this modern translation met, Bobrick wrote,

Although a work of great magnitude, felicity, and skill, Jerome’s translation was not accorded an immediate welcome by the Church. His enemies alleged that it was “tainted with Judaism,” while conservatives automatically adhered to the older Greek and Latin versions which had “a halo of sanctity” about them from long and familiar use.¹⁰

Jerome was exasperated by the resistance which greeted his arduous labors to put into the hands of the people of the West a good copy of the originals in their tongue. Bobrick

¹⁰. Ibid.

describes Jerome's response and the gradual recognition of his labors as follows.

“. . . in obedience to the precepts of the Savior, I have, for the good of souls, chosen to prepare the bread which perishes not and have wished to clear the path of truth of the weeds which ignorance have sown in it, I am accused of a twofold crime. If I correct errors in the Sacred Text, I am denounced as a falsifier; if I do not correct them, I am pilloried as a disseminator of error.” At his death at Bethlehem in A.D. 420, his translation had yet to receive the recognition it deserved. But over time resistance gave way to admiration, and admiration to wonder, tinged with awe; by the early seventh century the Vulgate, or “common version,” as his translation came to be known, was in general use by Churches throughout the Christian West. Eventually, it acquired that mystical aura of immutable perfection which for many Christians has enveloped it ever since.¹¹

Once again, the strong resistance met by the introduction of the Vulgate to replace a long standing traditional translation is partially explicable in light of the natural resistance of human nature to change. This was true in the fifth century with the introduction of the Vulgate to replace the Septuagint. It was true in the sixteenth century with the introduction of the Textus Receptus and Erasmus' Latin translation to replace the Vulgate, and is still true in the twenty-first century with the introduction of modern translations to replace the King James translation. So, regardless of the era, human beings are resistant to change.

Although Jerome's Vulgate created a violent uproar in some circles in its early days when it was a “modern translation,” it eventually caught on and became the accepted or “common version” of the Western Church for over eleven hundred years. And, with the passing of time, Jerome was eventually elevated to the same saintly status that Erasmus enjoys with most King James Only advocates today.

After being used long enough to reach the status of becoming the traditional Bible of the Church, Jerome's Vulgate then enjoyed the same allegiance or “mystical aura of immutable perfection” that the King James translation enjoys in some circles today. Yet, even with it being awarded with an aura of immutable perfection (sacred halo), the Vulgate was far from perfect. Lorenza Valla, a fifteenth century Italian humanist, recognized that

¹¹ Ibid.

the Vulgate quotes in the commentaries of Jerome, which had not been used that much and had therefore not been hand-copied as many times, was different in many places from the current copies of the Vulgate. Valla concluded that since the commentaries had not been copied as many times as the Vulgate, they would be more likely to be closer to Jerome's original text than current texts which had been copied over and over again for eleven hundred years.

He secretly made notes on his observations about the corruption of the text because any criticism of the Vulgate constituted a serious charge in that day. These notes fell into the hands of Erasmus. Convinced of the corruption of the Vulgate text, Erasmus sought to repair the text but recognized its sacred status and instead published his own Latin translation. He published his Latin translation in parallel form beside the Greek text of his first edition of the *Textus Receptus*.

Even before he published the *Textus Receptus* and his Latin translation, Erasmus received a letter stating that no one would ever accept his claims that the Vulgate contained errors. God would not have allowed the Church to use a text with errors in it for hundreds of years. Thus, the longevity of the Vulgate and God's blessings upon it were proofs of its perfection.

This ancient writer went on to assert that in any place that the Vulgate did not agree with the Greek or Hebrew texts, the Vulgate was the correct reading. Interestingly, that same false claim is being made today about the King James translation. Concerning this opposition, James White wrote,

It would be funny, if it were not so serious. Jerome takes the heat for translating the *Vulgate*, which eventually becomes the standard. Erasmus then takes the heat for challenging Jerome and for publishing the Greek New Testament. Then, four hundred years later, it is Erasmus' work itself, in the form of the *Textus Receptus*, which has become enshrined as "tradition" by advocates of the AV!¹²

Erasmus met with stronger resistance than did Jerome. This stronger resistance is due

¹². White, *The King James Only Controversy*, 17.

to the fact that by Erasmus' day the Vulgate had been in use by the Western Church for over eleven hundred years. It had acquired a mystical aura of immutable perfection which is tantamount to a sacred halo. People had developed a deep emotional attachment to a translation which had been in use for over a thousand years and any suggestion of its need of being revised met with the wrath of Church leaders.

This observation brings us to the second thing about human nature that leads to resistance to changing to a more contemporary translation. *The longer a translation has been in use, the higher it will be venerated, and the stronger will be the resistance to changing to a more contemporary translation.* This is clearly illustrated in James White's remarks about the extreme devotion to the Vulgate when Erasmus introduced his Greek text and his Latin translation. White wrote,

Over the 1,100 years following Jerome's publication of his Latin translation of the Bible, which became known as the *Vulgate*, his work became the most popular translation in Europe. By the early sixteenth century the *Vulgate* was "everyone's Bible." It held the position in the minds of Christians that the Septuagint had held a millennium before. And, just as Jerome himself had ruffled feathers with his "new" translation, so along came a great scholar who again upset the apple cart. This man's name was Desiderius Erasmus.¹³

Eleven hundred years gave ample time for people to develop deep emotional attachments to a translation which had served them for so long. As this veneration grows over the centuries, the translation gains a sacred aura of immutable perfection to the point that the orthodoxy of anyone who questions its accuracy on any issue is brought into question. The text becomes sacred and untouchable although this position demands perfection on the part of the translators and all subsequent copyists.

We have seen two examples of this principle already with the Septuagint and the Vulgate. We are witnessing the same deep attachment and loyalty to the King James translation today. Of this loyalty Philip Comfort wrote,

¹³. Ibid., 13.

Strong adherence to “the KJV only” is based on traditional sentimentality. To many people, the KJV sounds like the Bible because it is different than our modern English. It is old and therefore seems to be authoritative. It is the Bible they heard in church, read on the porch, and memorized time and again. For these people, the KJV is part of their tradition and constitutes their religious culture. Any other Bible just doesn’t sound right.¹⁴

There is a third truth about human nature which also creates a reluctance to change from a long-standing translation. *Human beings naturally crave a sense of comfort and security in critical matters of their lives, and, the more critical the issue is, the more certainty is demanded.* The longer a tradition has been in place, the more certainty it acquires, and the more comfortable and secure people become with it. Therefore, it is only natural for people to feel more comfortable and secure with a translation that has been in use for four hundred years than with a modern translation that has been in use for only a few years. However, based upon this premise, the King James translation would have been rejected in 1611 when it too was a “modern” translation with no track record to bring with it a sense of comfort and security.

Concerning this early opposition, Alister McGrath wrote, “The new translation’s first decades were marked by violent criticism from both Protestant and Catholic opponents, and a failure to gain widespread support.”¹⁵

Some of the Puritans of that day denounced it as being biased toward Anglican practices and doctrines. The Catholic hierarchy would obviously denounce it because it was not approved by the pope and the church hierarchy.

Hugh Broughton, who is described as a cantankerous and aggressive Puritan Hebrew scholar, who wanted to be involved in the translation but was rejected because of his incivility, had some harsh words of denunciation for this modern translation. He denounced it for its errors and for slavishly following the Bishops’ Bible. His solution for

¹⁴. Philip Comfort, *Essential Guide to Bible Versions* (Wheaton: Tyndale Publishing House, 2000), 159.

¹⁵. Alister E. McGrath, *In The Beginning* (New York: Random House, Inc., 2001), 207.

this modern translation was that it be burned.¹⁶

There were some key factors that were prevalent when the King James was first published that helped reduce the resistance to this modern translation. First, it did not have to compete with a long-standing translation that had become the revered traditional translation possessing a mystical aura of immutable perfection. It followed the Bishop's Bible which was published in 1568 which means that it had only been in use for forty-three years when the King James translation was published. Its strongest competition came from the Geneva Bible which had only been on the market since 1550 which means that it had only been in use for sixty-one years when the King James translation was published.

Second, the King James was not a new translation as so many mistakenly think. It was a revision of the Bishop's Bible by orders of the King. Third, at this point in time, England was used to revisions of existing translations. The Bishop's Bible was a revision of Great Bible, which was a revision of the Coverdale Bible, which was a revision of the Tyndale Bible, which was a fresh translation from the Greek and Hebrew texts. The King James Bible is about ninety percent the Tyndale Bible which has subsequently influenced all English translations.

Fourth, it was authorized by the King, by the Anglican Church, and by the Puritans, although they continued to use the Geneva Bible for several decades after the publication of the King James. Fifth, the King James translation was and is an excellent translation.

Philip Comfort wrote of it,

The King James Version, known in England as the Authorized Version because it was authorized by the king, captured the best of all the preceding English translations and exceeded all of them. It was the culmination of all the previous English Bible translations; it united high scholarship with Christian devotion and piety. Furthermore, it came into being at a time when the English language was vigorous and beautiful—the age of Elizabethan English and Shakespearean English. This version has justifiably been called “the noblest monument of English prose.” Indeed, the King James Version has become an enduring monument of

¹⁶. Adam Nicolson, *God's Secretaries, The Making of The King James Bible* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2003), 227,228.

English prose because of its gracious style, majestic language, and poetic rhythms. No other book has had such tremendous influence on English literature, and no other translation has touched the lives of so many English-speaking people for centuries and centuries.¹⁷

America was born with a King James Version of the Bible in her hands. Although the Puritans landed at Plymouth Rock with the Geneva Bible in their hands, they too eventually adopted the King James translation as their Bible. For over 350 years, the beloved King James Bible reigned supreme as the Bible of the land. Up until the last fifty years it faced little competition.

Early America taught her young to read using the King James translation. It served as her core curriculum in her home and church schools. It reached across denominational barriers and became the standard Bible of the American church. It remained the number one selling Bible in America until 1988, when, for the first time, it was surpassed in sales by the New International Version. Recent market surveys indicate that the New International Version has about forty percent of the market share and the King James Version twenty percent.

Summary and Conclusion

The preceding review of past translation controversies when the Church has introduced more contemporary translations proves that the Church has traveled this controversial path before. The same basic arguments used today to defend the King James Only position have been used to defend earlier traditional translations. The Church has changed to modern translations before, but not without doing battle with those who fought fervently to retain the old established traditional translation. However, the majority of God's people have historically seen the need for a more contemporary translation and eventually made the transition. They made the transition and Christ's Church was neither corrupted nor destroyed as so many King James Only advocates predict if the Church abandons their beloved King James translation.

¹⁷. Comfort, *Essential Guide to Bible Versions*, 146.

Jesus is still the Head of His Church. He still guides His Church. He does so primarily through His Word, and His Word at no place forbids the use of modern translations. Neither does it specify a particular translation or text as God's divinely approved translation or text. This silence of the Word of God about texts and translations is why the Church has historically felt free to replace existing translations when the need has arisen.

There is another human factor that is seldom discussed in the translation debate that plays a major role in the loyalty of many to this translation. This human factor is the natural outgrowth of the other factors discussed in this chapter. It has to do with the fact that over the years humans tend to ascribe a sacredness to long-standing translations that grows out of their deep love and loyalty based upon the extended use of their beloved translation. This sacredness is referred to by Bobrick as the "mystical aura of immutable perfection" which this author has chosen to refer to as a "sacred halo."¹⁸

Modern King James Only advocates have clearly attributed to the texts underlying the King James translation and to the translation itself a sacred halo. They have also awarded this mystical aura of immutable perfection to the men involved in the compilation of its underlying texts, to its translators, and to its publishers. In seeking to justify this unique sacredness they have resorted to rewriting history and making up doctrines which have no biblical basis to support their position. This sacred halo will be dealt with more extensively in the next chapter.

¹⁸. Bobrick, *Wide As The Waters*, 15.

Chapter Two

THE MYTH OF THE SACRED HALO

The King James translation of the Bible is indeed a beloved translation that has served the Church of Jesus Christ well. It is not a perfect translation, but it is an excellent translation that has been blessed and greatly used of God. He used this translation to influence the English-speaking world for almost four hundred years as no other book in all of their history. Up until the last fifty years, God has used the King James Bible to shape the culture and the language of the English world. He has used it to bring great revivals to His Church and to sweep multiplied millions into His Kingdom. The King James Bible is unsurpassed in its influence over the English-speaking world.

The demand for its revision, or for it being replaced with a modern translation, does not grow out of the need to replace a bad translation. The need arises out of the evolution of the English language which has made an excellent translation less effective. Seventeenth and eighteenth century English of the King James translation is very different from contemporary twenty-first century language. Alister McGrath hit the nail on the head when he wrote, “Yet translations eventually require revision, not necessarily because they are defective, but because the language into which they are translated itself changes over time.”¹

As strange as it may seem, our King James Only friends live in denial of the rapid evolution of modern English. They live in complete denial of the fact that an excellent translation, which has served the Church so well, is being rapidly outdated and is increasingly becoming unintelligible. This irrational denial of an obvious and undeniable

¹. McGrath, *In The Beginning*, 309.

fact is the result of shifting from making rational decisions based on reason to making irrational decisions based upon emotions. Their loyalty to, and their deep emotional attachment to their beloved King James translation has led them to assign to it an aura of immutable perfection that no other translation possesses or can ever possess. This is what this writer has designated as the “sacred halo syndrome.”

Those afflicted with the sacred halo syndrome will not even allow the substitution of an archaic unintelligible word or phrase in the text. The text has been assigned a mystical aura of immutable perfection which makes it untouchable regardless of the lack of intelligibility of the language. They assign to this translation an exclusive providential origin that guarantees it to be the only translation which retains the exact message of the autographs. They have assigned to the King James Bible a sacred halo of immutable perfection which no other translation possesses or can ever possess.

The sacred halo syndrome is a form of reasoning that is driven primarily by the human emotions. Instead of allowing the obvious facts to dictate its conclusions, it seeks to interpret the facts to support the conclusions it has already reached based upon its deep emotional attachment to the King James translation.

James White gave a very convincing argument about the evolution of language and the resulting need for new or revised translations. He wrote,

Languages change. They evolve and grow. Often this process involves the addition of new terms due to contact with other languages or from improving technology (the KJV translators would think we were speaking a foreign language if we spoke of astronauts, television, downloading, or CD-ROMs). Words change meanings over time due to use, first by small groups, then by the larger populace. Such common terms as “let,” “prevent,” and “communicate” all meant different things to English speakers only a few centuries ago.

The fact that languages change over time is one of the strongest arguments for either the revision of older translations of the Bible, or for completely new translations. It is difficult to understand how KJV Only advocates can resist the logic of the reality that the KJV is written in a form of English that is not readily understandable to people today. It is amazing to listen to people honestly asserting that they think that the KJV is “easier to read” than the modern versions. Surely they must realize that this is so for them only because of their familiarity with the

AV, not because it is, in fact, easier to read! But no, it is actually asserted that the KJV is the simplest, easiest to read version of the Bible.²

Concerning the present day veneration of the King James translation pastor John Quincy Adams wrote in an 1854,

Let it be remembered, that the Bible which we possess is a translation. The words of our English version are invested with Divine authority, only so far as they express just what the original expresses. I present this thought because there is, in the minds of many, a superstitious reverence for the words and phrases of our English version. This being a translation, partakes more or less of the imperfections of the translators; and, in every instance where the original is not clearly and fully translated, it is the word of man, and not the Word of God.³

Concerning this blind loyalty to a translation whose language no longer effectively communicates the message of the autographs, Philip Comfort wrote,

I think it is pointless to try to convince them to use another version. But I would appeal to them to understand why so many other people use modern versions. The primary reason is that people in the twenty-first century just don't understand the KJV. Its language is five hundred years old. Is it any wonder that most bible translators today, working all over the world do not use the KJV in their translations work? And why not? Because they are at war against the KJV? No, most Bible translators greatly respect the KJV for what it is and what it was. But the KJV can't be used in modern translation work for the simple reason that its language and its text are out of date.⁴

It is easy for a person to allow his deep loyalty and his emotional attachment to the King James Bible to lead him to attributing to this translation a mystical aura of immutable perfection that no other translation can ever possess. Ultimately, he will wrap the King James translation in a sacred halo, but once this emotional bridge is crossed, once he allows his emotions to overrule his reason, everything changes. He begins to make irrational assumptions about the King James translation and the texts underlying it that he cannot possibly verify from the Scriptures or from the facts.

This is demonstrated by the fact that, although he has never seen the original texts to

². White, *The King James Only Controversy*, 234.

³. John Quincy Adams, *Baptists, The Only Thorough Religious Reformers* (University of Michigan Library: Scholarly Publishing Office, 2006), 109.

⁴. Comfort, *Essential Guide to Bible Versions*, 159.160.

prove his assumptions, the person who has been afflicted with the sacred halo syndrome assumes an exclusive providential preservation of the King James translation and its underlying texts which can only be proven by having the autographs to prove that assumption. He then assumes the corruption of all other texts which he also cannot verify apart from having the autographs to prove their corruption. He also assumes a providential guidance upon its translators that no other translation or text can have, although he has not one single verse to verify this emotional decision.

This sacred halo is also extended to the men involved in the composition of the texts underlying the King James, to the translators of the King James, to King James who authorized it, and finally, to its publishers. From the writings of some King James Only advocates one would almost conclude that the forty-seven men (the number varies depending upon who you are reading) involved in the actual translation of the King James translation were of a spiritual and scholarly order that can never again be duplicated.

David Sorenson's book, *Touch Not the Unclean Thing*, has this mystical aura of immutable perfection of the King James translation, its underlying texts, and the men involved as the premise of the book. This is stated in his purpose statement.

This book will attempt to document the historic lineage of the two primary textual bases. On the one hand, the history of the Received Text, and particularly one stain thereof, will be found to be associated with our persecuted, martyred brethren in separatist churches across the face of history. On the other hand, the lineage of the critical text will be shown to be linked to apostasy at virtually every step of its history.⁵

Concerning the Modern Critical Text, Sorenson wrote, "When the critical text has been developed by such unholy hands, how can God have had anything to do with it?"⁶

Here is a summary of Sorenson's thesis, which is also the underlying assumption of most King James Only advocates who have been smitten with the sacred halo syndrome.

⁵. David Sorenson, *Touch Not The Unclean Thing* (Duluth, Mn.: Northstar Baptist Ministries, 2001), 5.

⁶. *Ibid.*, 183.

1. You can fully trust the King James translation because it was translated from pure texts.
2. These texts are pure because they were providentially preserved down through the centuries by pure copyists or guardians of the text (the Waldensians).
3. From this providentially preserved pure text, a more pure text was compiled (the Textus Receptus) by the pure hands of Erasmus.
4. This providentially preserved pure text was translated into a pure translation (the King James translation) by pure translators.
5. This providentially preserved translation was authorized by a pure king.

At least Edwin Hills is honest enough to admit that he bases his assumptions about the King James and the texts underlying it on faith. He wrote, “For we are led by *the logic of faith* to the Masoretic Hebrew text, to the New Testament Textus Receptus, and to the King James Version.”⁷ (Emphasis added.) It is critical that the reader note that Dr. Hills openly admits that he did not reach his conclusions about the superiority of the texts underlying the King James nor about the translation itself based upon scholarly research. He clearly states that he arrived at these conclusions by “the logic of faith.”

In the following quote, Hills makes all kinds of faith assumptions which have absolutely no biblical basis. By faith, Hills assumes God’s providential guidance over Erasmus in the preparation of the Greek text underlying the King James. What is even more amazing is his assumption that God used Erasmus to correct the few places in the Traditional Text that needed correction. He wrote,

The first printed text of the Greek New Testament was not a blunder or a setback but a forward step in the providential preservation of the New Testament. Hence the few significant departures of that text from the Traditional Text are only God’s providential corrections of the Traditional Text in those few places in which such corrections were needed. Through the use of Bible-believing Protestants God placed the stamp of His approval on this first printed text, and it became the Textus Receptus (Received Text).⁸

⁷. Edward F. Hills, *The King James Version Defended* (Des Moines, Iowa: The Christian Research Press, 1973), 224.

⁸. *Ibid.*, 193.

Hills assumes that God guided Erasmus, who prepared the first printed text of the Greek New Testament, so that “the few significant departures of that text from the Traditional Text are only God’s *providential corrections* of the Traditional Text *in those few places in which such corrections were needed.*” (Emphasis added)

This statement raises four critical questions. First, if God providentially guided Erasmus to correct the Traditional Text in the few places where it needed correction, would that not dictate that the Textus Receptus is a perfect replica of the originals? Second, how do we explain the fact that Erasmus revised his work five times? One would think that God would get it right the first time.

Third, if Hills’ faith assumption were true, then in all of the places where Stephanus and Beza later changed the text, they corrupted what was already a perfect text. Fourth, who told Hills that Erasmus possessed a providential guidance that no modern textual critic can possess? The Bible certainly does not say that. That is an assumption growing out of the sacred halo syndrome.

Because of these sacred halo syndrome assumptions, it will be extremely helpful to have some basic knowledge of the history of the origin and publication of the King James translation. The following time line is given to give the reader a sense of the overall history of the King James translation and its historical background.

A Historical Time-line of the King James Translation

- 1384 John Wycliffe translated the Bible from the Latin Vulgate into English
- 1456 Johannes Gutenberg produces the first printed Bible, in Latin
- 1516 Erasmus publishes the first of five printed editions of the Greek New Testament
- 1517 Luther nails his Ninety-Five Theses on the church door at Whittenburg
- 1522 Luther publishes his German translation from Erasmus Greek text
- 1526 Tyndale published the New Testament in English translated from the Greek
- 1535 Coverdale Bible published
- 1537 Matthews Bible published, revised into the Great Bible in 1539

- 1550 Geneva Bible, the Bible of the Puritans published under Calvin in Geneva
- 1568 Bibshop's Bible published
- 1603 Elizabeth I dies, succeeded by King James VI of Scotland; becomes King James I of England
- 1604 Hampton Conference and authorization to publish new translation by King James I
- 1610 Death of Richard Bancroft, archbishop of Canterbury who supervised translation
- 1611 King James Bible published
- 1675 King James Bible published by Cambridge University Press
- 1769 King James Bible revised

(Appendix A contains a brief history of the English translations preceding the King James translation.)

A Brief History of the King James Bible (1611)

When James VI of Scotland became King James I of England in 1603, he inherited a religiously divided nation. The Anglican Church, established by Henry VIII, was the official church of the nation. Henry did not break with Rome because of deep Protestant convictions, he broke with Rome and established the Anglican Church primarily because of political, financial, and carnal reasons. Therefore, the Reformation in England was not theologically based, and because of this, the Anglican Church was not a Church deeply committed to the Protestant theology of Luther. It also retained many of the high church rituals of Rome.

Because the English Reformation was basically politically motivated and initiated by the king and not the clergy, there was still a large Catholic element in England which the new king needed to pacify. Then, there was also a large and growing Puritan population which was Calvinistic in its theology. They were also making demands for change in the Anglican Church, which was the state church. Concerning King James' need to unify the nation religiously, Bryan Bevan wrote, "His object was to unite the various fractured rival factions of the English church - a very difficult task - the high-church Anglicans, with the

low-church Puritans.”⁹

During the days of Elizabeth, each of these warring factions bided their time while hoping for a replacement that would be more friendly to their cause. Since James VI of Scotland had been king of a country which was basically a Presbyterian state, the Puritans saw his coronation as King of England as a good sign for their cause. However, such was not the case. James had only tolerated the Calvinists in Scotland, but secretly held them in contempt. Probably his early childhood under the guidance of strict Presbyterians who showed him little affection had something to do with his dislike for the Puritans, whose theology was that of the Presbyterians.

His disdain for the Puritans was not primarily theologically motivated. It was primarily politically motivated. The problem was their opposing views on government. As noted previously, King James I believed in the political theory, the Divine Rights of Kings, which was a political theory created to justify government by kings. According to this political theory, his authority rested upon a divine commission and not the consent of the people as the Puritans believed.

Popular Sovereignty, which was the political theory of the Puritans, shifted the right to rule from a divine right to the consent of the people. The king could be replaced by the people if he did not rule righteously. It was these opposing views on government which placed the newly crowned king and the Puritans on opposite sides of the political and religious spectrum. The king saw the Anglican Church and its hierarchal system as his ally and his best tool in guaranteeing his right to rule.

He also saw the potential threat to his rule posed by the Geneva Bible with its Calvinistic notes advocating Popular Sovereignty. This helps to explain why King James so readily jumped at the suggestion of Reynolds at the Hampton Court Conference in 1604 that a new translation of the Bible be made. It was this which, probably more than

⁹. Bryan Bevan, *King James VI of Scotland and I of England* (57 Cromwell Gardens, London: Rubicon Press, 1996), 84.

anything else, motivated King James I to gladly authorize the King James translation.

History would shortly prove the King's fears of the political theory of Popular Sovereignty to be well founded. In less than twenty years after his death a civil war erupted in 1642 between these factions which resulted in James' son, King Charles I, being beheaded in 1649. Called by some the Puritan War, it ended in 1648 with the Puritans overthrowing the monarchy and establishing a commonwealth under the leadership of Oliver Cromwell.

The commonwealth fell apart upon his death in 1658, partly because he had not established a means for his successor. The monarchy was reestablished in 1660 and still stands today, although hardly more than a figurehead.

In 1604 James called the Hampton Court conference as an attempt at some type reconciliation between these warring parties. The Puritans, who had submitted to him the Millenary Petition containing about a thousand signatures concerning their grievances, could no longer be ignored. The king's disdain for the Puritans is reflected in the make-up of the conference. It was heavily weighted toward the established Anglican Church which James viewed as his ally in holding power. The Puritans were not allowed to nominate their own representatives and were allowed only four representatives while the Anglican establishment had nineteen representatives.

The king treated the Puritans with rudeness at the conference, but still John Reynolds, the Puritan president of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, seized the opportunity to propose an authorized version of the Bible suitable for all parties of the Church. Just exactly why Reynolds made this proposal is not clear since the Puritans were very satisfied with their Geneva Bible with its Calvinistic notes.

It has been suggested by some that Reynolds might have thought that James would respond by authorizing their precious Geneva Bible as the establishment's choice as a means of pacifying them since they had been so unfairly treated. Otherwise, Reynold's suggestion hardly makes sense in light of the Puritan devotion to their beloved Geneva

Bible, which was the most popular Bible in England at that time.

King James I saw this suggestion as an opportunity to portray himself as a peacemaker and immediately voiced his approval. It would give opportunity to replace the Bishop's Bible which never really caught on with the populace. However, above all, it would afford him the opportunity to rid himself (and England) of the Geneva Bible which was offensive both to the king and to Anglicans, not because it was a bad translation, but because of its Calvinistic notes and its advocacy of Popular Sovereignty.

He ratified the idea, but he provided no funding for the enormous translation costs, nor did he provide any funds for printing which would require a huge investment up front. He did authorize a letter to the leading clergy suggesting promotions for those who participated in the translation work. The king did not provide funding because the funds were not available. Of this shortage of funds, one historian on King James' life wrote,

Financing the new bible presented a considerable problem for James, because his Exchequer was bare and it was urgent for the King to fund the translation. On July 22 he wrote to Bancroft, telling him to make a levy, a royal surcharge on the English clergy, but this had little effect and they contributed hardly anything. The universities were rather more generous, for some of the Cambridge colleges offered a small stipend to the translators. Finally, however, the erudite and devoted men who took part in this noble project made enormous financial sacrifices during the six years it took to produce King James' Bible.¹⁰

One thing which James specified about the new translation which reveals much about his motives in authorizing it was his requirement that the new translation not have any interpretative notes. The only notes permissible were notes explaining Greek and Hebrew words where needed. This would also make the translation more acceptable to all theological factions within the religiously divided nation. This directive of the King was set forth by Bancroft in rule six of his rules of translation given below.

The guiding principles to be used in the translation process were laid out by Richard Bancroft, the new Anglican archbishop of Canterbury, and approved by the king. It was

¹⁰ Ibid, 85.

also Bancroft who would be primarily responsible for the process of selecting those who would be on the various translation committees. This meant that the King James Version would ultimately be the product of the Anglican clergy, although there were some token Puritans such as John Reynolds on the various committees.

It is important that the reader understand that the translators did not start with a blank sheet of paper on which they created a completely new and fresh translation. The King James Bible is a revision of the Bishop's Bible, which is ultimately a revision of previous translations, all of which trace their roots back to the Tyndale translation. This was dictated by the first rule of translation set forth by Bancroft which specifically stated that the translators would follow the Bishop's Bible and only alter it where the Hebrew and Greek texts demanded. Rule fourteen then states that when the Hebrew and Greek texts dictate a departure from the Bishop's Bible, they would then follow the Tyndale, Matthews, Coverdale, Whitchurch, or the Geneva Bible.

The men of this era saw themselves as standing on the shoulders of their predecessors. They held in high regard those who had labored in the field of original languages and translation and sought to build upon their labors. It is this factor which explains why English translations subsequent to Tyndale were largely a revision of his work. This also helps to explain the retention of the "thee's" and "thous" which were changing to the use of "you" and "your" by the time the King James Version was translated. They had been used in the Bishop's Bible, which had been published in 1568, which was a revision of the Great Bible, which was a revision of Roger's revision of the Tyndale Bible, which was published in 1526.

The texts that the translators used are given by Farstad who wrote,

For the OT, the translators used the rabbinic Hebrew Bibles of 1519 and 1525 and the Hebrew text found in the Complutensian and Antwerp Polyglots. For the NT, printed Greek texts by Erasmus, Stephanus, Beza, and the Complutensian Polyglot were used. They also "diligently compared" and revised all of the available English Bibles, the Septuagint, the Vulgate, the Targum, and versions in other modern languages. In short, these learned men left no stone unturned to

produce an accurate, beautiful, and complete Bible.”¹¹

The translators, in their introduction to the 1611 King James Version, made it clear that they viewed themselves as building upon the labors of their predecessors. They wrote,

Truly (good Christian Reader) we never thought from the beginning, that we should need to make a new Translation, nor yet to make a bad one a good one . . . but to make a good one better, or out of many good ones, one principal good one, not justly to be excepted against; that hath been our endeavor, that our mark.

This approach to the King James translation was dictated by the very first rule guiding the translators handed down to the various translation committees by Bishop Bancroft. They are given below.

Anglican Archbishop Richard Bancroft’s Translation Rules

1. The Ordinary Bible read in the Church, commonly called the *Bishop’s Bible*, is to be followed, and as little altered as the Truth of the originals will permit.
2. The names of the Prophets, and the Holy Writers, with the other Names of the Text, to be retained, as nigh as may be, accordingly as they were vulgarly used.
3. The Old Ecclesiastical Words to be kept, *viz.* the Word *Church* not to be translated *Congregation* & c.
4. When a Word hath divers Significations, that to be kept which hath been most commonly used by the most of the Ancient Fathers, being agreeable to the Propriety of the Place, and the Analogy of the Faith.
5. The Division of the Chapters to be altered, either not at all, or as little as may be, if Necessity so require.
6. No Marginal Notes at all to be affixed, but only for the explanation of the Hebrew or Greek Words, which cannot without some circumlocution, so briefly and fitly be expressed in the Text.
7. Such Quotations of Places to be marginally set down as shall serve for the fit Reference of one Scripture to another.
8. Every particular Man of each Company, to take the same Chapter or Chapters, and having translated or amended them severally by himself, where he thinketh good, all to meet together, confer what they have done, and agree for their Parts what shall stand.
9. As any one Company hath dispatched any one Book in this Manner they shall send it to the rest, to be considered of seriously and judiciously, for His Majesty is very careful in this point.
10. If any company, upon Review of the Book so sent, doubt or differ upon any Place, to send them Word thereof; note the Place, and withal sent the Reasons, to which if they consent not, the Difference to be compounded at the general Meeting, which is to be of the chief Persons of each Company, at the end of the Work.

¹¹. Arthur Farstad, *The New King James Version* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1989), 23.

11. When any Place of special Obscurity is doubted of, Letters to be directed by Authority to any Learned Man in the Land for his Judgment of such a Place.
12. Letters to be sent from every bishop to the rest of his Clergy, admonishing them of this Translation in hand; and to move and charge as many skillful in the Tongues; and having taken pains in that kind, to send his particular Observations to the Company, either at Westminster, Cambridge, or Oxford.
13. The Directors in each Company, to be Deans of *Westminster* and *Chester* for that Place; and the King's Professors in the *Hebrew* or *Greek* in either University.
14. These translations to be used when they agree better with the Text than the Bishop's Bible: *Tindoll's*, *Matthew's*, *Coverdale's*, *Whitchurch's*, *Geneva*.
15. Besides the said Directors before mentioned, three or four of the most Ancient and Grave Divines, in either of the Universities, not employed in Translating, to be assigned by the vice-Chancellor, upon Conference with the rest of the heads, to be Overseers of the Translations as well as *Hebrew* as *Greek*, for the better observation of the 4th Rule above specified.¹²

Translation Committees

The translation was accomplished by six translation committees as specified by the King. This pattern was adopted from the manner in which the Geneva Bible was translated which had proven to be very effective and efficient. The total number specified by James was 54, although that number was never achieved. Some say that death is probably why the total number was never reached. The King recognized that a committee provides a check on theological bias. It also helps to catch translation errors that a single translator would miss. One weakness of this system is that different committees often do not translate the same Greek word with the same English word. This explains why the Greek word for spirit, which is *pneuma*, is sometimes translated in the King James Version as "Holy Spirit" and in other places as "Holy Ghost."

The credentials of the men on the committees were impeccable. The committees were composed primarily of scholars from Westminster, Cambridge, and Oxford Universities. Two committees met at each of these universities. They were almost all from southeastern England, a factor which influenced the type English used in the King James Version. They were also almost all drawn from the establishment Anglican Church, which would

¹². McGrath, *In The Beginning*, 173-175.

therefore favor the continuity of the religious and political establishment of the times.

One very interesting observation about the influence of the theology of the times upon the translators is the way they handled the Greek word βαπτίζω [*baptizo*]. The basic meaning of the word is to “dip” or to “immerse,” but since sprinkling was the accepted mode of baptism by the Anglicans and the Puritans, they transliterated the word instead of translating it.

1. The first Westminster Committee was assigned Genesis through II Kings and was headed up by the brilliant linguist, Lancelot Andrewes, dean of Westminster Abbey, who later became bishop of Chichester, bishop of Ely, and bishop of Winchester in 1619.
2. The second Westminster Committee was assigned the NT letters and was headed up by William Barlow, dean of Chester who became bishop of Rochester in 1605.
3. The first Cambridge Committee was assigned I Chronicles through the Song of Solomon and was headed up by Edward Lively, Regius Professor of Hebrew, Cambridge University.
4. The second Cambridge Committee was assigned the Aprocypal Books and was headed up by John Duport, master of Jesus College, Cambridge.
5. The first Oxford Committee was assigned Isaiah through Malachi and was headed up by John Harding, president of Magdalen College, Oxford. The Puritan scholar, John Reynolds, president of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, and an apt scholar was on this committee. Note that although he was recognized for his scholastic abilities he was not appointed as leader of this committee.
6. The second Oxford Committee was assigned the four Gospels, Acts, and Revelation. It was headed up by Thomas Revid, dean of Christ Church, Oxford, who became bishop of Glouchester in 1605 and bishop of London in 1607.¹³

After each committee had agreed on a translation of their assigned books, their work was then passed up to a revision committee of twelve members which was composed of two members of each of the six translation committees. They met at Stationers' Hall. (This is the account given by one Samuel Ward, who was a member of the second Oxford Committee, which he gave at the Synod of Dort in 1618. Another account given by John Boys, a member of the Second Cambridge Committee, and who was also present at the final editorial meeting says that the number was six.) After making their final revisions,

¹³ A complete listing of the individual members of each committee can be found in the following book which I highly recommend to anyone interested in the historical background of the King James translation. Alister McGrath, *In the Beginning* (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 179-182.

the text was then passed to two men, Miles Smith and Thomas Bilson, who were charged with making the final touches. However, Archbishop Bancroft personally made some fourteen changes to the text which outraged many. This would be one of his final acts. He died on November 2, 1610, and never lived to see the King James Version published.

The 1611 edition included a total of 8,422 alternate or more literal readings of various Old Testament and New Testament words. F.H.A. Scrivener indicated that the original 1611 edition of the OT contained 6,637 such notes and of these 4,111 expressed a more literal rendering of the Hebrew or Chaldee word. Another 2,156 marginal notes give alternate translations of a word which in the mind of the translators is a possible rendering of the word under question. In the New Testament, they gave a total of 767 marginal notes. Of these, 37 give a possible variant reading of a word while 512 give a more literal translation of a word. There were 582 alternate translations and 35 brief explanatory notes.¹⁴ Inspired translators who were led by the Holy Spirit would not have needed to give a single alternate reading due to the infinite wisdom of the Holy Spirit who would have been leading them to make the very best rendering possible.

The printing of the King James Version was not accomplished by either the Church or the King. It was a massive undertaking accomplished by private enterprise. However, the printer was designated by the King, who in return, received a portion of the profits. Robert Barker was the king's appointee to print Bibles. He had to secure outside capital in order to fund such a massive undertaking. The first printing of the 1611 King James Version was carried out in London at Northumberland House on Aldersgate Street, which was close to the center of London. It was 16 ½ x 10 ½ inches. It contained a title page which read as follows,

THE HOLY BIBLE, containing the Old Testament and the New. Newly translated out of the original tongues: and with the former translations diligently

¹⁴ F.H. A. Schrivner, *The Authorized Edition of The English Bible, 1611* (Cambridge: Cambridge, 1884), 41. Quoted by White, *The King James Only Controversy*, 77.

compared and revised by his Majesty's special commandment. Appointed to be read in Churches. Imprinted at London by Robert Barker, Printer to the King's most excellent majesty. Anno Domini 1611.

James White points out that "The KJV that is carried by the average KJV Only advocate today looks very different than the edition that came off the press of Robert Barker in 1611. . . Editions with changes came out as soon as 1612, another in 1613, followed by editions in 1616, 1629, and 1638."¹⁵ It was not until 1629 that the King James Version was available both with and without the Apocrypha. Many of today's King James translations do not contain the marginal notes and references contained in the 1611 edition.

Farstad wrote this about the Cambridge Revision of 1629,

Careless printing and irresponsible editing had left the text of the translation in a poor state, hence a complete revision of the text was undertaken at Cambridge University. The unknown revisers repaired much of the damage done in previous years. They made many changes and corrections of their own, most of which were very valuable.¹⁶

The text was carefully revised for the second Cambridge edition of 1638. One of the revisers was Mr. John Boise, who was one of the original translators who had served on the Second Cambridge committee and later was transferred to the first to help them finish their section. A third Cambridge revision was accomplished in 1762 by Dr. Thomas Paris. He corrected the italicized words and modernized spelling and punctuation. This revision was not widely circulated because much of the printing was destroyed by fire.

In 1769, Dr. Blayney of Oxford incorporated many of the revisions of Dr. Paris and made revisions of his own which included some of the following changes. Many of its antiquated words were replaced with modern language of that time. Thousands of spelling errors were corrected. It has been estimated that Dr. Blayney's final edition contained 75,000 changes from the original 1611 version. This is the revision which most people use today.

¹⁵. Ibid., 78.

¹⁶ Farstad, *The New King James Version*, 25.

Interestingly, in its early years, when the King James was a modern version, it met with strong opposition much like modern versions do today. This was especially true among the Puritans who had grown to like their popular Geneva Bible with its Calvinistic notes. They viewed this new translation as having an Anglican bias. For about 80 years after its initial publication, there was opposition to this modern translation from several quarters. Weigle wrote,

For eighty years after its publication in 1611, the King James Version endured bitter attacks. It was denounced as theologically unsound and ecclesiastically biased, as truckling to the king, and unduly deferring to his belief in witchcraft, as untrue to the Hebrew text and relying too much on the Septuagint.¹⁷

McGrath noted, “But such acceptance actually lay some distance in the future. The new translation’s first decades were marked by violent criticism from both Protestant and Catholic opponents, and a failure to gain widespread support.”¹⁸

However, the King James translation had several factors in its favor which would ultimately cause it to rise to the point of unchallenged supremacy for almost four centuries. It did not become the most influential book in the history of the English-speaking world by accident. The King James Bible earned its way to the top of the translation world and overcame its resistance because it possessed superior qualities that its competition did not possess.

First, there was the critical matter of providential timing. As a modern translation in 1611, this new translation did not have to do battle with a long-standing translation that had won a deep loyalty and emotional attachment of the people. Beginning with William Tyndale and the publication of his translation in 1526, the previous century had been an era of intense translation activity among the English people. There was a steady stream of

¹⁷ Luther A Weigle, “English Versions Since 1611,” in *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, 361, quoted in *The New King James Version* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1989) 24.

¹⁸ McGrath, *In The Beginning*, 207.

new translations which did allow them to become so deeply attached to a long-standing translation.

This long line of translations included the Coverdale translation in 1535, the Matthews Bible in 1537, which was revised in 1539 and became known as the Great Bible, the Geneva Bible in 1550, and finally, the Bishop's Bible in 1568. The King James Bible is basically a revision of this Bishop's Bible. The only translation of that day which had built up the most loyal and enduring loyalty was the Geneva Bible. It had gained the hearts of the Puritans and other English Calvinists because of its Calvinistic notes.

Second, the King James translation was blessed with the political and religious endorsement of both the King and the Anglican Church. So, very early, it enjoyed the blessings of both the political and religious power-brokers of the times. King James himself endorsed it because he so fervently detested the Geneva Bible with its notes advocating the political theory of Popular Sovereignty which he saw as a threat to his throne. The Anglican Church was eager to supplement the Geneva Bible because of its strongly Calvinistic notes.

Finally, just like cream always rises to the top, the King James translation rose to the top because of its clear superiority to all of its competitors. There were and still are a few key factors which clearly distinguish this beloved translation from its competition and put it into a class all by itself.

First, the fact that the King James Bible is technically a revision and not a fresh translation is could very well be the primary reason for its rise to the top of the translation heap and remaining there until 1988 when it was surpassed in sales by the New International Version for the first time. As a revision it drew on the cumulative wisdom of all of its predecessors. Benson Bodrick wrote, "In a cumulative way, all the virtues of the various translations which preceded it were gathered up."¹⁹ Alister McGrath sums the

19. Bobrick, *Wide As The Waters*, 258.

importance of the King James Bible being a revision of its predecessors in a very convincing manner in the following quote.

The writers of the Renaissance were conscious of standing within a stream of cultural and intellectual achievement, from which they benefited and to which they were called to contribute. The wisdom of the past was to be appropriated in the present. One of the images most frequently used to illustrate this understanding of the human cultural endeavor was that of “standing on the shoulders of the giants”. . . . The King James translators saw themselves as standing on the shoulders of giants, those who had translated before them and blazed a trail that they were proud to follow . . . The King James Bible is, therefore, not to be dismissed as a mere tinkering with earlier versions---the verdict of our modern era, in which originality and novelty often seem to be prized above all other virtues. The King James Bible is an outstanding example and embodiment of the ideals of its own period, by which it must be judged. It is to be seen in the light of the Renaissance approach to human wisdom, in which one generation is nourished and sustained by the intellectual achievements of its predecessors. Each era draws on the wisdom of the past, and builds upon it, before handing a greater wisdom on to its successors. The King James Bible can be seen as one of the most outstanding representatives of this corporate approach to cultural advance and the enterprise of gaining wisdom.²⁰

Instead of seeking novelty to grab attention, the King James translators revised a revision which was itself a revision of its predecessor tracing its lineage all the way back to Tyndale. This man spoke seven languages and was an intellectual giant who set the standard for translating which would endure until the twentieth century and the rise of dynamic equivalency as a translation philosophy. The King James Bible is the culmination of a process of slow, careful, and scholarly evolution of the English Bible.

Second, the translation philosophy used in the Middle Ages and by Wycliffe, Tyndale and subsequent translators for three hundred years produced an excellent translation with an elegance of language and rhythm that is pleasing to the mind and to the ear. They followed a translation philosophy known as verbal or formal equivalence which involves the attempt to translate the Hebrew and Greek words of original languages with an English equivalent.

Although it is impossible to make an exact word-for-word trade off in translating from

20. McGrath, *In The Beginning*, 177-78.

one language to another, and although it is also impossible to follow the exact word order when translating from one language into another, nevertheless the King James translators and their predecessors sought to, as far as is possible to do both. They sought to make a word-for-word trade off from the originals into the English while also retaining the word order of the originals as far as possible.

They did not feel free to assume the role of an interpreter and translate the thought, the idea, or the concept rather than a strict word-for-word trade off. This is said with the full realization that all translation requires some interpretation, but the pursuit of a word-for-word trade off from the original language into the receptor language keeps the translators from being first interpreters and second translators. They felt it their responsibility as translators to give as far as practical a literal translation of the originals and then to allow the reader and not the translators to be the interpreter.

Another factor that gives rise to the supremacy of the King James translation is the fact that the translators did not reduce its language to the lowest common denominator in seeking to create a translation that is palatable to the lowest echelons of the culture. They chose not to create a colloquial translation. They chose to retain many words and phrases coined and used by Tyndale and his successors. Concerning this approach, Leland Ryken wrote, “. . . the translators consciously adopted a prevailingly formal rather than colloquial style.”²¹

They did not seek elegance, but neither did they seek colloquialism. The result was a natural beauty of language which makes it enjoyable to read and easy to memorize. The King James Bible possesses a dignity that is still unequalled. Its variety of style, its rhythm, its beauty of language, and its translation philosophy also helps to explain the rise of the King James translation to the pinnacle of translations for almost four centuries.

The thing that elevated a lesser translation to surpass it in sales was the simple fact that,

21. Leland Ryken, *Understanding English Bible Translation* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books, 2009), 50.

even with all of the above attributes of excellence, father time eventually caught up with and dethroned it. The rapid evolution of the English language, which rendered much of its beautiful sixteenth and seventeenth century language unintelligible, demanded the Word of God in contemporary twenty-first century language.

The Tilted Halo of the Translators

The attempt to canonize or to discredit the men surrounding the birth of the King James Bible accomplishes absolutely nothing. The King James Bible is strong enough to stand on its own merits. The translation itself is the proof of the pudding. King James Only advocates actually weaken their case when they distort the truth about the men involved in its production in order to glorify the translation they produced. A translation rises and falls on its own merits and not on the merits of those who translated or authorized it. The same is true of the texts underlying the King James. The credibility of these Hebrew and Greek texts lies in the texts themselves and not in the credibility of those who compiled or copied them.

The records state that originally there were fifty-four men appointed as translators. However, it seems that only forty-seven ever actually worked on the translation. Some died either before the translation work ever began and others during the seven years when the translation work was in process. Others, for various other reasons, were never involved in the translation process for which little money was ever paid which may very well explain why some did not participate. They simply could not afford to.

The question that needs to be resolved has to do with the sacred halo that these men have been awarded by King James Only advocates who have been afflicted by the sacred halo syndrome. Did they walk on water as some King James Only advocates imply, or were they also fallen depraved human beings like the rest of the human race? Were they really the genius saints whose scholastic, intellectual, and spiritual levels remain beyond the reach of all modern scholars, as many suggest today? What does the record say about these men?

This is not an attempt to slander the translators of the King James Bible as profane men. For the most part, they were godly men with impeccable scholastic credentials. However, the fallen depraved nature of man guarantees that anytime forty-seven good men are assembled together who profess to be godly Christian men, there will be some in that group who are not what they should be. This same appraisal would be true of any assembled group of men anywhere and anytime between the fall and the rapture.

Concerning their academic credentials Sorenson wrote, “All of the translators held divinity degrees and thirty-nine of the forty-seven men held doctor of divinity degrees.”²² That is indeed impressive, but to imply that all of these men bordered on sainthood, as Sorenson suggests, is quite a stretch. Here is how Sorenson describes them.

The fifty-four translators appointed to produce the Authorized Version were godly men . . . There probably has never assembled at one time a greater group of English-speaking scholars of biblical languages. These men were head and shoulders higher in their expertise of Greek and Hebrew than any other body of English translators before or since.²³

Benjamin G. Wilkinson, one of the earliest and most influential King James Only advocates, and the author of *Our Authorized Bible Vindicated*, wrote of the King James translators,

No one can study the lives of those men who gave us the King James Bible without being impressed with their profound and varied learning . . . The translators of the King James, moreover, had something beyond great scholarship and unusual skill. They had gone through great suffering. They had offered their lives that the truths which they loved might live.²⁴

This is not an attempt to diminish the excellent work of these men. Neither is it an attempt to slander all of the men involved in the process. It is simply a plea for a rational

²² Sorenson, *Touch Not The Unclean Thing*, 204.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Benjamin Wilkinson, *Our Authorized Version Vindicated* (New York: Teach Services, Inc., 2006), 86-87.

approach that is willing to admit that not all of these men were saints as some imply. One of them had a drinking problem and drunkards seldom make good saints. Another had moral problems and immoral people usually do not qualify for a sacred halo. Still, another was a thief and thieves are seldom awarded a sacred halo or promoted to sainthood.

Here is how historian Adam Nicolson described Richard Thomson, one of the translators of the King James Bible.

It shouldn't be surprising that as broad and complex a figure as Lancelot Andrewes should have inclusive and eclectic taste in companions and colleagues. Alongside Overall and the exotic Saravia (his parentage was partly Spanish) were three other men who had pursued a far from straightforward course as theologians and divines. The most eccentric (although a committed member of Andrewes's ceremonious, anti-Puritan tendency in the church, later pilloried by the Puritans for it) was Richard Thomson, born in Holland of English parents, a brilliant linguist, which perhaps goes without saying, who would later be calumniated by William Prynne as "a debosh'd English Dutchman, who seldom went one night to bed sober". Thomson lived hard and fast and, although a fellow of Clare Hall in Cambridge, was also part of much racier and riskier London set. Extraordinarily, for a translator of the King James Bible, he was known as one of the wittiest of all translators ('the great interpreter') of the wildly obscene epigrams written by the poet Martial in the Rome over which Nero presided.²⁵

Richard Thomson not only had a problem with drinking, he also had moral problems. This same author tells of one translator who was a thief. He was the brother of the great scholar, Lancelot Andrewes. Roger Andrewes rode his brother's coattails most of his life, which is most likely how he ended up being a translator of the King James Bible.

Nicolson wrote,

One of the translators, in the Cambridge company dealing with the central section of the Old Testament, was Andrewes's brother Roger. Judging by every other aspect of Roger's life we know of, he was almost certainly there on Lancelot's recommendation: when Lancelot had become Master of Pembroke, he made Roger a fellow; when he became Bishop of Chichester, he made Roger a prebendary, archdeacon and chancellor of the cathedral. When Lancelot moved on to Ely in 1609, Roger became a prebendary there and also Master of Jesus College, Cambridge, which was in the gift of the Bishop of Ely. At Jesus, Roger was not a success. He argued with the fellows, neglected the financial affairs of the college

²⁵ Nicolson, *God's Secretaries*, 99-100.

and was finally sacked in 1632 for stealing college funds.²⁶

Jesus chose twelve disciples and one of them was a hypocrite. There were four times as many involved in translating the King James and nobody who understands the Bible and fallen human nature would expect all of these men to be genius-saints.

Another obvious factor of the whole process is that of politics. Anytime there is a hierarchy and an organization among human beings, there will be internal politics, and this is just as true among Christians as it is among the world. Politics may very well be the chief reason that King James authorized the King James translation. The religious leaders of that day were politicians just like religious leaders are today. Concerning the political clout of Lancelot Andrewes and his willingness to stoop to the political maneuvering of the political machine of his day in order to promote himself, his ideology and his friends, Nicolson wrote,

He could look the church's adversaries in the eye, and he was clever enough to slalom around the complexities of theological dispute: not only a great scholar but a government man, aware of political realities, and able to articulate the correct version of truth. He was a trusty (a Jacobean word, use in that sense), and useful for his extensive network of connections. It is clear that in 1604 he played a large part in selecting the men for his, and perhaps also for Barlow's company [translation teams]. Several themes emerge: there is a strong Cambridge connection (Andrewes had been an undergraduate and fellow there and was still Master of Pembroke College); an emphasis on scholarly brilliance - more so than in the other companies; a clear ideological bent in choosing none who could be accused of Puritanism, however mild, and several who would later emerge as leading anti-Calvinists in the struggles of the 1620s; there was also a connection with Westminster Abbey, where Andrewes had been appointed dean on the recommendation of Robert Cecil; and, stemming from that, a clear thread of Cecil influence. In this marrying of leverage and discrimination, it is a microcosm of the workings of Jacobean England; the right men were chosen and part of their qualifications for being chosen was their ability to work the systems of deference and power on which society relied.²⁷

Andrewes was a member of the Anglican Church which was the state church, or the

²⁶ Ibid, 94.

²⁷ Ibid, 93-94

church in power at that time. Like Rome, they too resorted to death as a means of controlling their opposition. In regards to Andrewes willingness to tolerate the martyrdom of a godly separatist of that day, Nicolson wrote,

Andrewes could happily see a good, God-fearing straight-living, honest and candid man like Henry Barrow condemned to death; and a debauched, self-serving degenerate like Thomson elevated to the highest company. Why, Because Barrow's separatism was a corrosive that would rot the very bonds of Jacobean order; because that order was both natural and God-given; and because nothing could be more sinful than subversion of that kind. Goodness, in other words, was not a moral but a political quality and nothing in Thomson's failings could approach the depth of Barrow's wickedness.²⁸

The record is clear that the translators of the King James Bible were far from being as pure as the driven snow, as some King James Only advocates would like us to believe. Included in this notable group were men with many of the same moral and spiritual problems that would be present in a similar group of men today. So, the attempt by Sorenson and other King James Only advocates to purge and purify the hands of all those associated with the production of the King James translation just will not hold up under close scrutiny. Why? Although they produced a noteworthy translation that would be greatly used by God, they were all fallen men whose halo was just a little bit tilted.

The Tilted Halo of Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536)

One could read David Sorenson's appraisal of Erasmus' life and influence and walk away thinking that a Roman Catholic priest, who was Luther's contemporary, who never broke with Rome, and who eventually turned on Luther, was a spiritual giant largely responsible for the Protestant Reformation which he refused to join. Sorenson has been so affected by the sacred halo syndrome that he is so blinded by his emotional attachment to the King James translation that he is apparently unable to rationally interpret the facts of church history, and especially the history of Erasmus and the Protestant Reformation.

The Erasmus revealed in church history is not the Erasmus that Sorenson writes about.

²⁸ Ibid, 100.

Regardless of his attempts to do so, Erasmus cannot be converted into a Fundamentalist Independent Baptist preacher disguised as a Roman Catholic priest. Sorenson's attempt to canonize Erasmus is evident in the following quote,

It should be recalled that Desiderius Erasmus was the Renaissance humanist who first published the Received Text in 1516. This was prior to the beginning of the Reformation in 1517 when Luther nailed his Ninety-five Theses to the door of the church in Wittenberg, Germany. Regarding the origins of the Reformation, it has been said by Catholic enemies thereof that "Erasmus laid the eggs and Luther hatched the chickens." Other Catholic enemies of both Erasmus and Luther charged that "Erasmus is the father of Luther." These charges were based upon the fact that Luther was influenced in no small measure by Erasmus's publication of his Greek New Testament in 1516. In that year, there was no Reformation nor were there yet any official Protestants.²⁹

Sorenson clearly wants to make it appear that the publication of Erasmus' Greek text in 1516 was the catalyst that motivated Luther to nail his Ninety-five Theses on the Wittenburg church door on October 31, 1517. According to Sorenson, Erasmus and his Greek New Testament was the real motivating force behind the Protestant Reformation. He actually says, "Erasmus was the root of the Protestant Reformation . . . Erasmus is a fascinating character in the lineage of the Received Text of the New Testament. His Greek New Testament, without doubt was the catalyst which sparked the Reformation."³⁰

The truth of the matter is that neither Erasmus nor Luther was the root of the Protestant Reformation. Most church historians agree that the seeds of the Protestant Reformation were sown long before the advent of either of these men. The need for reformation was created by the moral and doctrinal corruption of the Roman Catholic Church plus its excessive power, greed, and wealth. There had been voices crying for reform within the church for many generations prior to Luther.

There were several factors which served as catalysts that eventually sparked the

²⁹ Sorenson, *Touch Not The Unclean Thing*, 187.

³⁰ *Ibid*, 189,192.

Reformation. The Renaissance, with its emphasis upon the original sources, was a catalyst that sparked the quest for ancient Greek texts from which Erasmus compiled the *Textus Receptus*. It was the study of these texts that revealed the vast differences between the Roman Catholic Church and the New Testament Church.

In the late eleven hundreds Peter Waldo, who died in 1217, appeared on the scene with a fresh emphasis upon the authority of the Scriptures as being supreme over the authority of the Church. John Wycliffe (1329-1384), who has been called “the morning star” of the Protestant Reformation, acknowledged the Bible as the only source of truth whose authority superseded that of popes, church councils, and tradition. He rejected the doctrines of transubstantiation, purgatory, and other Roman doctrines not taught in the Scriptures.

Wycliffe’s writings crossed the English Channel and influenced the martyr, John Hus (1373-1415). Hus, probably more than Erasmus or his Greek New Testament, influenced Martin Luther who had espoused the core doctrines of the Reformation long before he ever read Erasmus’ Greek New Testament in late 1516 which was only a few months prior to him nailing his theses on the church door on October 31, 1517.

Bainton wrote, “The volume [Erasmus’ Greek New Testament] reached Wittenberg as Luther was lecturing on the ninth chapter of Romans, and thereafter became his working tool.”³¹ Cairns tells us that Luther lectured on the book of Romans from 1515-1517. Further, he tells us that Luther became fully convinced of the doctrine of justification by faith alone as a result of his studies on Romans 1:17.³² This means that he would have reached this decision on justification by faith apart from human merit of any form several months prior to receiving a copy of Erasmus’ Greek New Testament.

³¹. Roland H. Bainton, *Here I Stand, a Life of Martin Luther* (New York: The American Library, 1950), 96.

³². Earle E. Cairns, *Christianity Through The Centuries* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 282.

Martin Luther was a brilliant theologian who held a Doctor's degree in theology. He was doctrinally driven and not politically driven. He was also a serious student of Augustine who probably made a greater impact on his thinking than did Erasmus. (This is clearly evidenced in his view of the bondage of the human will which is clearly Augustinian.) Luther's conclusion that man is justified by faith apart from human works is a conclusion which he had reached long before Erasmus ever published the *Textus Receptus*.

There were other contributing factors which drove Luther to ultimately break with Rome. There were things like the corruption, the excessive wealth, and the politics of the Roman Church where high offices were bought and sold to the highest bidder that also drove him. The straw that broke the camel's back was Rome's sale of indulgences to raise the money to finance the construction of St. Peter's basilica in Rome.

The fact of the matter is that Rome herself, in her refusal to reign in her excesses in politics, materialism, the immorality of her clergy which was basically untrained, and her corrupt man-made theology, created the environment which gave rise to the Protestant Reformation of which Luther served as the catalyst in Germany while others in areas like Switzerland were moving in the same direction independently of Luther.

This is not an attempt to deny Erasmus any honor which he rightly deserves. Nobody questions his scholastic abilities. He was known as "the scholar of Europe." One writer referred to him as the "intellectual dictator of Europe."³³ Without a doubt, Desiderius Erasmus was an astoundingly brilliant man whose scholastic skills and prolific writings made him one of the most influential men of his day.

To his credit, Erasmus was a strong moralist who was bold enough to point out the excesses of monks, bishops, cardinals, and even the popes. His work, *Handbook of the Christian Soldier*, was a demand for reform within the Church which set out very

³³ Wilkinson, *Our Authorized Bible Vindicated*, 53.

compelling reasons for having the Bible in the common language of the laity. It also set forth an ideal church in which the laity had a role, and which diminished the unbridled authority of the corrupt clergy of his day. This work became a best seller. It was originally published in Latin, but was soon translated into several European languages. Erasmus made enemies within the Church, but did manage to maintain a friendship with the popes and many of the secular rulers of his day.

As contemporaries, he and Luther were initially friendly. They greatly respected each other and on occasion corresponded with each other, but never became real friends. They had much in common in that both were reformers. Both recognized and spoke out against the excesses and errors of the Roman Church. Both were educated, brilliant, and influential men. Luther had defended Erasmus as a scholar and against those who opposed scholarship. Erasmus defended Luther's as a man of integrity who had the right to speak out on the issues of the day.

However, it is here that their similarities ended. Their personalities and their ultimate goals were very different. Erasmus was a man of peace and Luther was a man of battle. Erasmus was a humanist scholar while Luther was a theological scholar. Packer and Johnston wrote of him, "Luther's first concern, as a theologian and reformer, was with doctrine."³⁴ Erasmus sought moral reform within the Church while Luther sought theological reform that would change the decadent morals of the clergy. Erasmus sought to change people from the outside inward while Luther sought to change people from the inside outward. Erasmus wrote to the mind while Luther wrote to the heart.

Erasmus sought moral reform without jeopardizing his position within the Church and his standing with the rulers of his day. On the other hand, Luther sought doctrinal reform of the Church regardless of what it cost him in regards to his standing within or without the Church. Luther would risk his life for the doctrinal purity of the Church while Erasmus

³⁴. Martin Luther, *The Bondage of The Will*, trans. J. I. Packer, and O. R. Johnston (United States: Fleming H. Revel Company, 1957), 44.

was careful to guard getting himself into deep trouble with the power brokers of his day.

Erasmus was a man of peace, almost at all cost. He had no taste for real conflict other than that of a scholarly prodding for moral reformation that never jeopardized his standing or his life. For years he avoided having to take a stand against Luther by defending his right to speak out and to a fair trial, which he would never receive in a church court. He would remind his readers that he had not read any of Luther's writings, but that Luther was a man of real integrity.

At first he encouraged Luther, but after the Leipzig debate in 1519, when the die was cast by Rome against Luther, Erasmus began to back off and to criticize Luther who refused to disassociate himself with John Hus who had been condemned and burned at the stake a hundred years earlier by Rome. Cairns wrote, "Erasmus had supported Luther's demands for reform at first but recoiled when he saw that Luther's views would lead to a break with Rome."³⁵ He often defended Luther's right to speak out on the issues, *but he never once sided with Luther*. Erasmus was ultimately defending his own right to speak out as a humanist writer.

This willful and skillful guise of ignorance about what Luther wrote kept him from being forced to take a stand on the doctrinal errors of Rome that Luther so vigorously condemned. Daniel Preus wrote this about Erasmus' tactic of ignorance, "Erasmus made it well known that he had not read Luther and was not responsible for anything which Luther had written."³⁶

This brilliant strategy kept Erasmus from taking a stand that would jeopardize his standing with Rome and with the secular powers of that day. To some extent Erasmus had become a prisoner of his fame. Here is how Luther explained Erasmus' refusal to take a

³⁵ Cairns, *Christianity Through The Centuries*, 286.

³⁶ Daniel Preus, *Concordia Theological Journal*, "Luther and Erasmus: Scholastic Humanism and the Reformation," Vol. 46, Nu. 2-3 (Fort Wayne, Indiana, April-July 1982), 222.

stand on the issues in a letter he wrote to Erasmus in April of 1524.

Grace and peace to you from the Lord Jesus Christ. I have kept silent long enough, dearest Erasmus, expecting that you, being older and of higher station, would break the silence; yet since I have waited so long in vain, respect compels me to proceed. I do not hold it against you that you keep yourself aloof from me, the better to safeguard your interest with mine enemies the Papists. Nor was I much offended by the bitterness and acerbity with which you criticized me in many passages of your printed works in order to win their favor or mitigate their asperity.³⁷

Erasmus would liked to have kept it this way, but those who so bitterly opposed Luther were not going to allow the most famous scholar of the times to remain neutral forever. The power-brokers would eventually force his hand. So, finally, in 1524, he published his *Diatribes on Free Will* which he knew would be the straw that broke the camel's back. Packer and Johnston, who translated Luther's *Bondage of the Will*, said in their introduction, "It is beyond all reasonable doubt that the *Diatribes* was produced as a result of the constant pressure brought to bear on Erasmus from both friends and enemies."³⁸

These same men later wrote, "The work of Erasmus was well received by the Pope and the Emperor, and was praised by Henry VIII, who had himself written against Luther in 1621 and to whom Erasmus had sent a first draft before its publication."³⁹ The fact that Erasmus sent a draft of the *Diatribes* to Henry VIII before he published it, and the fact that the Pope and the Emperor were also pleased with it, clearly suggests that the work was written in order to curry the favor of the power brokers of his day. It certainly does not say much about the spiritual depths of a man who would sacrifice doctrinal truth for the sake of personal position, prestige, and power.

³⁷. John Joseph Mangan, *Life, Character and Influence of Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam, Derived From a Study of His Works and Correspondence* (New York: The Macmillian Company, 1927), 236.

³⁸ Martin Luther, *The Bondage of the Will*, "Introduction," Packer and Johnston, 37.

³⁹ Ibid, 38.

Packer and Johnston made the following interesting observation in their summary remarks about Luther's evaluation of Erasmus. They wrote of Luther,

He did not speak of Erasmus favorably again, and there are thirty or more harsh judgments on the writer of the *Diatribes* for those who care to seek for them in Luther's Table-talk. He saw Erasmus as an enemy of God and the Christian religion, and Epicurean and a serpent, and he was not afraid to say so.⁴⁰

Philip Schaff, in his contrast of the two men does not present Erasmus in the favorable light that modern King James Only advocates do. He described the contrast between Erasmus and Luther the following manner.

Erasmus was essentially a scholar, Luther a reformer; the one was absorbed in literature, the other in religion. The former reached the intellect of the educated, the latter touched the heart of the people. Erasmus labored for freedom of thought, Luther for the freedom of conscience. Erasmus followed maxims of worldly wisdom; Luther, sacred principles and convictions. The one was willing, as he confessed, to sacrifice "a part of the truth for the peace of the church," and his personal comfort; the other was ready to die for the gospel at any moment. Erasmus was a trimmer and timeserver, Luther every inch a moral hero. . . . So long as the Reformation moved within the church, Erasmus sympathized with it. But, when Luther, who had at first as little notion of leaving the Catholic Church, burnt the Pope's bull and the decretals, and with them the bridge behind him, Erasmus shrank back, and feared that the remedy was worse than the evil. His breadth of culture and irresolution became his weakness; while Luther's narrowness and determination were his strength. . . . We must believe his assertion that his conscience kept him from the cause of the Lutherans. At the same time he was concerned for his personal comfort and literary supremacy, and anxious to retain the friendship of his hierarchical and royal patrons. He wished to be a spectator, but not an actor in "the Lutheran tragedy."⁴¹

If one were to stand in Luther's shoes and judge the most influential man of his age who refused to stand with him against the doctrinal error of Rome, he could at least have some understanding of Luther's strong negative feelings about Erasmus. The Protestant Reformation could have had a much greater impact on Europe had Erasmus joined with Luther, and Luther knew this. There is no doubt that Luther felt personally betrayed, but

⁴⁰ Ibid, 40.

⁴¹. Philip Schaff, *A History of The Christian Church*, Vol. 7 (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishers, 1910), 422-32.

more than that, he felt that Erasmus had betrayed his Savior and Lord, His truth, His Church, and the people of Europe over which he had so much influence. Erasmus was not going to risk his position, his power, and his prestige by joining forces with Luther against a morally and doctrinally corrupted Roman Church.

Was Erasmus ever saved? Only God can answer that question. Some of his doctrinal statements sound very orthodox while others raise some doubts. One of the most revealing studies on Erasmus' theology is his annotations on the book of Romans. In many passages his comments are very orthodox, but in others he clearly tends to mix law and grace which has historically been the traditional Roman Catholic position. Of this confusion DeMolen writes,

In both the *Paraphrases* and the annotations, *sola fide* is usually set over against the ceremonial "righteousness" of the Old Testament, but Erasmus later broadened the latter to include other legalistic works, namely, those lacking in faith and charity. In his notes on I Corinthians 13:2, Erasmus shows by many examples drawn from both sacred and secular literature that one can say *solus* without necessarily meaning to exclude everything else; therefore he who says that man is justified *sola fide* is not excluding charity, or the works of charity, but human philosophy, and the ceremonies and works of the law.⁴²

The only logical explanation for the following glowing remarks about Erasmus is that Sorenson has been blinded by his deep emotional attachment to the King James translation and the texts underlying it that he is unable to think rationally. He has been afflicted by the sacred halo syndrome. In spite of the fact that Erasmus turned on Luther and remained with the corrupt Roman Church thereby refusing to join the Reformation movement, Sorenson wrote,

Reading some of the quotations of Erasmus in his later years is insightful. They reveal a man who had shifted from conventional Roman Catholic theology to one much closer to a biblical position . . . However, what is most amazing is that in Erasmus' later years, he came very close to becoming an Anabaptist. Though he never joined with them, his theology became somewhat parallel with theirs . . . By the time he died in 1536, he had virtually become an Anabaptist in

⁴² *Essays On The Woprks of Erasmus*, ed. Richard L. DeMolen (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), 133.

his theology. To his demerit, he never officially left the Catholic Church. Though not a separatist, by the time he had published the third edition of his Greek New Testament, the charge of Roman Catholic apostasy can no longer be applied to Erasmus.⁴³

Another King James Only advocate who seeks crown Erasmus with a sacred halo, wrote of him,

Erasmus became attached to the Brethren of the Common Life, a movement which attacked indulgences, rejected transubstantiation, believed in justification by faith alone, and believed in salvation by grace alone . . . It would be difficult to distinguish between the core beliefs of Luther and Erasmus. They both contended for the same doctrines of the faith, and they both opposed the same evil practices of the Roman Catholic Church. For several years Luther collaborated with Erasmus and thanked God for him. It was only when Erasmus thought that Luther was going too far, too quickly, that division came.⁴⁴

It is one thing to give intellectual assent to the great doctrines of the faith, but it is another thing to act on them as Luther did. Erasmus certainly did not react to the heretical doctrines of Rome in a manner that leads one to believe that his core beliefs were almost the same as Luther's. Neither did Erasmus turn on Luther because he was going too far too quickly. He broke with Luther when he was forced to choose sides and he chose to remain in the Church and with those who were seeking Luther's life.

The following statements concerning Erasmus' belief system will be sufficient to convince most anyone who is knowledgeable of the great doctrines of the faith that Erasmus was far from being a fundamentalist Christian.

He had a sharp eye to the abuses of the Church, and endeavored to reform them in a peaceful way. . . . At the same time he lacked a deeper insight into the doctrines of sin and grace, and failed to find a positive remedy for the evils he complained of. . . . With his critical faculty he saw the difficulties and differences in human surroundings and circumstances of the Divine Scriptures. He omitted in his Greek Testament the forgery of the three witnesses I John 5:7, and only inserted it under protest in the third edition (1522), because he had rashly promised to do so

⁴³ Sorenson, *Touch Not the Unclean Thing*, 190-193.

⁴⁴ Lloyd L. Streeter, *Seventy-Five Problems With Central Baptist's Book, The Bible Version Debate* (LaSalle, Illinois: First Baptist Church of LaSalle, Il., 2001), 102.

if a single Greek MS. could be found to contain it. [Schaff has a footnote at the bottom of the page explaining that the Greek MS which was given to Erasmus was a forgery.] He doubted the genuineness of the pericope of the adulteress (John 8:1-11), though he retained it in the text. He disputed the orthodox punctuation of Rom 9:5. He rejected the Pauline origin of Hebrews, and questioned that John was the author of the Apocalypse. He judged Mark to be an abridgement of Matthew. He admitted lapses of memory and errors of judgment in the Apostles. He denied any other punishment in hell except “the perpetual anguish of mind which accompanies habitual sin.” As to the Lord’s Supper, he said, when asked his opinion by the magistrate of Basel about the book of (Ecolampadius and his figurative interpretation, that it was learned, eloquent, well written, and pious, but contrary to the general belief of the church from which it was dangerous to depart. There is good reason to believe that he doubted transubstantiation. He was also suspected of leaning to Arianism, because he summed up the teaching of Scripture on the Trinity in this sentence: “The Father is very frequently called God, the Son sometimes, the Holy Spirit never;” and he adds: “Many of the fathers who worshiped the Son with the greatest piety, yet scrupled to use the word *homoousion*, which is nowhere to be found in the Holy Scripture.” He moderated the doctrine of hereditary sin, and defended human freedom in his notes on Romans. He emphasized the moral, and depreciated the doctrinal element in Christianity. He deemed the Apostle’s Creed sufficient, and was willing to allow within this limit freedom for theological opinions. “Reduce the number of dogmas,” he advised Archbishop Albrecht of Mainz, “to a minimum; you can do it without injury to Christianity; on other points, leave every one free to believe what he pleases; then religion will take hold on life, and you can correct the abuses of which the world justly complains.”

He had a high opinion of the morality and piety of the nobler heathen, such as Socrates, Cicero, and Plutarch. “The Scriptures,” he says in his Colloquies, “deserve, indeed the highest authority; but I find also in the writings of the ancient heathen and in the poets so much that is pure, holy and divine, that I must believe that their hearts were divinely moved. The spirit of Christ is perhaps more widely diffused than we imagine, and many will appear among the saints who are not in our catalogue. Then, after quoting from Cicero and Socrates, he says, “I can often hardly restrain myself from exclaiming, ‘Holy Socrates, pray for us.’”⁴⁵

The belief system revealed in these statements would hardly qualify Erasmus for sainthood. His intellectual approach to the doctrines of the Scriptures clearly removes him from the ranks of a Fundamentalist. His deprecation of doctrine as reflected in his exalted opinion of the noble heathen clearly brings into question his understanding of salvation by grace through faith in the atoning sacrifice of Christ plus nothing. The sacred halo that

⁴⁵ Schaff, *The History of the Christian Church*, Vol. VII, 412 -414.

some seek to put on his head just keeps getting knocked off by his betrayal of Luther, by him remaining a part of a system that he knew to be corrupt, and by a lack of faith that would move him to act even at the risk of his power, influence, and his exalted position.

After skimming through five books on Erasmus' life and a couple that discuss his writings, Desiderius Erasmus remains an enigma. There are three things about him that are essential to any understanding of the apparent contradictions between the Gospel he professed to believe and his actions in refusing to join with Luther in the Reformation movement.

First of all, Erasmus was a *committed pacifist*. One of his life's goals was that of bringing peace to a Europe plagued by war. This pacifism also spilled over to his dealings with the Church. There could be divergent opinions, there could be internal debates, but there was to be no battles within the Church that divided it. At all cost, even the toleration of heretical doctrines, immoral practices, and the murder of its opposition, the Church must not be divided by doctrinal battle. Reform, if it comes, must come peacefully from within. Erasmus' writings focused on moral reform not realizing that moral reform can only come as a result of doctrinal reform.

Second, Erasmus was a *committed Roman Catholic*. He identified Christianity with the Roman Catholic Church. Loyalty Christ was expressed in loyalty to the Roman Catholic Church. This explains why he could seem to have a clear conception of the Gospel and the orthodox faith, but still he remain in a system that he knew to be both morally and doctrinally corrupt. Since he identified Christianity with the Roman Catholic Church, he had no place to go. This left him no choice but to remain within this corrupt system and to refuse to break with Rome and join Luther. His only option was internal reformation.

Third, Erasmus was a *committed Christian moralist and humanist*. What he called his "Christian philosophy" controlled his life. Erasmus was not a humanist in today's secular humanistic sense of the word. Humanism, as applied to Erasmus, was the belief in the innate abilities of man. Humanism in that day reflected an exalted view of man in regards

to his natural abilities. It was not necessarily anti-Christian as is secular humanism of today.

His Christian philosophy was based upon Christian morals and not upon Christian doctrines. It is almost like he had the order reversed. He seemed to think that good doctrine flows out of good morals. The truth is that good morals flow out of good doctrine. Doctrine determines deeds. Erasmus, the brilliant humanist, never got that. This resulted in him pursuing a moral reformation for Rome instead of a doctrinal reformation which would in turn produce his desired moral reformation.

It is these factors that explain how he could be so critical of the Roman Church and then refuse to join with Luther and the Reformers. He agreed with Luther on many issues, but he turned on Luther when it became evident that he would break with Rome. This explains Halkins observation that “He preferred to persuade by his writings and still hoped that the break would be avoided thanks to the generous efforts of Melanchthon, but he was to be a powerless witness of an imminent schism. Erasmus reproached the innovators for the contradictions of their doctrine and deplored their imprecations against the Roman Church.”⁴⁶

Erasmus was indeed an intellectual giant. He was well equipped to act as a textual critic and compile the *Textus Receptus*, but this does not make him into a spiritual giant. Luther doubted that he ever knew the grace of God, but that is a call that mortal man does not and cannot make.

Yet, the facts are still the facts. Erasmus knew the moral and doctrinal corruption of the Roman Catholic Church, but he remained within the fold as a priest, although he never functioned as a priest. He turned on Luther when he broke with the Catholic Church. When forced to make a choice, he carried the favor of the pope that had excommunicated Luther. He also carried the favor of the secular rulers of his day. These are the men who

⁴⁶. Leon E. Halkins, *Erasmus, a Critical Biography*, trans. John Tonkin (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, 1993), 241.

would have assisted the pope in executing Luther had God not providentially protected him.

If, as Sorenson claims, in his later years Erasmus became evangelical in his theology, his actions certainly do not reflect that evangelical conversion. He still remained a part of an apostate church. All of the heroes of the faith in Hebrews eleven acted on their faith. Erasmus may have professed an intellectual assent to orthodoxy but he never acted on it. This brings into question the reality of this new found faith.

The bottom line is that the validity of the Textus Receptus does not rest upon the sainthood of Erasmus. It rests primarily upon his skills as a brilliant Greek scholar and a skilled textual critic, and he was both of these although his halo was severely tilted.

The Tilted Halo of King James I

Once again, if King James I were not in some manner involved in the production of the King James Bible, he would never have been awarded the sacred halo as one of the men who helped birth the King James Bible. What makes the canonization of a homosexual so unusual is that he had absolutely nothing to do with the actual translation of the King James Bible. He only authorized it, and this does not require sainthood. He did establish some basic guidelines for the translators, but apart from that he basically had little to do with bringing to life this enduring and excellent translation which bears his name.

Whether or not King James I was a saint, a nominal Christian, or just a shrewd politician, changes absolutely nothing about the merits of the translation that bears his name. The purpose of this discussion is simply to prove that King James was not the spiritual giant that some present him to be. King James I can never be understood apart from his tragic childhood which formed him into an emotionally flawed adult. Here is how one writer described his childhood.

Crowned king of Scotland after his father's murder in 1567, 13-month old James was placed with his government under the guardianship of Presbyterian regents. His mother, Mary Queen of Scots, was imprisoned in England. His was a grim childhood.

The regents—more Calvinistic than Calvin himself—dressed the little king in black and draped his bedroom in black damask. He received no tenderness or affection. His only contact with a woman was with harsh Lady Mar, the wife of one of the regents.

James' formal education began just after his third birthday. It left little time for play and had no emphasis on manners or courtly graces. The solemn youngster's daily schedule would cause today's university student to collapse. But James was expected only to excel, and he did.

Morning prayers were followed by studies in Greek: New Testament, Isocrates, and Plutarch. After breakfast, Latin and history. Following lunch James studied composition, mathematics, geography, astronomy, and rhetoric. He read classics and theology books. By the time he was eight, the king was fluent in four languages. By 12, his formal education was complete. James' emotionless upbringing had tragic effect on the adolescent king. A French nobleman, Esme Stuart D. Aubigny, arrived in Scotland. A distant cousin of James, the 38-year old father of five traded affection for a position in the court and became James' homosexual partner.

At the same time, James was making decisions about religion and politics. Convinced that the Scottish Reformation was really a revolt against authority, he rebelled against his Calvinistic elders and rejected Presbyterianism altogether. His bitterness toward the Presbyterians would last through his reign.⁴⁷

King James I did not authorize the translation which would carve him a niche in history out of the purest of motives. He clearly had other motives. One was the fact that he saw a new translation without interpretive notes as a means of promoting unity amidst his religiously divided Kingdom. Another reason was to silence the voice of the Geneva Bible with its advocacy of Popular Sovereignty which posed a serious threat to him and his posterity's continued rule.

So, his motives were not purely spiritual. Even his treatment of the Puritans at the meeting at Hampton Court when he authorized the translation was not in keeping with the love of Christ. It was from the persecution of this same "saintly" King James that the Puritans who landed at Plymouth Rock in 1620 fled. The King detested the Puritans and warned his son, Prince Henry who was then four years old, against them in his *Basilikon Doron*,

Take heed therefore, my son, to such Puritans, very pests in the church and

⁴⁷. Karen Ann Wojahan, "The Real King James," *Moody Monthly*, July-August 1985.

commonwealth, who deserts can oblige . . . breathing nothing but sedition and calumnies, aspiring without measure, railing without reason and making their own imaginations the square of their conscience. I protest before the great God that ye shall never find with any Highland or Border thieves greater ingratitude and more lies and vile perjuries than with these fantastic spirits.⁴⁸

One of the more positive histories on his life His life is a 1997 publication by W. B. Patterson. Here is how he describes King James I on the back flyleaf of his book,

This book shows King James VI and I, King of Scotland and England, in an unaccustomed light. Long regarded as inept, pedantic, and whimsical, James is shown here as an astute and far-sighted statesman whose reign was focused on achieving a permanent union between his two kingdoms and a peaceful and stable community of nations throughout Europe. James sought closer relations among the major Christian churches - English, Calvinist, Lutheran, Roman Catholic, and Greek Orthodox - out of the conviction that they shared a common heritage and as a way of easing tensions in an era of recurring religious wars.⁴⁹

He later writes about how the King described himself. “King James, who described himself as a ‘Catholic Christian,’ encouraged a certain diversity among theologians and ecclesiastical leaders to help him to steer a middle way between the Scylla and Charybdis of Presbyterianism and Roman Catholicism.”⁵⁰

The King was born and baptized as a Roman Catholic. Late in life he referred to himself as a “Catholic Christian.” He clearly sought to unite the Anglican Church, the Calvinists, the Lutherans, the Roman Catholics, and the Greek Orthodox all under one umbrella based their shared common heritage. This view of ecumenicity would never be endorsed by those who seek to canonize King James I.

There was the unsettled issue of the murder of two of his enemies which lingers, even today. It is stated as follows,

⁴⁸ King James I, *Baskilikon Doron*, quoted in Bryan Bevan, *King James VI of Scotland and King James I of England* (London: The Rubicon Press, 1996), 57.

⁴⁹ W. B. Patterson, *King James VI and I and The Reunion of Christendom* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977), Back Cover.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 280.

Like Elizabeth, James had grown up without a mother. However, he had grown up without a father either, and his difficult and dangerous youth left him so terrified of violence that in later life he wore thickly padded clothes to protect him from assassination. Baptized a Roman Catholic, he was brought up a Protestant and four Protestant regents in succession, three of whom died violent deaths, ruled Scotland during his childhood. His education was sadistically beaten into him and gave him both an appetite for scholarship and nightmares for the rest of his life. Inevitably, powerful figures contended to control him. In 1582, at the age of 16, he was kidnaped by a group of conspirators led by William Ruthven, Earl of Gowrie, and held prisoner. He got away the following year and Gowrie was hanged. In 1600, when James believed that the new Earl of Gowrie and his brother were plotting to murder him, the two Ruthvens were killed.⁵¹

Later, these same two authors wrote, “. . . although he was an affectionate husband and father who sired seven children, he had an unconcealed enthusiasm for good looking young men.”⁵² The *Encyclopedia Britannica* deals with the issue very discretely by simply saying,

In August 1589, James was married to Anne, the daughter of Frederick II of Denmark, who in 1594, gave birth to their first son, Prince Henry. Throughout his life, however, James exhibited little interest in the opposite sex. It seems that he never had a mistress and was interested in women only as the wives and mothers of his male friends. . . Shortly after he moved to England, he ceased marital relations with his wife.⁵³

Bryan Bevan, in his history of the life of King James I, gave the following tragic description of his relationship with his wife and the young men who slept in his chamber. He wrote,

So after 1595, Anne gradually drifted apart from James, becoming disillusioned with him because of his homosexuality, which she learned to accept, and his uncouth speech and manners. . . His first ardor for his young wife gradually cooled, for it only lasted a brief time, and she must early have become aware of James’ partiality for the minions who slept in his chamber.⁵⁴

⁵¹. Richard Cavendish, and Pip Leahy, *Kings and Queens, The Story of Britain's Monarchs From Pre-Roman Times to Today* (New York: Barnes and Nobles, 2006), 160.

⁵² Ibid, 161.

⁵³ *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 8th ed., s.v. “King James I.”

⁵⁴ Bryan Bevan, *King James VI of Scotland & I of England*, 55,46.

Sorenson takes the typical cultic approach in his attempt to rewrite history and turn King James into a saint. He recognizes that historians write about King James I being a homosexual. However, he does what the cults normally do when their leader is discredited, he simply explains this away as being lies propagated by the King's enemies. That is exactly how Jehovah's Witnesses explain the lies told in court by their founder, Charles Taze Russell. However, anyone who is willing to research the issue will find that there is a common consensus among historians that he was indeed a homosexual and that this was not simply a charge made by his enemies to discredit him.

Sorenson's problem is that if he admits that King James I was a homosexual, his entire premise, that all those connected with the King James translation and the composition of the texts underlying it had clean hands, collapses.

This "clean hands" thing is nothing more than a backdoor approach to King James Onlyism. It is a futile attempt to discredit all modern texts and translations by discrediting the men who produced them. However, in order to be consistent and make this argument valid, they must then purge the hands of all the men involved in the production of the King James and its underlying texts.

However, because the premise is false, its collapse does not dictate the fall of the King James translation, nor does it discredit modern texts and translations. The history of translations reveal that down through the centuries God has used imperfect translations put together by imperfect men to communicate His Gospel to imperfect men. The King James translation of the Bible is but one among scores of other imperfect translations made into hundreds of other languages, none of which were translated by perfect men. Neither were they translated by men inspired by the Holy Spirit. Yet, God in His providence has watched over His Word in a manner to preserve His Gospel via the hands of imperfect fallen men. A sovereign infinitely wise and powerful God is able to do that.

Therefore, it is not necessary to attribute sainthood to the thousands who have translated His Word down through the centuries into various languages. It would be natural to

assume that most translators were godly men with godly motives, but the bottom line is always the providential hand of God moving to preserve the Gospel message and not the sainthood of those involved in its transmission down through the ages.

The Tilted Halo of the Texts Underlying the King James Translation

In their futile attempt to purge the hands of all who were involved in the production of the King James translation, King James Only advocates, as already observed, are often forced to doing a historical slight-of-hand. Such is the case with those who copied and preserved the texts underlying the Textus Receptus from which King James was translated.

Church history reveals that these texts came to Erasmus via the theologically impure hands of the Catholic and Greek Orthodox churches, but King James Only advocates seek to revise history and place these texts into the pure hands of the Waldenses whose hands are more easily purged than those of the Greek Orthodox and Roman Catholic religions.

They understand that the doctrinal distinctions between the doctrinally corrupt Roman Catholic Church and the doctrinally corrupt Byzantine Church (Greek Orthodox Church) are not enough to attribute to the Byzantine scholars who handled the Byzantine texts pure hands. Their “pure hands” claim will collapse unless they can remove the texts underlying the Textus Receptus from the hands of both Rome and Constantinople and place them into the supposedly pure hands of the Waldenses.

Keep in mind that the Byzantine Text is called the “Byzantine” Text because it is the text which was used for over thirteen hundred years in the Byzantine Empire by the theologically corrupt Greek Orthodox Church which, up until 1054, was a part of the Roman Catholic Church. That is why it is called the Byzantine Text! This is why King James Only advocates prefer to call it the Majority Text instead of the Byzantine Text. This helps them to distance it from its Byzantine roots in both the Greek Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church.

The following statement is the typical approach of King James Only advocates to the Traditional Text and to all other texts.

This book will attempt to document the historic lineage of the two primary textual bases. On the one hand, the history of the Received Text, and particularly one strain thereof, will be found to be associated with our persecuted, martyred brethren in separatist churches across the face of history. On the other hand, the lineage of the critical text will be shown to be linked to apostasy at virtually every step of its history.⁵⁵

Another King James Only advocate wrote,

It is widely believed by most Christians that modern Bible translations are merely an updating of the English language. What few realize, however, is that these modern translations are translated from highly questionable sources . . . The K.J.V. is translated from a completely different Family of manuscripts known as the Traditional Text.⁵⁶

Another King James Only proponent wrote, “The manuscripts or texts used to translate such versions as the Revised Standard Version, New Revised Standard Version, American Standard Version, New American Standard Version, New International Version, etc., are based on corrupt texts that have originated, for the most part, from within the Catholic Church.”⁵⁷

In order to remove their texts from impure hands and guard the sacred halo status of the texts underlying the King James translation, they are forced to take a couple of unclear statements and read into them unwarranted interpretations. Or, they simply revise history, as is the case with the Waldenses, which is indicated in the following quote.

“The Waldenses [or Vaudois] were Bible-believing churches of the valleys of the Alps and Piedmont regions of northern Italy and southern France . . . The Waldenses and their lineal predecessors are remarkable because they evidence a lineage of churches which for the most part remained true to the Word of God from apostolic times up through the Reformation . . . A thought which is

⁵⁵ Sorenson, *Touch Not the Unclean Thing*, 5.

⁵⁶ Marc A. Graham, “Should the Church be Concerned about Translations,” *The Church Bus News*, Oct.-Dec., 1990.

⁵⁷ Walter S. Beebe, “Which Version of the Bible Should I Use,” *Church Bus News*, Apr.- June, 1992.

intriguing for Bible-believing Baptists is the possibility that there may be a link between the ancient Waldenses, their forerunners, and the King James Version . . . However, what is germane to the primary purpose of this book is the possible connection between the Waldenses and the lineage of the Received Text.”⁵⁸

There are several major problems with this assumption. First and foremost, there is no historical record that the texts that Erasmus used were in any way connected with the Waldenses. As a matter of fact, the historical record clearly contradicts this assumption. Metzger wrote,

Since Erasmus could not find a manuscript which contained the entire Greek New Testament, he utilized several for various parts of the New Testament. For the most of the text he relied on two rather inferior manuscripts from a monastic library at Basle, one of the Gospels and one of the Acts and Epistles, both dating from about the twelfth century . . . Most of the manuscripts that Erasmus used in the preparation of his editions of the New Testament came from the collection of manuscripts that had been bequeathed in 1443 to the Dominican monastery at Basle by John Stojkovic of Ragusa, one of the cardinals created by the Anti-Pope, Felix V.⁵⁹

Metzger’s description of the texts that Erasmus used in compiling the Textus Receptus harmonizes with the commonly accepted historical record. He says that most of the texts Erasmus used were acquired from a Roman Catholic monastery at Basle. Kurt and Barbara Aland concur with this. They wrote of Erasmus, “He took manuscripts most readily available to him in Basel for each part of the New Testament (the Gospels, the Apostolos [Acts and the Catholic letters], the Pauline letters, and Revelation. . . .”⁶⁰

The fact is that most of the texts used by Erasmus in compiling the Textus Receptus were borrowed from a Roman Catholic Dominican monastery in Basle. The fact is that

⁵⁸ Sorenson, *Touch Not the Unclean Thing*, 258.

⁵⁹ Bruce M. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament, Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 99, 269.

⁶⁰ Kurt and Barbara Aland, *The Text of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1989), 4.

these texts were twelfth century copies of the Byzantine Text which were most likely copied by either a Roman Catholic or a Greek Orthodox scholar. These texts did not come to Erasmus by the way of the Waldenses.

Second, there is a major problem with his assumption that the lineage of the Waldenses can be traced back to the Apostles. The historical record testifies that the Waldenses began in the late twelfth century. The claims by early Waldensian historians to be able to trace their origins back to the Apostles has been discredited by several historians over the last two and a half centuries. Here is what church historian, Philip Schaff, wrote about the antiquity of the Waldenses,

A new era in the study of the history and tenets of the Waldenses was opened by Dieckhoff, 1851, who was followed by Herzog 1853. More recently, Preeger, Karl Muller, Haupt, and Keller have added much to our knowledge in details, and in clearing up disputed points. Comba, professor in the Waldensian college at Florence, accepts the conclusions of modern research and gives up the claim of ancient origin, even Apostolic origin being claimed by the older Waldensian writers.⁶¹

Church historian, Henry Sheldon, wrote, “The origin of the Waldenses [Waldensians] is traced back with sufficient certainty to the third quarter of the twelfth century. The founder was Peter Waldo, a rich merchant of Lyons.”⁶² *World Book* says this about the date of their origin, “Waldenses are members of a Christian religious group. The group was founded by Peter Waldo, a wealthy merchant of Lyons, France. In 1173, Waldo left his wife, gave his fortune to the Church and charity, and began preaching in the streets of Lyon.”⁶³ *Nelson’s New Christian Dictionary* lumps the names Waldenses, Vaudois, and Waldensians together and says this of their origin, “Several possibly interrelated groups,

⁶¹ Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, vol. 5, 507.

⁶² Henry C. Sheldon, *History of the Christian Church* (No address given, Hendrickson Publishers Inc., Vol. 2, “The Mediaeval Church,” reprint, 1999), 391.

⁶³ *The World Book Encyclopedia*, s.v. “Waldenses.”

all tracing their origin to Peter Waldo or Valdes of the twelfth century.”⁶⁴

Henry Sheldon also explains the Waldenses’ possession of the Scriptures in a manner that also seriously conflicts with the attempt to trace their possession of the Scriptures back to the Apostles. He wrote,

At the same time, the little knowledge of Scripture which he had gained from the services of the Church excited his desire for a more thorough introduction to the Bible. To gratify his ambition in this direction he employed the labors of two men, who made translations for him into the vernacular.⁶⁵

So, it is true that the Waldenses had copies of the Scriptures in their possession, but, they had them because in the late twelfth century their leader, Peter Waldo, hired two men to make these translations. The truth that needs to be recognized is that neither these copies of the Scriptures nor the Waldenses as a movement can be traced back to the Apostles.

Ultimately, the attempt to create the illusion that the texts underlying the King James translation were preserved and passed down through the centuries exclusively through the pure hands of a pure church is futile. The preceding studies make it clear that the texts underlying the Textus Receptus used by Erasmus were Byzantine Texts which originated in either the Byzantine Church or the Roman Catholic Church and were copied by scholars from one of these churches and somehow landed at the Catholic monastery in Basle where Erasmus borrowed them to create the Textus Receptus.

The preceding studies of the men involved in the creation of the texts underlying the King James translation, the translators themselves, and of King James I reveal that many of them wore a tilted halo. Like all men since Adam, they too had dirty hands. Yet, a sovereign God, in His infinite in wisdom and power, can work through the lives of fallen

⁶⁴ *Nelson’s New Christian dictionary, The Authoritative Resource On the Christian World*, s.v. “Waldenses.”

⁶⁵ Sheldon, *History of the Christian Church*, 391.

and sometimes very flawed men to preserve His Word, which He has obviously done.

Summary and Conclusion

The futile attempt to cleanse the hands of all those involved in the texts underlying the King James, its translators, and the king who authorized it, reflects a real lack of understanding of history and the actual process by which the beloved King James Bible came into existence. In their attempts to canonize the men surround this beloved translation, they completely omit the key figure responsible for the King James translation.

The truth of the matter is the fact that the men they glorify as translators, and they were gifted scholars of the first order, were hardly more than revisers of an existing translation. The King James Bible is not bold new translation made between the years of 1604 and 1611 when it was published. It is a revision of the Bishop's Bible which traces its roots back to the Tyndale Bible translated by William Tyndale, who was burned at the stake for producing a translation of God's Word into the English language.

The key figures behind the King James translation itself are not the translators, neither is it Erasmus. The towering influence behind the King James translation and the English reformation is the martyr and brilliant scholar, William Tyndale. The King James translation is between eighty and ninety percent the William Tyndale translation. Even the elevated and expressive language is largely attributed to this key figure in the history of English translations. Here is how one historian described Tyndale, his abilities, and his influence upon the King James translation.

Tyndale was gifted in the use of the English language both in expression of the simple Anglo-Saxon vocabulary and his use of syntax . . . The accuracy and easy-to-read style of the King James Version of 1611 dwarfed the work of all previous translations. And yet, the work of William Tyndale should be valued as the greatest influence on English translations and its language. Tyndale's use and command of the English language had a positive influence on the works of Shakespeare. Even the famous translators of the 1611 King James Version relied heavily upon the work of Tyndale. It has been estimated that 80 to 90 percent of the King James Version is the direct expression of Tyndale.⁶⁶

One of the great things about this forgotten hero of the faith is the fact that his hands do not

⁶⁶ Donald L. Brake, *A Visual History of the English Bible* (Grand Rapids, Baker Books, 2008) 100, 102,106.

need cleansing. He was personally acquainted with Martin Luther and, unlike Erasmus, Tyndale, who was also an authentic scholar in his own right, bought into the Reformation faith and acted upon it and paid the price by being burned at the stake.

So, not only do King James Only advocates not recognize the major influence behind their beloved translation, they also fail to recognize the human factors behind their clinging so tenaciously to a translation whose archaic language has gradually limited its effectiveness. Like all human beings, they are naturally resistant to change. And the longer something has been used and accepted, the stronger will be their resistance to changing to something new. Furthermore, like any long-standing tradition, it is only human to find a sense of comfort and security in the King James translation.

God created us with these natural tendencies for our good. They are natural and they serve us well as long as they are not allowed to get such a stranglehold over our emotions that they affect our ability to think rationally. Then we have allowed something God intended for our good to become something bad for us.

We need long-standing traditions in our ever-changing world to provide anchors around which we build our lives. The natural desire for comfort and security grows out of the insecurity of living in a world where things are constantly changing. However, like all good things in life, this natural resistance to change and desire for comfort and security can become a hindrance.

The problem arises when we allow these tendencies to control us instead of us controlling them. We can either control these natural emotions or they will control us. Left uncontrolled, they can blind us to the new (change) which very well may be better than the tradition to which we are clinging. They can inhibit our personal growth and our ability to cope and adapt to our changing world which is exactly what is now happening within the King James Only Movement.

Let me illustrate how these natural tendencies to resist change have been allowed to impede growth and progress in the lives of people. Electricity eventually replaced

mechanical power and oil lamps for light, but some, out of their reluctance to change from long-standing traditions, have found some kind of biblical or spiritual justification for refusing to allow electricity to be installed in their homes and businesses. Cars eventually replaced the horse and buggy, but once again, some, out of their strong resistance to giving up a long standing traditional form of transportation, have found some type of biblical justification for not using tractors, cars, and trucks. They still use authentic horse power.

We must recognize that these tendencies are present in all of our lives. Then we must learn how to keep them from becoming our enemies instead of our friends, as God designed them to be. We must recognize and master them or they will master us. There are at least five ways to ascertain if these tendencies to reject change are controlling us, or if we are controlling them.

1. Are these natural tendencies leading us to justify clinging to some long-standing tradition by attributing to it a mystical aura of immutable perfection (a sacred halo) which cannot be validated from the Scriptures?
2. Have we sought to justify clinging to a long-standing tradition by taking biblical passages out of context and distorting them to justify our refusal to abandon this long-standing tradition?
3. Have we allowed our deep emotional attachment to the tradition to lead us to personally attack those who do not agree with us instead of responding in love?
4. Have we allowed our deep emotional attachment to give us tunnel vision which blocks our ability to think rationally and look at both sides of the issue and evaluate them objectively?
5. Have we allowed our deep emotional attachment to the tradition to so control our thinking that we find ourselves out of step with the church and the Bible's historic position on the issue?

It is fitting to close with an illustration of how the sacred halo syndrome affects one's ability to think rationally. Gail Riplinger, in her *New Age Bible Versions*, makes the

following astounding and irrational claim about the letter “s.” She wrote, “Watch out for the letter ‘s’---sin, Satan, Sodom, Saul (had to be changed to Paul). The added ‘s’ here is the hiss of the serpent.”⁶⁷

What rational believer would demonize a letter in the alphabet because it is found in the name of Satan? Why not do the same for the rest of the letters used in his name. Then why not then do the same for the letters in his other name, Devil? What then is the Church to do with other words which begin with the letter “s” like Son of God, Savior, Son of man, only-begotten Son, salvation, saved, saint, and sanctify? Her book is riddled with irrational and contradictory thought which will be discussed in the fourth chapter.

Our natural resistance to change, especially when it involves a long-standing tradition like the beloved King James translation, will serve us well if it leads us to carefully evaluate modern translations and not accept the new just because it is new or novel. Our natural resistance to change should cause us to be very cautious in jumping on every new translation that comes down the pike. However, when we allow our natural resistance to change to control us to the point that we refuse to objectively evaluate any modern translation and assume that they are all bad, then we have allowed something God intended for our good to become a detriment.

Ultimately, the child of God must decide on the validity of modern translations based upon the clear teachings of the Scriptures and they do not speak to the issue of translations. There is not one verse in the entire Bible that specifies a particular text or translation as being God’s choice to the exclusion of all other texts or translations.

⁶⁷ Riplinger, *New Age Bible Versions*, 232.

Chapter Three

MAKING MOUNTAINS OUT OF MOLEHILLS

A Comparison of the Textus Receptus and the Modern Critical Text

“Mountains out of mole-hills” is a term used of people ascribing life and death importance to matters that clearly do not threaten one’s life. It is a term that refers to placing disproportionate emphasis upon matters that may be important, but not critically important. For example, a Ford is an automobile that has transported people from point “A” to point “B” for almost a hundred years. Likewise, a Chevrolet is also an automobile that has transported people from point “A” to point “B” for almost a hundred years. Both are cars, both are the same, and yet, both are different, but the differences do not make one trustworthy and the other extremely dangerous. One does not make the differences between them disqualify one from being a dependable form of transportation, and to do so, would be to make a mountain out of a molehill.

This is precisely what is being done today in regards to the differences between the Textus Receptus and the Modern Critical Text. One is a Ford text and the other is a Chevrolet text. They are similar and they are different, but both give the Gospel that will transport a person from earth to Heaven. Both texts contain every doctrine of the Christian faith and to say differently is to be blatantly dishonest. They are different, but their differences do not corrupt the Gospel message or the great doctrines of the faith found in both of them. One is not a pure text while the other is a very corrupt text, and to state otherwise is to make a mountain out of a mole-hill.

The Textus Receptus (the Received Text) was the most widely used New Testament

Greek text for almost four hundred years (1516-1904ca). It was used long enough to become regarded as the traditional Greek text of the New Testament. And, as was discussed in the first two chapters, once it became the traditional text, it gradually took on a sanctity that elevated it to a sacred halo status. People gradually accepted it as possessing a mystical aura of immutable perfection. Once it was awarded this sacred halo, it gradually became recognized by many as the exclusive text that God used to preserve the message of New Testament the autographs.

This sacred halo status also means that any suggestion that the Textus Receptus needs further revision is viewed as an attack upon the pure Word of God which is found only in the Textus Receptus and in the King James translation of this text. It also brings into question the spirituality and integrity of any who would dare suggest that the Textus Receptus contains readings not found in the autographs.

This is illustrated by the following event. In 1734 J. A. Bengel published an edited edition of the Textus Receptus and was viciously attacked by Textus Receptus Only advocates. Here is how Metzger described the reaction.

Though Bengel was a man whose personal piety and life of good works were well known to all (he had been in charge of an orphan home at Halle) and whose orthodoxy of belief was acknowledge (he was Superintendent of the Evangelical church of Wurtemberg), he was treated as though he were an enemy of the holy Scriptures. So many persons impugned his motives and condemned his edition that he published in German, and then in Latin, a *Defense of the New Testament*.¹

When Erasmus published his Greek New Testament the Vulgate was the traditional translation which had an eleven hundred year track record. Due to its longevity it had gradually been awarded a scared halo status and anyone who did not make this same assumption was subject to vicious attacks by theses Vulgate Only advocates. Then, the same thing happened in regards to the Textus Receptus. It too was gradually awarded a sacred halo and those who were not Textus Receptus Only advocates were likewise subject to vicious attacks. A.T. Robinson spoke of both of these when he wrote,

From the very first the printed Greek New Testament was bitterly assailed by the ignorant monks as a great calamity. Erasmus was attacked in Britain and on

¹ Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, 113.

the continent. “Stephanus had to flee from the wrath of the doctors of the Sorbonne to Protestant Geneva” (Schaff, Companion to the Greek Text, p. 288). Owen attacked Walton, Whitney assailed Mill, Middleton condemned Bentley, Wettstein opposed Bengel, Frey attacked Wettstein, Matthaei abused Griesbach. It was a pitiable story, but truth as to win in the end.

The battle went on. The fight for the true text of the New Testament was carried on by Lachmann, by Tregelles, by Tischendorf, by Alford, by Westcott and Hort, even by Scrivener at last, by Gregory, by Nestle, by Von Soden. But even in this list of heroes of scholarship there has been suffering. Fritzesche called Lachmann “the ape of Bentley.” England allowed Tregelles to almost starve and he went blind deciphering manuscripts. Simonides slandered Tischendorf and actually claimed that he wrote the Codex Sinaiticus himself.²

This same attack mind set permeates much of the modern King James Only Movement toward those who favor texts other than those underlying the King James translation and who favor modern translators, and publishers. History is busy proving that, as a general rule, mankind learns very little from the mistakes of the past and is therefore doomed to repeating them.

As a student in a conservative Christian college in the mid-sixties, I was taught Greek out of Nestle’s third edition. The conservative seminary I later attended used this same Greek text. From 1983 until 2003, I taught beginning and advanced Greek in a small conservative Christian college using a later edition of this same text.

From my college days up until the late nineties I never heard a discussion on the differences between the Greek texts. The text a person used was never an issue. But, beginning in the late nineties, I began to meet with a growing resistance to the use of the Modern Critical Text by a few ardent King James Only pastors, some of whom knew nothing about the Greek language, the Greek texts, or textual criticism. They had been reading behind King James Only advocates who routinely denounce the Modern Critical Text as being corrupt. Many of those denouncing the Modern Critical Text had studied Greek using this same text and somehow had not been corrupted, but King James Only advocates had convinced them that this same text would corrupt their children.

² Robinson, *An Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, 29-30.

It was extreme statements about its corruption like the following that brought the demand for changing Greek texts. One popular King James Only exponent wrote, “The ‘Word of God’ has vanished from the European and American scene. It left in 1904 [with the advent and later dominance of the Nestle text] and there is little chance that it will return (Amos 8:11).”³ Another wrote, “The problem is that most Fundamentalists who still cling to the critical text and its concomitant translations simply have not done their homework. For the most part, they are unaware of the apostasy and major problems connected to the critical text from its origin to the present hour.”⁴ Dr. Wally Beebe wrote the following about the corrupt nature of the Modern Critical Text,

The manuscripts or texts used to translate such versions as the *Revised Standard Version*, *New Revised Standard Version*, *American Standard Version*, *New American Standard Version*, *New International Version*, etc., are based on corrupt texts that have originated, for the most part, from within the Catholic Church.”⁵

Based upon extreme rhetoric of this nature, the college administration eventually caved in and banned the use of the Nestle text in the classroom. It was substituted by an edition of the Textus Receptus printed in 1976 by the Trinitarian Bible Society of London which is not a bad text.

What makes this sudden realization of the apostate nature of the Modern Critical Text appear to be so irrational and contradictory is the fact that, from its inception the college had established a reputation for turning out strong fundamentalists Bible preachers with strong separatist views, and they did it while studying Greek from the Modern Critical Text.

³ Ruckman, *The Christian Handbook of Manuscript Evidence*, 17.

⁴ Sorenson, *Touch Not the Unclean Thing*, 9.

⁵ Wally S. Bebee, “Which Version of the Bible Should I Use?” *Church Bus News*, April-June 1992.

For the most part, the Fundamentalist Movement itself was birthed under the leadership of men who learned Greek and formed their Fundamentalist views by studying from some edition of the critical text. Most of these God-fearing men would probably have been familiar with the name “Nestle,” but few would have known the difference between this text and the Textus Receptus. This was not because there were no differences between the two texts, but scholars did not view either text as being extremely corrupt or untrustworthy.

King James Only advocates are making a mountain out of a molehill, but they do it with an agenda. They are fully aware that if they can discredit the Modern Critical Text, they can then discredit all modern translations made from it. This will force people to the exclusive use of the King James translation. Their attacks upon the Modern Critical Text is a backdoor approach to their King James Only position since the King James and the New King James are the only two translations which are totally reliant upon the Textus Receptus.

The fact that the Greek text is not the real issue is illustrated by the following statement by a strong King James Only advocate.

Someone may ask if there would be an objection to a person going today to the “pure stream,” the Textus Receptus, and producing another version. There is no need of it. We cannot produce 50 men in America or in the world today that God will ever use again like those He used who translated the King James Version. When the job was done, God seemed to have sealed it.⁶

The following quote taken from the introduction to the modern Nestle text voices the common opinion of textual scholars today, “. . . the majority text which he [Eberhard Nestle] formulated corresponded not only to the views of nineteenth century New Testament scholarship on the text of the New Testament, but to those of the twentieth

⁶ Mickey P. Carter, *Things that are Different are not the Same* (Haines City, Florida: Landmark Baptist Press, 1993), 125.

century scholarship as well.⁷

Textual scholars did not suddenly backslide and decide to favor the Modern Critical Text over the Textus Receptus. They made this move slowly and reluctantly due to mounting evidence that the Textus Receptus needed to be revised. They were reluctant to make this move because they knew the strong opposition and the vicious slander they would face.

The imperfection of the Textus Receptus is seen by the fact that Erasmus continued to revise his original edition with four subsequent editions. Later, Robert Estienne (Stephanus, 1503-1559) published four additional editions including his 1551 edition which divided the chapters into verses for the first time.

Theodore Beza (1519-1605) who was Calvin's associate and successor at Geneva, produced nine editions of Erasmus' text. *It was Beza's fifth edition which was used primarily by the King James translators.* These nineteen editions make it abundantly clear that the compilers of the Textus Receptus did not view their work as a final or a perfect text. The awarding of the Textus Receptus with a sacred halo gradually evolved over the years with its extended use which is what had previously happened to the Septuagint and the Vulgate.

Dr. Mickey Carter, who is quoted above, referred to the Textus Receptus as the "pure stream." Edwin Hills clearly expresses this perfection sentiment in the following statement, "In the Textus Receptus God corrected the few mistakes of any consequence which yet remained in the Traditional New Testament text of the majority of the Greek manuscripts."⁸ Hills' statement that "God corrected the few mistakes of any consequence" clearly suggests a divinely corrected text which would not need any further revision.

⁷ "Introduction," *Novum Testamentum Graece* (Stuttgart, Germany: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1979), 39-40.

⁸ Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, 200.

David Sorenson argues for the Textus Receptus having “*de facto* canonical status.”⁹ Metzger spoke to the sacred halo status of the Textus Receptus which impeded textual critics from improving it when he wrote, “Yet, no real progress was possible as long as the Textus Receptus remained the basic text and its authority was regarded as canonical.”¹⁰

We will never understand the intensity of King James Only advocates until we come to understand their mind set. They simply assume that the text of Textus Receptus is without a doubt the Greek text of God’s choice, and the King James translation is the translation of God’s choice. Thus, if it is in either of these texts, it was in the autographs.

These assumptions eliminate any need for a modern text or a modern translation. The King James translation has been awarded a sacred halo which makes it the translation of God’s choice. Dr. Carter, who is quoted above, wrote of the King James translation, “When the job was done, God seemed to have sealed it.”¹¹ This mind set explains their obvious contempt for modern textual critics, texts, translators, translations, and publishers. Concerning the gradual recognition that the Textus Receptus needed revision J. Harold Greenlee wrote,

By the early part of the nineteenth century, however, scores of Greek MSS from earlier centuries, and something of the texts of versions and of patristic quotations, were known. Scholars were coming to see, moreover, that many readings which differed from the TR, especially readings from the older MSS, were clearly preferable to the TR. It was no easy matter, however, to print a text which differed substantially from the TR. Voices were raised even in the highest circles against disturbing what was considered to be the sacred original text—considered to be so simply because it was the form of the text which had long been accepted. At the same time, increasing evidence could not forever be disregarded.¹²

⁹ Sorenson, *Touch Not The Unclean Thing*, 89.

¹⁰ Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, 6.

¹¹ Carter, *Things that are Different are not the Same*, 125.

¹² J. Harold Greenlee, *Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism* (Peabody, Massachusetts:

Notice that Greenlee recognizes that, due to its extended use, the Textus Receptus had gradually become to be regarded as the “sacred original text” and any attempt to revise it would be met with opposition from the “highest circles.” This is but further evidence of human beings’ natural reluctance to change, and especially change which involves long a standing tradition to which they have attached a sacred halo.

The availability of 5487 assorted Greek texts, most of which were not available to the compilers of the Textus Receptus, provided evidence of the need for revisions.¹³ One of the most exciting discoveries, as it relates to the demand for the revision of the Textus Receptus was not made until 1897. It was at this time that Bernard Grenfell and Arthur Hunt fished several pieces of ancient writing paper called papyri from a garbage heap near the town of Oxyrhynchus near Alexandria, Egypt.

Written on these ancient pieces of paper was communications in Greek from the everyday lives of citizens who lived as far back as the days when the New Testament was penned. Some of them had to do with receipts, grocery lists, and commercial activities of the times. What makes these ancient everyday communications so critical is that they were not written in the classical Greek of that day. They were written in the language of the common man on the streets of that day which is called *Koine* Greek. Other ancient papyri were discovered in two other places that contained portions of the New Testament which were also written in *Koine* Greek.

Here is how this Greek of the common man evolved. Beginning at around 500 B.C., the dialect of Athens (Attic Greek) was becoming the dominant Greek dialect. It gradually became the common dialect of the Greek homelands and the common vehicle for communication in everyday affairs. Alexander the Great saw as one of his missions the

Hendrickson Publishers, 1995), 68.

¹³ Kurt and Barbara Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, 74.

Hellenization of the world and this included spreading and establishing the Greek language as the international language of the day. He was pretty successful at this point. At the time of the writing of the New Testament, Greek had become the international language of the day.

Peterson tells us that internationalizing the language and using it as the language of commerce reduced the level of its elegance. He wrote,

But as the time of Alexander the Great's military and cultural conquests of all the countries from Greece to India and from Syrian to Egypt, as Greek developed into the common language across this vast, many-languaged territory, it lost a good bit of its elegance. As it was adapted to international usage — military, mercantile, diplomats — the gap between where this Greek began (preserved in Attic classical literature) and where it ended up (the language of the people) became significant. The Attic dialect of Athens thus evolved into what we customarily refer to as the *Koine* or “common” Greek of the Hellenistic period of the New Testament. Meanwhile, philosophers, poets, dramatists, and historians continued to write in classical Greek, “proper” Greek. All students learned that serious writers must shun the common (*koine*) language, which was fit only for nonliterary uses.

The consequence was that in the course of the three centuries preceding Jesus and the formation of the Christian church, there were two levels of Greek language: the classical Greek represented by great writers of the past, and the common Greek in use across the empire to conduct all the affairs of everyday life. If you intended to write history or philosophy or poetry, you would use the best Greek available, classical Greek. But if you were carrying on conversation with your neighbors or shopping in the market, you would use the *Koine*, the common tongue . . . So here's the thing: Only what was written in classical Greek survived, the writings that ended up in libraries and government archives or on monuments and in formal inscriptions — the kind of writing that professional writers “real” writers wrote.¹⁴

Based upon these distinctively different uses between the classical Greek and the *Koine* Greek, one would at first naturally assume that the writers of the New Testament would have chosen the classical Greek which was the more elegant language of the educated and of the formal writings of that day. However, because the Gospels and Epistles were addressed to the common working people of that day, they were written in *Koine* Greek, which was the language of the common working people of that day. For many centuries

¹⁴ Peterson, *Eat This Book*, 142-143.

this unusual language created problems for both translators and interpreters of the New Testament. Of this distinction, Peterson wrote,

The translators noticed that the Greek of Paul and Mark was quite different from the Greek that they had learned in the schools. The Greek of the New Testament sounded so barbarous to the educated that it had to be defended by the early church. Over the centuries of translation two theories emerged to account for this oddity of the New Testament Greek as compared to classical Greek. One group thought that New Testament Greek must have been a translation from an original Hebrew text. These were the “Hebraists”: they argued that an underlying Hebrew original accounted for the un-Greek quality of the writing. The other group — these were the “purists” — conjectured that the New Testament Greek was a special language, created by the Holy Spirit to suit the purposes of God’s revelation. The classical Greek that provided the base was purified of its pagan origins by the refining fire of the Spirit.

The Greek New Testament has a vocabulary of about five thousand words. Of those five thousand words, about five hundred were considered unique to the New Testament, never appearing in any extant secular Greek literature up to that point. The “purists” seized on this statistic to suggest that the Spirit modified the secular Greek to give it a distinctive “holy Spirit” cast, and then seeded it with freshly coined “Holy Spirit” words to confirm its exalted status as the language of revelation . . . A German theologian, Richard Rothe, went so far as to call it the “language of the Holy Ghost.”¹⁵

Thus, a full ten percent of the New Testament vocabulary is composed of *Koine* Greek which neither the compilers of the Textus Receptus nor the translators of the King James translation clearly understood. They had no record of how these words were used in New Testament times because they had no written records of their use or even of their existence. Clarke wrote the following concerning the impact of these papyri findings were upon textual criticism, “Since the discovery of these precious new papyri, Westcott and Hort’s theories, as well as the entire field of textual criticism, have needed to be re-examined.”¹⁶

To choose to ignore actual historical documents that greatly aid in properly

¹⁵ Ibid, 143-144.

¹⁶ Kent D. Clarke, *Textual Optimism, A Critique of the United Bible Societies’ Greek New Testament* (19 Kingfield road, Sheffield, England: Shjffield Academic Press Ltd Mansion House, 1997), 36.

understanding the meaning of one out of every ten words in the Greek New Testament is both irrational and irresponsible. Yet, modern King James Only advocates are sure that the translators of the King James were so providentially guided by God that they did not need the added insights gained from a more precise understanding of ten percent of the words in the New Testament.

They also refuse to acknowledge and take the advantage of the scholastic advances of the last four hundred years. The King James translators were glad to stand upon the shoulders of those who went before them as is indicated by their introductory statement in the original King James, “. . . so, if we, building upon their foundation that went before us, and being holpen by their labours, do endeavor to make that better which they left so good.”

King James Only advocates seem to operate on the assumption that when the compilers of the Textus Receptus and the translators of the King James Bible died, real Christian scholarship also died. Dr. Carter clearly stated this when he wrote, “We cannot produce 50 men in America or in the world today that God will ever use again like those He used who translated the King James Version.”¹⁷

It is time that King James Only advocates stop reading each other’s false claims about the corrupt nature of the critical text and simply do some investigation for themselves. If they will do the research, they will find that the claims about the corrupt nature of the Modern Critical Text are grossly exaggerated. Here is what Dr. Steward Custer wrote about the textual families.

The important thing to note is that *each of these four types of texts is theologically conservative*. Each one sets forth an accurate gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, His deity, the personality and deity of the Holy Spirit, the blood atonement, justification by faith, and the other major doctrines of the faith. Not one of these texts can be called heretical or apostate as Mr. Ruckman alleges . . . Every one of the major doctrines of the faith is found in each kind of text. There is no

¹⁷ Carter, *Things that are Different are not the Same*, 125.

attempt to twist or to disparage any of the great doctrines of the faith . . . **Most of the differences in modern Bibles are differences in translation rather than differences in text.** (Emphasis added) Most of the modern translations are poor, not because they use a different text, but because they are doctrinally prejudiced and will not allow the text to say what it says.¹⁸

David Allan Black agrees that most of the distinctions between modern translations are not because of textual differences, but differences in translational philosophies. He wrote,

Of course, such variants should not overshadow the overwhelming degree of agreement that exists among the ancient manuscripts. In fact, the most important differences in today's English New Testament are due, not to textual variation, but to the way translators view their task (i.e., paraphrase versus literal translation).¹⁹

We will compare the major distinctions between the two texts, but before we can do that we will need a basic understanding of the history of the two texts. Then we will present the verses that are omitted from the Modern Critical Text but are included in the Textus Receptus.

A Brief History of the Textus Receptus

The preceding chapter presented Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536) as the chief architect of the Textus Receptus. It was later edited by two other men, Robert Estienne (also known as Stephanus) who produced four editions, and by Theodore Beza, a competent scholar who was Calvin's assistant in Geneva who produced ten editions. The text is based upon the Byzantine Text which is briefly described in Appendix C.

Metzger appropriately points out that there is a sixty year lapse between Johannes Gutenberg's invention of the printing press and the publication of Erasmus' Greek text of the New Testament in 1516. Yet, shortly after its invention Gutenberg published an edition of the Vulgate between 1450 and 1456. Over the next fifty years at least one

¹⁸ Stewart Custer, *The Truth About the King James Controversy* (Greenville, South Carolina: Bob Jones University Press, 1981), 4-5.

¹⁹ David Alan Black, *New Testament Textual Criticism* (Grand Rapids: BakerBooks, 1994), 13.

hundred editions of Jerome's Vulgate were published. Metzger suggests two reasons for the delay in printing the New Testament Greek text.

In the first place, the production of fonts of Greek type necessary for a book of any considerable size was both difficult and expensive . . . The principal cause which retarded the publication of the Greek text of the New Testament was doubtless the prestige of Jerome's Latin Vulgate. Translations into the vernacular languages were not derogatory to the supremacy of the Latin text from which they were derived. But the publication of the Greek New Testament offered to any scholar acquainted with both languages a tool with which to criticize and correct the official Latin Bible of the Church.²⁰

After having been used by the Church in the West for over a thousand years, the Vulgate had acquired a sacred halo. Therefore, anything that was viewed as having the potential to either correct or supplant it was considered as an attack upon God's divinely approved text for His people and must be rejected.

It is often said that the Textus Receptus was the first printed Greek New Testament, but that is technically incorrect. It was the first *published* Greek New Testament, but not the first *printed*. There was an excellent Greek text, which was twelve years in being compiled that was printed in 1514, but it was not published until 1522. On this Metzger wrote,

At length, however, in 1514 the first printed Greek New Testament came from the press, as a part of a Polyglot Bible. Planned in 1502 by the cardinal primate of Spain, Francisco Ximenes de Cisernos (1437-1517), this magnificent edition of the Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek, and Latin texts was printed at the university town of Alcala (Called Complutum in Latin). Known as the Complutensian Polyglot, the project was under the editorial care of several scholars, of whom Diego Lopez de Zuniga (Stunica) is perhaps the best known . . . it appears that for some reason the Polyglot was not actually circulated (that is, published) until about 1522.²¹

The first edition of Erasmus was based upon no more than six to eight manuscripts. Concerning these sources Sturz, who was a Textus Receptus advocate, wrote,

Most textual students of the New Testament would agree that the TR was made

²⁰ Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, 96.

²¹ Ibid.

from a few medieval Greek manuscripts, mostly Byzantine, of Von Soden's K x strand. They would further concur that the TR, though it brought the students and translators of the New Testament infinitely closer to the originals than the Latin Vulgate, was far from the pure text of the original autographs. Indeed, it was "the received text received by all" and therefore the text used by all. However, the principal reason for this was probably the fact that it was the only text available to all.²²

The Textus Receptus was published along with an accompanying Latin translation which made it much more affordable. It quickly captured the market. Sturz explains that it was the text used by all largely because it was the only text available to all. And, as traditional things normally do, the text gradually took on a mystical aura of immutable perfection. It was gradually awarded a sacred halo which gave it an untouchable sanctity which is recognized even today by many King James Only/Textus Receptus advocates.

However, beginning in the eighteen hundreds, there were voices raised about the corruption of this text, but it was the critical text of Westcott and Hort that ultimately dethroned it. Sturz wrote, "The climax came with the use of the genealogical argument, which, as applied by Westcott and Hort (WH) gave the *coup de grace* to the Received Text. The text of WH then replaced that of the TR, and the reign of the Byzantine text came to an end"²³

It cannot be determined exactly when Erasmus decided to compile his Greek text for publication. It is known that he had been working on a new Latin translation because he knew the corrupt state of the Vulgate of that day. This means that he had already developed a keen interest in Greek texts and had studied them in preparation for his Latin translation which he published along with his Greek New Testament.

On a visit to Basle in August of 1514, he discussed the possibility of editing a complete

²² Harry A. Sturz, *The Byzantine Text-Type and New Testament Textual Criticism* (Nashville, Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1984) 14.

²³ Ibid,

Greek text of the New Testament with the well-known publisher Johann Froben, who recognized a ready market for a printed copy of the Greek New Testament. Metzger says that this was probably not the first time they had discussed this venture.²⁴ Their discussion seems to have broken off, only to be continued again at another meeting in April of 1515. At this encounter, Froben secured the aid of a mutual friend to entice Erasmus, who was by then a widely recognized scholar, to undertake to immediately compile a complete Greek text of the NT for publication.

Froben, being an astute businessman, had heard of the Spanish Polyglot Bible which contained the Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek, and Latin texts, which was printed in 1514, but had not yet received the Pope's blessings and was therefore not officially published until 1522. He realized that there was indeed a market for a printed copy of the entire Greek text of the NT. He promised to pay Erasmus as much as anyone else might offer for such an undertaking. It appears that at this time Erasmus committed himself to compile a complete Greek text of the NT

Going to Basle in July of 1515, he hoped to find enough good Greek manuscripts to send to Froben to print. However, the manuscripts he found were not as good as he desired and required a certain amount of editing before they could be sent to the printer. Most of the manuscripts that Erasmus used in compiling what would later become known as the Textus Receptus came from the collection of Byzantine manuscripts that had been bequeathed to the Roman Catholic Dominican monastery at Basle in 1443, by John Stojkovic of Ragusa.

The precise number of manuscripts that Erasmus had before him when he compiled the Textus Receptus is said to have been between six to eight manuscripts, none of which contained the entire New Testament, and none of which went back prior to the eleventh century.

²⁴. Metzger, *The Text of The New Testament*, 98.

Having no complete Greek text of the New Testament, he relied on several different shorter manuscripts. His two primary and most complete manuscripts were rather inferior manuscripts from the Roman Catholic monastic library in Basle. One contained the Gospels and the other the book of Acts and the Epistles, both dated from about the twelfth century.

With the assistance of two aids, Nicklaus Gerber and Joannes Oecolampadius, who later became an aid to Zwingli, Erasmus compared these copies with the two or three other copies of the same books and made occasional corrections for the printer in the margins or between the lines of the Greek text.

For the book of Revelation, he had but one manuscript dating from the twelfth century, which he had borrowed from his friend Reuchlin. Erasmus had an unknown copyist to make a copy of it. The manuscript was a Greek text as well as a commentary. In some places the commentary and the text itself were hardly distinguishable.

The manuscript also lacked the final leaf which contained the last six verses of Revelation. For these verses, as well as a few other passages throughout the book which were not clear, Erasmus went back to the Vulgate and simply translated it back into Greek. And, as would be expected from such a procedure, these passages contain words and phrases which are found in no known Greek text. Some of these errors are still perpetuated in the Textus Receptus and the King James translation today. To his credit, Erasmus, in his fourth edition, did go back and make over ninety changes to the text in Revelation.

Erasmus also relied heavily upon the Vulgate which had been the traditional Bible of the Western Church for eleven hundred years. And, because of this, there are verses, words, and phrases in the Textus Receptus and the King James translation taken from the Vulgate which are not found in any Greek text. An example of this is Acts 9:6 where Erasmus introduced the question by Paul to Jesus during his conversion experience on the Damascus road, "*And he trembling and astonished said, 'Lord what will thou have me do?'*" This question is found in no existing Greek manuscripts, yet is still perpetuated in the

Textus Receptus and the King James translation.

Since this question is found in the parallel account of this same incident in Acts 12:10, textual critics recognize that at some point in the transmission of the Vulgate this question by Paul was simply inserted by a copyist into the account in 9:6 in order to make it harmonize with the account in 12:10. The question does not jeopardize any doctrine; it is simply a question of whether or not it was included by Luke when he penned Acts 9:6.

The response of Philip in Acts 8:37 “*And Philip said, if thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest,*” is not found in any Greek manuscript prior to the sixth century. This fact clearly suggests that at some point in the transmission of the text, this response was inserted into the text and not dropped from it as some King James Only advocates irrationally claim.

What makes this idea of it being dropped from the text early in its transmission an irrational explanation is the fact that the texts of the New Testament were so widely disseminated almost immediately after they were written. This means that it is highly unlikely that this sentence could have been dropped from all these texts scattered all across Christendom at roughly the same time.

This claim is irrational because one has to posit that it was in the autographs and there was a widespread collusion among copyists to drop an orthodox statement from the text for no apparent reason. That hardly makes sense. This claim is also irrational because the ability to communicate such a plot to all Christendom and have it immediately dropped was practically impossible in an era of very limited communication.

This irrational assumption also assumes that such a devious plot to drop an orthodox statement from the sacred text would have been widely accepted by an orthodox Church for no apparent reason. These are all very irrational assumptions brought on by the sacred halo syndrome. This supposition also contradicts the unbiblical doctrine of Plenary Preservation which is held by some King James Only advocates. (Plenary Preservation is discussed in Appendix E.)

Erasmus' original edition did not contain the Trinitarian statement in I John 5:7-8, "*the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth.*" Erasmus did not include it because none of the manuscripts he had contained it. Even after the initial publication of his Greek text, he searched in vain to find one Greek text containing this reading. It had apparently originally been written in the margin of the Vulgate and from here it eventually made its way into the text itself by the twelfth century.

Due to the popularity of the Vulgate, which contained this reading, there was a public outcry because it was missing in Erasmus' Greek text. (The Vulgate had acquired a sacred halo status which meant that if it was in the Vulgate, it was in the originals, which is the same attitude that millions have today toward both the Textus Receptus and the King James translation.) In an unguarded moment, Erasmus promised to put it back if anyone could find a single Greek manuscript with this variant reading in it.

It appears that a Franciscan monk named Froy at Oxford manufactured a Greek text with the disputed sentence in it, and, true to his promise, Erasmus restored it in his third edition. However, he did indicate in a lengthy footnote that the text had been manufactured expressly to force him to restore the sentence which later would become known as the *Comma Johanneum*. The manuscript in question is codex minuscule 61. It is today in the library of Trinity College in Dublin.

Of the thousands of Greek manuscripts which have come to light since then, only eight contain this questionable reading and four of the eight have it written in the margin in sixteenth century handwriting. It does not appear in any Greek text prior to the sixteenth century.

The passage is quoted by none of the early Greek fathers. Certainly they would have used this passage in the Trinitarian controversies with Sabellius and Arius if it had been in the original text. The variant is also missing from all ancient translations. The first instance of its being quoted as Scripture was in a fourth century Latin treatise titled *Liber*

Apologeticus (ch. 4), usually attributed either to the Spanish heretic Priscillian who died in A.D. 385, or to his follower Bishop Instantius.

In the fifth century, the reading was quoted by some of the Latin fathers in North Africa as Scripture. It appears in no Greek text prior to the sixteenth century. It appeared only after the sixth century in the text as Scripture in manuscripts of the Old Latin versions and in the Vulgate.

However, regardless of the overwhelming evidence to the contrary, once one has awarded the Textus Receptus a sacred halo, it must be accepted as containing the original reading even when the evidence dictates otherwise. This is but a testimony to the irrational thought generated by the sacred halo syndrome.

The argument by Hills that the first undisputed form of this Trinitarian formula goes back to the fourth century only means that the formula was known and cited in the fourth century.²⁵ There is absolutely no evidence that it was found in any Greek text. There is not one Greek text from that era which contains this reading.

Hills' suggestion that it was in earlier manuscripts and somehow was dropped is nothing more than irrational speculation growing out of his "logic of faith" decision he made about the superiority of the Textus Receptus. It would be rational to say that it could drop out in one or two geographical areas or from one or two textual families, but to assume that this disputed text, which contains an orthodox statement of the faith, would suddenly drop out of all Greek texts all across Christendom and then suddenly reappear in the Old Latin version and in the Vulgate in the sixth century is nothing more than wishful thinking in the face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary.

The earliest forms of the Apostles, Creed, which dates back to around A.D. 125, its further developed form which dates around A. D. 250, and the Nicene Creed which was written in A.D. 325, all testify to the fact that the Church has historically recognized the

²⁵ Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, 209-213.

Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as God. Therefore, the immediate omission of a reading that substantiated one of the Church's core beliefs is also a contradiction of logic. Only those suffering from the sacred halo syndrome could accept this irrational logic.

If the variant was in John's autograph, no good reason can be given for its early disappearance from all Greek texts and ancient translations by a Church which was mostly Trinitarian in theology. The fact is that this variant is without any credible evidence and is almost universally recognized as being spurious. The man who placed it into the Textus Receptus did not believe that it was a part of John's autograph. He placed it into the text as a result of a rash promise and the deceit of the man who manufactured the fake text containing it.

The actual printing of Erasmus' first edition began on October 2, 1515 and was finished on March 1, 1516. It contained the Greek text and Erasmus' own Latin translation, which he had been working on for several years. It was dedicated to Pope Leo X. Because of the haste in which it was printed, the original publication contained hundreds of typographical errors. His second edition was published in 1519 and contained some revisions both to the Greek text and to his Latin translation. It was in his third edition that he inserted the debated passage of I Jn. 5:7.

After the publication of his third edition in 1522, he had the opportunity to see Ximenes' Polyglot Bible and wisely decided to avail himself of its generally superior text and to amend his fourth edition. In the book of Revelation alone he altered the text in some ninety passages. (If God had been guiding him to the point that he corrected the few mistakes in the existing Traditional Text as Hills says, it certainly would appear that He would have guided Erasmus not to have made those ninety mistakes.)

Erasmus' fourth edition of his Greek text was issued in 1527. It was in three columns containing the text of the Vulgate, his own Latin translation, and the Greek text which he had prepared. A fifth edition was issued in 1535 in which the Vulgate was dropped, but the Greek text differs very little from that of the fourth edition. Erasmus' explanatory

notes on variant readings in the Greek text were retained.

Erasmus revised his original text four times. The text then passed into the hands of the famous Parisian printer and publisher, Robert Estienne, which in Latin is Stephanus (1503-1559). Unlike Erasmus, Stephanus was converted to Protestantism. He edited and published four editions (1546, 1549, 1550, 1551). The first two editions by Stephanus were a compound of the Complutensian and Erasmus' fourth and fifth editions. His third edition had variant readings in the margins based upon the Complutensian and about a dozen other Greek manuscripts.

His final edition relied more heavily upon Erasmus' text of the fourth and fifth editions which Erasmus had greatly altered and improved. This fourth edition was divided into verses. His activities in publishing drew the ire of Rome, and in 1550 he fled Paris and settled in Geneva during the time when Calvin exerted great influence over the city. It was here that he converted to Protestantism embracing Calvinism.

Theodore Beza (1519-1605), who was Calvin's disciple and successor at Geneva and a brilliant classical and biblical scholar, published nine editions of the Greek text. A tenth edition was published posthumously. He also made a Latin translation of the New Testament which was published in 1556. The Greek text he used differed very little from Stephanus' edition of 1551, which relied more upon Erasmus' fifth edition than it did upon the Complutensian Polyglot, but nevertheless he did utilize both.

In his 1582 edition, which he calls his third edition, Beza listed the sources he used. One was the variant readings collected by Stephanus. Another was a Syriac version published in 1569. Another was an Arabic New Testament in Latin. He had a Greek text of the Gospels and Acts (Codex Bezae or D) and a manuscript of the Pauline Epistles. Four of Beza's editions are independent folio editions, while six are reprints. The translators of the King James Version relied heavily upon Beza's editions of 1588-89 and 1598, which rarely departed (38 times according to Reuss, 1872) from Stephanus' fourth

edition.²⁶

The name "Textus Receptus" came about when the Elzevir brothers published their second edition of a compact Greek New Testament which was largely the text of Beza. In the second edition, which was published in 1633, they inserted the following sentence in Latin: "The text that you have is now received by all, in which we give nothing changed or perverted." From this, Erasmus' text began to be referred to as the "Textus Receptus," which is Latin for "Received Text." We should be clear that this text is nowhere designated by the Church or the Bible as the received text. The term simply meant that, in that day, it was the commonly accepted text.

The Textus Receptus gained and held the ascendancy in the Church for almost four hundred years making it the traditional text of the Church. It was the text from which the King James Version was translated and also the basis for every European translation until 1885, when the text compiled by Westcott and Hort was used as the basis for the English Revised Version and the American Standard Version of 1901. It was the Westcott/Hort text published by Eberhard Nestle in 1905 which toppled the Textus Receptus from its position of ascendancy.

As indicated above, the move away from a text that had become the traditional text met with strong resistance. Some of the defenders of the Textus Receptus were very able scholars who argued very capably against the superiority of the Westcott/Hort text.

John W. Burgon (1813-1888) was a very capable scholar who strongly opposed the critical text of Westcott and Hort as being superior to the Textus Receptus. He has become the darling of King James Only advocates. Some of his works are being republished today. F.H.A. Scrivener (1813-1891) was not as vehement as Burgon, but was nevertheless opposed to the critical text of Westcott/Hort. George Salmon (1819-1904) also opposed Westcott and Hort for the lack of weight they gave to the Western Text.

²⁶ Ibid, 206-208.

With the death of Burgon and Scrivener, the opposition to the Westcott/Hort text and the advocacy of the Textus Receptus as the superior text was rather muted until the rise of the modern King James Only Movement of the past few decades. In 1956, Edwin F. Hills, who was a textual critic, published *The King James Version Defended*. In it he argues vehemently for the superiority of the Textus Receptus and the King James Version. However, he clearly states that he arrived at this conclusion based on his “logic of faith” which was discussed in the previous chapter. In 1976 Jacob van Bruggen published *The Ancient Texts of the NT* which was a defense of the Textus Receptus.

One year later Wilbur Pickering published *The Identity of the NT Text* in which he argued against the whole concept of texts types which was foundational to the work of Westcott and Hort. Pickering suggested that the only method of resolving textual variants was to simply count the number of witness and go with the majority reading. He was fully aware that this approach would almost always favor the readings of the Textus Receptus since it is based upon the Byzantine Text which vastly outnumbers all other text types combined.

Zane Hodge also takes this approach in editing *The Greek NT According to the Majority Text*.) In 1984, Harry Sturz published *The Byzantine Text-Type and New Testament Textual Criticism* in which he argued for the Byzantine text, not necessarily as being superior, but as being a good text and worthy of higher consideration than Westcott and Hort had attributed to it.

The slander of the Textus Receptus because of the limited number of manuscripts Erasmus had available (5-8) will not hold up under scrutiny. This is because subsequent to his initial edition, Erasmus availed himself of many other manuscripts, including the Complutesian Polyglot which was a good text, and made scores of revisions to subsequent editions. Stephanus and Beza, both of whom further edited the text, also availed themselves of additional manuscripts. So, the Textus Receptus is not based solely upon the few manuscripts that Erasmus had when he compiled his first edition which was

published in 1516.

In summary, God has indeed preserved His Word. The critical nature of the message of the Bible demands that a holy and a loving God preserve it in a manner that communicates the great truths of the Gospel. Otherwise men are left in total darkness without any light. So, the issue is not providential preservation, the issue is the means God chose to preserve His Word.

The problem arises when King James Only advocates attempt to limit providential preservation to the King James translation and the texts underlying it when they have no biblical or textual evidence to prove this claim. The *Textus Receptus* is indeed a reliable text that retains every doctrine of the Christian faith. It is not a perfect text. Neither is it an exact replica of the autographs as Dr. Del Johnson of Pensacola Christian College and others claim.

From the time of its publication in 1516, almost every translation made in any language up until the publication of the Modern Critical Text in 1884 was made from this text. The English translation that rose above all others and became the standard translation of the English-speaking world for almost four hundred years was also made from this Greek text. The great Greek scholar, A. T. Robertson wrote of it,

It should be stated at once that the *Textus Receptus* is not a bad text. It is not a heretical text. It is substantially correct . . . It should be clear, therefore, that the *Textus Receptus* has preserved for us a substantially accurate text in spite of the long centuries preceding the age of printing when copying by hand was the only method of reproducing the New Testament.²⁷

The following truth needs to be clearly understood by advocates on both sides of the text issue. Neither text is a corrupt text, although neither is a perfect text. In the places where they differ, no doctrine of the faith is in jeopardy. From either text it is possible to

²⁷ A. T. Robertson, *An Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1925), 21.

make a translation that contains every doctrine of the Christian faith. It just might be that some are making a mountain out of a molehill by maligning the Modern Critical Text as being extremely corrupt as a backdoor approach to their King James Only position.

The Modern Critical Text

When we make reference to the Modern Critical Text or the Standard Text, we are speaking of the texts of the United Bible Societies' 4th edition (published in 1993) and of the Nestle-Aland Text 27th edition. These texts are virtually identical in so far as the text itself is concerned, and because of their textual agreement, they are often together called the Standard Text. They do differ in matters of spelling, punctuation, and in paragraph divisions. Most textual scholars today accept this text as the text which comes closer to replicating the autographs than any text available to the Church today. It is from this text that most modern translations are made.

The fact that the Textus Receptus has been awarded a sacred halo has made it extremely difficult for scholars to challenge. Robinson wrote,

J. A. Bengel in 1734 published, indeed, the Textus Receptus "because he could not then publish a text of his own. Neither the publisher nor the public would have stood for it." (Gregory, *The canon and Text of the New Testament*, p. 447) So Bengel only dared to put the good readings into the text when they had already appeared in some previous printed edition. But he made marginal notes of five classes of readings (the genuine readings, those better than the text, those just as good, those not so good, and those to be rejected). This was a clear scheme, but even so he angered so many that he published a "Defence of the Greek New Testament" in German and then in Latin (1737).²⁸

Karl Lachman (1793-1851), was the first recognized scholar to break with the Textus Receptus and publish the first Greek New Testament to rely wholly upon the application of the principles of textual criticism.²⁹ Interestingly, Metzger says that the man to whom

²⁸ Ibid, 25-26.

²⁹ Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, 124

modern textual critics owe the most is Lobegott Friedrich Constantine von Tischendorf (1815-1874). He sought out and published more manuscripts and produced more critical editions of the Greek New Testament than any other single scholar. His primary claim to fame is his indefatigable industry in assembling textual evidence.³⁰

Samuel Prideaux Tregelles (1813-1875) was influential in England in leading the way in not relying totally upon the Textus Receptus and utilizing and comparing others texts in seeking to reestablish the original text. Of his devotion to God and to the production of a good Greek text, one writer wrote,

In spite of poverty, opposition, and ill health, Tregelles overcame all difficulties and devoted a lifetime of meticulous labours upon the text of the New Testament as an act of worship, undertaken, as he declares in the preface, ‘in the full belief that it would be for the service of God, by serving his Church.’³¹

Henry Alford (1810-1871) is best known today for his widely used commentaries on the New Testament. He was also the Dean of Canterbury and the author of several well-known hymns such as “Come ye Thankful People Come” and “Ten Thousand Times Ten Thousand.” However, as a genuine scholar, he recognized the need for further revisions in the Textus Receptus and the difficulty in making these changes due to the blind devotion to the Textus Receptus rampant in his time. He worked for the “demolition of the unworthy and pedantic reverence for the received text, which stood in the way of all chance of discovering the genuine word of God.”³²

It was the labors Brooke F. Westcott (1825-1901) and Fenton John Anthony Hort (1828-1892), who labored twenty-eight years (1853-1881) in compiling the critical text that would signal an end to the reign the Textus Receptus. A. T. Robertson, whose work

³⁰ Ibid, 126.

³¹ Ibid, 128.

³² Ibid.

was published in 1925, which was just forty-four years after the publication of the Westcott and Hort text in 1881, wrote of the dominance their critical text had gained in that short span, “It is today the text that is used by scholars all over the world. These two Cambridge scholars have produced a text that is not final, but that is infinitely superior to all others that preceded it since the first printed Greek New Testament in 1514.”³³

It would be the Westcott and Hort text popularized by the Eberhard Nestle edition and published in 1904 that would topple the Textus Receptus from its extended dominance. The twentieth century would become the century almost completely dominated by various editions of the Nestle text.

The following lengthy quote is taken from the introduction to the modern Nestle Greek text. It is given because so much data relative to the origin and production of the Nestle text is related in this long quote.

When Eberhard Nestle produced the first edition of the *Novum Testamentum Graece* in 1898, neither he nor the sponsoring Wurttemberg Bible Society could have imagined the full extent of what had been started. Although the Textus Receptus could still claim a wide range of defenders, the scholarship of the nineteenth century had conclusively demonstrated it to be the poorest form of the New Testament text. The major editions in the field were those of Tischendorf (from 1841 to the *editio octava critica major* of 1869-1872). But internationally by far the most popular text used in university, church, and school was still some edition of the Textus Receptus such as the one distributed by the British and Foreign Bible Society until 1904. The reign of the Textus Receptus did not end until the appearance of Nestle’s edition.

Eberhard Nestle was motivated by practical considerations in producing his *Novum Testamentum Graece*. He wished to make the text achieved by nineteenth century scholarship commonly available. To this end he took as his basis the editions of Tischendorf, Westcott-Hort, and Weymouth (1886, from 1901). The latter was replaced by the edition of Bernhard Weiss, 1894-1900, and from a comparison of these three editions he constructed a majority text: when the editions differed, the agreement of two determined the text, and the reading of the third was placed in the apparatus. When all three differed, Nestle would adopt a mediating solution. This principle was not new. In 1873 the Cambridge Greek New Testament for Schools and colleges had appeared with a text based on the editions of Tischendorf and Tyregelles. But for it the deciding factor in a draw

³³ Robertson, *Introduction to the Textual Criticism of N T*, 36.

was the *Textus Receptus*.

From these beginnings his son, Erwin Nestle, in response to proposals made by the *Deutsche Neutestamentlertagung* and following the lines suggested, created the 13th edition of 1927 the modern “Nestle” with its critical apparatus, which retains the readings of the three above-mentioned editions (together with those of von Soden), but exhibits more prominently the evidence of manuscripts, versions, and the Church Fathers . . . Kurt Aland first became associated with the work in the 21st edition of 1952; from that time he began to collate the evidence in the apparatus against original sources, and in particular to introduce the readings of newly discovered papyri.

This “Nestle”, as it was soon popularly called, was distributed in the hundreds of thousands, not only in the Greek edition (the 25th edition of 1963 has been reprinted repeatedly), but also in diglot editions. Due to its popularity and wide acceptance, it soon became a kind of new ‘*Textus Receptus*.’³⁴

The Modern Critical Text is an eclectic text. The term “eclecticism” refers to the concept that each variant of the text must be resolved variant by variant and without regarding one manuscript or text-type as the manuscript or text which preserves the original reading. The UBS 4th edition utilized what is called “Reasoned Eclecticism.” This would also mean that in considering a variant reading they also considered both internal evidence and external evidence. They also sought to choose the variant which best explained and accounted for the other readings.

A part of this approach involved the attempt to restructure the history of a textual variant by asking questions like, “When did the variant first appear and in what textual family did it first appear?” Or, they might ask, “What is the reliability factor of a text which gives witness to a particular variant?” This approach might be stated in a manner which affirms that no text is automatically assumed to be the best witness to the original reading, but the Standard Text still reflects more Alexandrian readings and still very strongly resembles the Westcott and Hort text, although in theory this method constitutes a real departure from Westcott and Hort.

Differences between the Modern Critical Text and the *Textus Receptus*

We now come to the point of actually looking at some of the variant readings that are

³⁴ “Introduction,” *Novum Testamentum Graece*.

found in the Textus Receptus, but are not in the Modern Critical Text, but before we begin we need to speak to the issue of two assumptions that King James and Textus Receptus advocates make about the Textus Receptus.

The assumption that if a variant reading is found in the Textus Receptus, it was in the autographs, is only an assumption. They have never seen the autographs. Therefore, they do not know for certain which text contains the original reading.

Next, the assumption that in every place where the Modern Critical Text differs with the Textus Receptus, the critical text is corrupted is another one of those assumptions which they cannot prove until they actually see the autographs to prove their point.

Because a verse is retained in the Textus Receptus and has been dropped by the Modern Critical Text does not mean that the verse was in the autographs. Nobody alive today has ever seen the original texts. Therefore, nobody alive today can say with absolute certainty which text contains the original reading. They can make an educated guess based upon the evidence, but even then, the only way that they can know for certain that they have made the correct choice would be for them to have the original text to verify which reading is correct.

It never seems to occur to the King James Only advocates that just because a variant is in the Textus Receptus, which means that it is also in the King James, does not mean that it was in the originals. There is a real possibility that those who prepared the Textus Receptus and the King James translation were not perfect men and could have erred on occasion.

They never get around to slandering Erasmus for adding to the Scriptures verses taken from the Vulgate which have no textual support, but they are experts at slandering modern textual critics for taking away from the Scriptures verses found in the Textus Receptus which textual evidence creates real doubts about their authenticity.

Here are the facts. The Modern Critical Text, just like the Textus Receptus, was compiled by textual critics who chose certain variant readings and rejected others because

they were convinced by textual evidence that the variants were or were not in the autographs. They did not omit a variant reading because they were ungodly men with a secret agenda to destroy the faith. They omitted it because they were convinced by the evidence that it was not in the originals. *And, the fact is that we will never know for certain who was right until we see the autographs.*

After reviewing the differences between the two texts, it just might be legitimate to ask the question, “Are we dealing with men of questionable character who are guilty of grossly overstating the differences between the two texts in order to hem people into to the exclusive use of the King James translation?”

Comfort made the following observations concerning the differences between the two texts.

The text of the TR has about one thousand more words than that of the Westcott and Hort, and about fifty more verses. Several of these verses have become so much a part of the biblical tradition and church liturgy that it has been excruciatingly painful for modern translators to wrench them from the text and place them in a marginal note, even when scholars have known that they were not originally in the text. The pain comes from knowing that most people expect to see these words in their Bible. Taking the Nestle-Aland text as a starting point, the extra verses in the KJV are as follows:

Matthew 5:44b; 6:13b; 16:2b-3; 17:21; 18:11; 20:16b; 20:22-23; 23:14; 27:35b

Mark 7:16 9:44,46; 11:26; 15:28; 16:8-20

Luke 4:4b; 9:54c-56; 11:2; 17:36; 22:43-44; 23:17,34

John 5:3b-4; 7:53-8:11

Acts 8:37; 15:34; 24:6b-8a; 28:16b,29

Romans 16:24

I Jn. 5:7b-8a³⁵

We are going to survey these omitted verses and see if we can discern any devious tactics of modern textual critics to corrupt the Word and destroy the faith. In doing this we will follow the following two guides:

³⁵ Comfort, *Essential Guide to Bible Versions*, 152.

* An asterisk indicates that the verse or the basic information contained in that verse is repeated in the New Testament in a parallel passage. For example, many of the so-called “deleted” verses in one of the Gospels have a parallel verse which is retained in another Gospel. Therefore, although it has been omitted from one passage, it was left intact in its parallel passage in another Gospel. This is important in light of the constant accusation by some that, if a verse is omitted it is due to devious textual critics who are out to destroy the faith. If that malicious charge were a true, one would think that these devious scheming men at least would have had the intelligence to also omit the variant in the parallel passage also.

Highlighting indicates that the missing verse or part of a verse has no parallel.

1. * Matt. 5:44b Textus Receptus: *“bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.”*

Modern Critical Text: *“Pray for those who persecute you.”*

Parallel Passage: Luke 6:27-28. It is thought to have been copied into Matthew from Luke at some later point in the transmission of the text in order to harmonize Matthew with Luke. We will see that this attempt at harmonizing accounts in different Gospels was done several times by early copyists. These extra words are not found in the two oldest manuscripts Aleph and B. Neither are they found in many early translations.

2. Matt. 6:13b Textus Receptus: *“For thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever, amen.”*

The Modern Critical Text ends with *“but deliver us from evil,”* which is exactly how Luke ended it in his account of the Lord’s Prayer in Luke 11:4. Several of the older manuscripts do not contain this ending. Other manuscripts have different endings.

One Vulgate manuscript and one minuscule manuscript reads “. . . *but deliver us from evil, Amen.*” Another reads, “. . . *but deliver us from evil, because yours is the power and the glory forever, Amen.*” Another reads, *“but deliver us from evil, because yours is the kingdom and the glory forever.”* There are other variations of this ending in

other manuscripts which are listed in the critical apparatus in Nestle-Aland's 27th edition (NA27) and in the United Bible Society text fourth edition (UBS4). Dr. Rogerson's claim that the form found in the Textus Receptus is also present in the *Didache* which goes back to A.D. 70 is very misleading. The actual form found in the *Didache* is "For the power and the glory are yours forever."³⁶ This doxology is recognized as an insertion that was added to the *Didache* at a later period.

Westcott and Hort thought that this doxology originated as a liturgical saying in the churches of Syria and eventually was incorporated into the Greek and Syriac texts.³⁷ This variety of endings along with the fact that Luke did not include it suggests that it was probably not in the original text of Matthew. However, the concept of an eternal Kingdom of great power and glory is clearly set forth throughout the Word of God. So, its omission here does not eliminate the concept from the Word of God.

3. * Matt. 16:2b & 3 Textus Receptus: "*When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the sky is red. 3. And in the morning, It will be foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowering. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?*"

Parallel Passage: Luke 12:54-56 Once again, the variant is dropped in Matthew and left intact in Luke. A devious scheming textual critic would have dropped it from both passages if he were the devious scheming person he is said to be by some. What could he possibly hope to gain by its omission since it contains nothing that affects any doctrine of the faith? Why would a devious scheming textual critic omit this reading in one place and leave it in another? Here is why. This variant is dropped because it is

³⁶ James Rogerson, *AND THE LORD SAIDA Study of the Doctrine of the Bible* (Pine Level, N.C.: The Carolina Bible Institute, 2008), 101.

³⁷ Comfort, *Essential Guide to Bible Versions*, 243.

not found in some of the most ancient manuscripts which includes the Codex Sinaiticus and the Codex Vaticanus.

Some have argued that it was dropped from these manuscripts because they were of Alexandrian origin and in Egypt a red sky does not indicate rain. However, that is not true of Alexandria since it is close to the Mediterranean Sea and a red sky would suggest rain. Thus, scholars of Alexandria would have no reason for dropping the variant. Furthermore, all of the texts which omit this variant are not Egyptian. Historically, copyists did not make a practice of altering the text when it did not harmonize with their culture or geographical setting.

Is it not possible that modern textual critics chose not to include this passage based upon textual evidence? After all, they had absolutely nothing to gain by leaving it out. There just might be the slightest possibility that they omitted this reading simply because they had an earnest desire to create a text that they believed represented the reading of the original text.

4. * Matt. 17:21 Textus Receptus: *“Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.”*

Parallel Passage: Mark 9:29. There are texts which include this reading and some which omit it, but there are enough reliable texts which omit it to raise a legitimate question about its authenticity. It would seem that an intelligent devious schemer who sought to eliminate the concept of prayer and fasting from the Word of God would have had enough smarts to omit all the references to prayer and fasting. Instead, they only omit one and then they leave intact an almost exact parallel reading in the Gospel of Mark.

This is but another instance of where ancient copyists sought to harmonize the shorter Gospel account with a longer one in another Gospel. Some modern translations include this verse while many omit it.

5. * Matt. 18:11 Textus Receptus: *“For the Son of Man is come to save that which was*

lost.”

Parallel Passages: Luke 19:10; Mk. 10:45; Matt. 20:28. The absence of this verse in Matthew is based upon several important and different manuscripts which do not contain this variant. This is but another attempt by copyists to make all the Gospel accounts to harmonize with each other. So, there is credible evidence that Matthew did not include this verse in his Gospel. This is a more credible explanation than the practice of so many King James Only advocates of attacking the character of any text or copyist which does not fully agree with the Textus Receptus.

Why would the critics of Alexandria omit this one reading and leave a parallel account in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and in John? There is a repeated emphasis throughout the New Testament that Jesus became incarnate in order to save fallen sinful man. Therefore, one has to ask, “What could Alexandrian copyists and modern critics possibly hope to gain by omitting a reading in one place when the message of that reading is a vital part of the message of the entire New Testament?”

It is both un-Christian and unethical for Christians to make the worst of all possible assumptions and accusations about those who disagree with them.

6. * Matt. 20:16b Textus Receptus: *“For many shall be called, but few chosen.”*

Parallel Passage: Matt. 22:14. What could textual critics possibly hope to gain by leaving out the last part of a verse in 20:16 and leaving it in Matt. 22:14? At the very least one should give modern critics the credit for having the intelligence drop this reading from both passages if they were intent on corrupting the text and the Church by the omission of this reading. Furthermore, what great doctrine would be jeopardized by the omission of this variant? The doctrines of calling and election are clearly taught in other passages which these men have left intact.

There is a textual problem with Matt. 20:16b which is why it is not included in the Modern Critical Text and in most modern translations which are based upon this text. There are enough credible texts which do not include this variant to convince most

modern critics that it was not in the original penned by Matthew.

7. * Matt. 20:22b & 23b Textus Receptus: *“and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with”*

Parallel Passage: Mark 10:38-39. This same clause is omitted from both verse 22 and 23, but it is retained in both places in Mark 10:38-39. It is omitted in Matthew because there is a textual problem and it is retained in Mark because there is not textual issue. Therefore, the issue is not whether or not Jesus made this statement, the issue is whether or not Matthew recorded it in his Gospel. It contains no great doctrinal truths. Nothing is gained by its omission in Matthew. It certainly harmonizes with the practice of early copyists of trying to harmonize what is said in one Gospel with what is said in another.

8. * Matt. 23:14 Textus Receptus: *“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye devour widows’ houses, and for a pretense make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.”*

Parallel Passage: Mark 12:40 & Lk. 20:47. This variant is not found in the earliest manuscripts. There is a legitimate textual problem as to whether or not this was in the original manuscript written by Mark. The only legitimate reason a modern textual critic would have for omitting this variant is because he was convinced that it was not found in the original text of Mark..Otherwise, why omit it? It contains no great doctrine of the faith and it is left intact in two parallel passages in Mark and Luke. If modern critics omitted this variant to destroy the faith, they certainly were not very intelligent.

9. * Matt. 27:35b Textus Receptus: *“... that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.”*

Parallel Passage: John 19:24. There is strong textual evidence that Matthew did not include this in his Gospel. It was adopted from John 19:24 by copyists to harmonize

the two accounts. All of the data given in this passage is also contained in the parallel passage which means that devious scheming modern textual critics would gain nothing by omitting it in Matthew and leaving it in John.

10. * Mark 7:16 Textus Receptus: *“If any man has ears to hear, let him hear.”*

Parallel Passage: Mark 4:9, 23. Modern textual critics omitted this reading because there is a legitimate textual question of whether or not it was ever in Mark 7:16. They would gain absolutely nothing by omitting it because no doctrine of the faith is jeopardized by its omission. Therefore, it is highly possible that modern critics were actually convinced by the evidence that this variant was not in the original text of Mark 7:16 and their loyalty to Jesus and His Word led them to leave it out.

11. * Mark 9:44, 46 Textus Receptus: *“Where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched.”* (The same sentence is omitted in both verses.)

Parallel Passage: Mark 9:48. This same verse is repeated in the exact same form in the 48th verse of this same passage. The question is whether or not Mark repeated this statement three times. It could be argued that the repetitions were dropped by copyists who thought that they were repetitious but its omission from texts so widely dispersed geographical locations make this supposition highly unlikely. The most likely explanation for them being missing from several of the earliest manuscripts is that it was never in the originals and was as sort of a prophetic refrain to enhance oral reading³⁸ Once again, the material has not been deleted. It is still retained in its exact form in the 48th verse.

12. * Mark 11:26 Textus Receptus: *“But if ye do not forgive, neither will your father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.”*

Parallel Passage: Matthew 6:15. Once again, there is textual evidence that at least raises the question as to whether or not this reading was originally in Mark 11:26. Its

³⁸ Comfort, *Essential Guide to Bible Versions*, 250.

omission does not mean that this great truth has been deleted from the Bible; it is still retained in its parallel passage in Matthew 6:15. Therefore, the only real thing that modern textual critics could gain was a text that is closer to the text of the originals.

13. * Mark 15:28 Textus Receptus: “*And the Scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors.*”

Parallel Passage: Luke 22:37. The textual evidence clearly raises a question as to whether or not this variant was in Mark 15:28. It is not found in any Greek manuscript prior to the late sixth century. It was most likely borrowed from Luke 22:37, which is a quote of Isa. 53:12, by a later scribe as a prophetic proof text for the phenomenon that Jesus died with the lawless. We know that there are numerous occasions in the Gospels where the Gospel writers did not bother to give all the details given by another Gospel writer. For example, Matthew tells us that there two men who met Jesus. Mark only mentions one. Each Gospel writer included the data that helped him make the point that he sought to make with his intended audience.

14. Mark 16:8-20 The entire passage is in question. This is because various manuscripts end in five different ways. The early church historian Eusebius (c.263-c.339) wrote that the accurate copies of the text ended with the 8th verse and that the longer ending was missing from almost all manuscripts of his day. Jerome, who knew Greek and translated the Vulgate, which was published in 406, also said that almost all of the Greek codices did not contain verses 9-20. Several of the ancient manuscripts which do have the long ending also have marginal notes indicating that the older manuscripts do not have the longer ending.

These men are mentioned, not to prove that the short ending of Mark is the correct ending, but simply to demonstrate the fact that there is a long-standing debate over the validity of the long ending of Mark. It has been a matter of debate since the third century. Modern critical texts contain both the long and the short endings. The passage has not been deleted. Some modern translations contain it with a note that it is

not in some of the ancient texts.

15. * Luke 4:4c Questionable material: “. . . *but by every word of God.*”

Parallel Passage: Matt. 4:4. Once again, it has not been deleted from the Word of God.

16. Luke 9:54c Questionable material: “*Even as Elias did.*”

9:55b Questionable material: “*Ye know what manner of spirit ye are of.*”

Once again, what could textual critics possibly gain by the omission of these two variants other than recreating a more accurate copy of the originals?

17. * Luke 9:56a Questionable material: “*For the Son of Man is not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them.*”

Parallel Passage: Luke 19:10. The statement in 9:56a “*For the Son of Man is not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them*” clearly has a parallel in 19:10, where Luke writes that “*The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.*” The saving mission of Jesus is clearly spelled out in several other passages which are left intact. They are left intact because there is no textual question concerning their validity. For example, all of the following passages clearly define Jesus’ ministry as a saving ministry (Matt 1:21; 18:11; 20:28; Mk. 10:45; Lk. 19:10; I Tim. 1:15; 2:6). All of them are left intact because there is no textual problems with them.

18. * Luke 11:2 Questionable Material: “*Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*”

Parallel Passage: Matt. 6:10.

19. * Luke 17:36 Questionable material: “*Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.*”

Parallel Passage: Matt. 24:40. It is not a matter of denying what Jesus said; it is a matter of seeking to establish exactly what Luke penned under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

20. Luke 22:43-44 Questionable material: 43. “*And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.* 44. *And being in agony he prayed more earnestly:*

and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.”

There is no parallel passage to this material. Therefore, if it is omitted, Jesus’ sweating great drops of blood in the Garden while facing the cross would cease to be a part of His passion. It would not alter any doctrine, but it certainly would take away from the intensity of His passion prior to going to the cross, but that is not the basis by which variants are decided. They are decided based upon textual evidence. Is there convincing evidence that the variant was or was not a part of the originals?

21. * Luke 23:17 Questionable material: *“For of necessity he must release one unto them at the feast.”*

Parallel Passages: Matt. 27:15; Mark 15:6. What great doctrine of the faith would critics be seeking to destroy? Why delete it from one passage and leave it in two others?

22. Luke 23:34. Questionable material: *“Father forgive them; for they know not what they do.”*

Almost all modern English translations include this statement which suggests that, although some texts do not contain this verse, most view it as authentic.

23. John 5:3b-4 Questionable material: *3b “Waiting for the moving of the water. 4. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.”*

There is no parallel passage to this passage. Therefore if it is deleted, the story line is altered considerably. It is questioned by critics because it is not found in most of the earliest manuscripts, and when it does appear, it has an obelisk (asterisk) in the margin to signal that it is questionable.

24. John 7:53-8:11 Questionable material: The entire account of the woman taken in adultery is questioned by many textual critics. It is not included in any of the earliest manuscripts. It only appears in manuscript D until the ninth century when it then

appears in later manuscripts, but in different places in the text. And, when it does appear, it is often marked in a manner to make the reader aware that it is questionable. The RSV, when it was first published, placed this passage in a footnote, and the outcry was so great that they placed it back into the text in the next printing. No English translation since has omitted it from the text. They usually bracket it with an explanation that the passage is questionable.

25. Acts 8:37 Questionable material: *“And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And, he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”*

There is no parallel passage to this verse. However, believer’s baptism is taught in other passages in the Scriptures. The necessity of faith in order to be saved is mentioned over one hundred times in the NT. Therefore, the deletion of this verse would certainly not constitute a denial believer’s baptism nor of the necessity of faith in Christ.

26. Acts 9:5b,6a Questionable material: *5b “. . . it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. 6a . . .and he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do”*

There is a parallel accounting of Paul’s arrest as recounted by Paul himself in Acts 22:6-8. It does include the question, *“Lord, what wilt thou have me to do”*, but the wording is different. Therefore the only part which is missing from what is recorded in the TR is *“it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks”* and *“he stood trembling and astonished.”* Neither of these statements, if they were omitted, would alter any doctrine of the Christian faith.

27. Acts 15:34 Questionable material: *“Notwithstanding it pleased Silas to abide there still.”*

There is no parallel passage to this verse in the Bible. Jay Green, Sr., who is an ardent supporter of the Textus Receptus and the King James translation, wrote in his

introduction to *The Interlinear Greek-English New Testament* the following concerning this verse:

Although it is admitted that Erasmus has added to his Received Text two or three readings from the Latin Vulgate, without Greek manuscript authority (*e. g.* Acts 9:6), and one from the Complutensian Bible which has no Greek manuscript authority (I John 5:7), we have not deleted these from the Greek text as supplied by the Trinitarian Bible Society —though we do not accept them as true Scripture.³⁸

This quote is presented only to remind the reader that not everyone who questions the authenticity of a verse is an advocate of the Modern Critical text or of modern translations. Theodore Beza, who helped create the TR, questioned the authenticity of the account of the adulterous woman in John eight. Erasmus also questioned the veracity of other passages like the I Jn. 5:7 passage. Dean Burgon clearly recognized the need of further editing of the TR.

28. Acts 24:6b-8a Questionable material: 6b “. . . and would have judged according to our law. 7. But the chief captain Lysias came upon us, and with great violence took him away out of our hands, 8. Commanding his accusers to come unto thee:”

There is no parallel passage to this verse, yet even with its omission, no information about Paul’s arrest has been compromised since it has already been given in previous accounts of Paul’s arrest. Therefore, no information is being deleted from the Scriptures. It is simply a matter of textual evidence.

29. Acts 28:16b Questionable material: “. . . the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard.”

30. Acts 28:29 Questionable material: “And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves.”

There is no parallel passage for this verse, and its deletion would leave us devoid of this heated discussion which took place among the Jews. Yet, it would still not compromise any doctrinal truth of the Christian religion.

31. * Romans 16:24 Questionable material: *“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.”*

Parallel Passage: Rom. 16:20.

32. I Jn. 5:7b-8a Questionable material: *“. . . the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. 8a And there are three that bear witness in the earth . . .”*

This spurious passage has been discussed at length above under the discussion of the Textus Receptus. It is almost universally recognized as being spurious.

I have only attempted to give the instances where a complete verse or a major part of a verse which is found in the Textus Receptus is omitted in the Modern Critical Text. This is not a listing of every missing word or of every textual variant. And, I could easily have missed some of the variants that should have been included in this discussion, but to my knowledge this listing is fairly close.

Listed below are the omitted passages in the Modern Critical Text *which have no parallel* passages. This listing does not include Mark 16:9-20 and John 7:53-8:11. Carefully read and analyze the omitted variants below and see if a devious scheme to destroy the faith is evident by the omission of these variants.

1. Matt. 6:13b *“For Thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever, amen.”*
2. Lk. 9:54c, 55b *“Even as Elias did” “Ye know what manner of spirit ye are of”*
3. Luke 22:43-44 43. *“And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. 44. And being in agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.”*
4. Luke 23:34 *“Father forgive them; for they know not what they do.”*
5. John 5:3b-4 3b. *“Waiting for the moving of the water. 4. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.”*
6. Acts 8:37 *“And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest.*

And, he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”

7. Acts 9:5b, 6a 5b. “. . . it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. 6a . . .and he trembling and astonished “
8. Acts 15:34 “Notwithstanding it pleased Silas to abide there still.”
9. Acts 28:16b “. . . the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard.”
10. Acts 24:6b-8a 6b “. . . and would have judged according to our law. 7. But the chief captain Lysias came upon us, and with great violence took him away out of our hands, 8a. Commanding his accusers to come unto thee:”
11. Acts 28:29 “And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves.”
12. I Jn. 5:7b-8a 7b. “. . . the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. 8a. And there are three that bear witness in the earth . . .”

What this Comparison of the MCT and TR Reveals

The preceding comparisons between the two texts make it possible for one who does not read Greek to look at the variants and at least draw some conclusions. A close scrutiny of these deleted verses or parts of verses will reveal the following facts. These observable facts then dictate some conclusions which do not harmonize with the claims of the extreme corruption of all modern critical texts made by most King James Only advocates.

1. **In every instance where a reading was dropped there was a textual problem.** This means that they were not just arbitrarily dropped as a part of a devious scheme to destroy the faith. Some of the omitted variants have been debated by textual scholars for seventeen hundred years. The long ending of Mark and the adulterous woman in John eight have been a matter of debate since the middle of the fourth century. Furthermore, the fact that the missing variants are set apart in the critical apparatus of the Modern Critical Text makes it clear that there was no devious scheming attempt to conceal anything. The critical apparatus gives the evidence upon which the decision to omit each variant was made.

2. **Since we do not have the autographs to compare the two texts with, nobody knows for certain which text is closer to the originals.** Therefore, since they have never seen the autographs, those who so viciously slander the Modern Critical Text cannot possibly know which text is the most pure text. Based upon this fact, advocates of the Modern Critical Text have as much right to assume that their text comes closer to replicating the autographs as do the advocates of the Textus Receptus..
3. **No doctrine of the Christian faith is jeopardized by any of the above variants which have been dropped.** Therefore, a competent committee of conservative scholars could take the Modern Critical Text and make a translation that retains every doctrine of the Christian faith.
4. **There is no discernable plot to leave out or deny any doctrine of the faith.** If modern textual critics were the scheming underhanded apostates that so many King James Only advocates accuse them of being, they certainly are not very intelligent. It would seem that they would at least have enough smarts to also drop the parallel readings of the verses that they omit.
5. **There has not been a wholesale deletion of verses from the Modern Critical Text.** Twelve of the verses listed above are not complete verses. Twenty have parallel readings which are retained in the parallel passage. Only twelve have no parallel reading found in another passage. All of them are included in the textual apparatus. None of them bring into question any doctrine of the faith. Many of the over one thousand words missing from the Modern Critical Text which are retained in the Textus Receptus are words that were dropped when the above variant verses, clauses, phrases or when the long ending of Mark and the adulterous woman of John eight were dropped. None of these missing words bring into question any doctrine of the faith.
6. **It is a violation to slanderously attack the integrity of a Christian brother just because you disagree with him on legitimate questions regarding textual variants.** A Christian brother may disagree with the conclusions of modern textual critics in

some instances, or even in every instance, but Christian ethics demand that he recognize that these men considered the evidence and came to a different conclusion. Ethically, he cannot attack the character and dedication of those who differ with him on legitimate textual problems. Only God can know the motives of every textual critic's heart.

7. **The text of the King James Bible does not designate the Textus Receptus as being the text of God's choice.** At no place does the Word of God designate any text or translation as being the text or translation of God's choice. Neither does the Word of God teach that God has chosen to providentially preserve the message of the originals through a particular text-type, text, or translation. These are assumptions made and accepted by King James Only advocates as truisms without one shred of biblical evidence. It is these unfounded assumptions about the Textus Receptus which dictate that all other texts be corrupt in every place where they disagree with their chosen text.
8. **The problem with some modern translations is not in the Modern Critical Text from which they were translated, but with the corrupt theology of the translators who translated them.** There are numerous places where the wording of both texts are the same, but the translators chose to translate them differently.

For example, many uninformed King James Only Advocates will take one of the modern translations of II Tim. 3:16 which translates the first part of the verse "Every Scripture that is inspired of God," and blame this translation on the corrupt Modern Critical Text.

The fact of the matter is that the Greek text underlying this phrase is exactly alike in both the Modern Critical Text and the Textus Receptus. The difference is in the translators, not in the text. Technically, the phrase could be translated both ways. It boils down to a person's convictions about the extent of inspiration. This explains why conservative translators have always chosen to translate it as "All Scripture is inspired of God."

9. **Neither text is a corrupt text.** They agree over ninety-five percent of the time. Here is how Geisler and Nix described the texts.

While scarcely a modern scholar seriously defends the superiority of the Received Text, **it should be pointed out that there is no substantial difference between it and the critical text. Their differences are merely technical, not doctrinal, for the variants are doctrinally inconsequential.** (Emphasis added) Nevertheless, the “critical” readings are often exegetically helpful to Bible students. Thus, for all practical purposes, both texts convey the *content* of the autographs, even though they are separately garnished with their own minor scribal and technical differences.³⁹

Dr. Stewart Custer of Bob Jones University gave the following appraisal of the similarities of the different textual families.

In about 90% of the manuscripts’ readings all the manuscripts are agreed. This is unquestionably the wording of the original text. In the other cases scholars are not as certain of the wording and will usually give footnotes to show the alternative readings. In most of these instances there is no doubt which of the readings is the best. There are very few passages in which any real question remains about the wording of the original texts. Westcott and Hort maintained that out of the 500 pages of the Greek NT there was only about a half of a page about which any question remained as to the wording of the original . . . The important thing to note is that *each of these four types of texts is theologically conservative*. Each one sets forth an accurate gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, His deity, the personality and deity of the Holy Spirit, the blood atonement, justification by faith, and the other major doctrines of the faith. Not one of these texts can be called heretical or apostate as Mr. Ruckman alleges . . . Every one of the major doctrines of the faith is found in each kind of text. There is no attempt to twist or to disparage any of the great doctrines of the faith . . . Most of the differences in modern Bibles are differences in translation rather than differences in text. Most of the modern translations are poor, not because they use a different text, but because they are doctrinally prejudiced and will not allow the text to say what it says.⁴⁰

³⁹ Norman L. Geisler and William E. Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1968), 392-393.

⁴⁰ Custer, *The Truth About the King James Controversy*, 5-6.

D. A. Carson argues the harmony of the Greek texts as follows, “I would argue that none of the text-types distinguished by contemporary textual criticism is theologically heretical in the way that the defenders of the KJV sometimes suggest.”⁴¹

10. **The text is not the real issue.** The false claims about the corruptness of all other texts is a backdoor approach to dictate the exclusive use of the King James translation. King James Only advocates are aware that if they can convince people of the extreme corruptness of all texts other than those underlying the King James and of all translations made from these corrupt texts, they have then hemmed them into the exclusive use of their beloved King James translation.

Implications of These Facts

Textus Receptus advocates build their system off of emotional assumptions and exaggerations. The fact is they have never seen the autographs. Therefore, they cannot know for sure which text is the more pure text. They have not one shred of biblical proof that God has chosen to preserve the message of the autographs exclusively through the Byzantine Text and the Textus Receptus. Their loyalty to the Textus Receptus grows out of their loyalty to the King James Bible. If it had been translated from the Alexandrian Text, they would be defending it as the superior text.

Their assumption about the purity of the Textus Receptus dictates their assumption about the corruption of all other texts in any place where they differ from their pure text. This same assumption also eliminates any need for modern textual critics and a modern critical text. Regardless of the false and irrational claims by some, the Textus Receptus did not come to us via pure hands. Charles Surret, who is a proponent of the Textus Receptus, wrote, “In point of fact, no matter which textual tradition is accepted, one must in some way go through the Roman Catholic and Anglican denominations to find the text. . . . In fact, no matter which textual tradition is taken as best, it has gone through dirty hands on

41. D. A. Carson, *The King James Version Debate* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979), 62.

many levels.”⁴²

Textual criticism is not innately evil. Greenlee defines textual criticism as follows, “Textual criticism is the study of copies of any written work of which the autograph (the original) is unknown, with the purpose of ascertaining the original text.”⁴³ Neither can all modern textual critics be lumped together as being demonic. Dr. Del Johnson, who was on the staff of Pensacola Christian College at the time, compared modern textual critics to the Devil in two chapel messages delivered on April 1st and 2nd of 1996 and mailed out all across America.

Conclusion

When all of the facts are analyzed, there are differences between these two Greek texts, but neither text is a heretical text. The Modern Critical Text (Standard Text) agrees with the Byzantine type texts over 90% of the time. In those places where they disagree no doctrine is in jeopardy. A.T. Robertson clearly minimized the differences between these texts and quoted Hort to prove his point. He wrote,

It should be stated at once that the *Textus Receptus* is not a bad text. It is not a heretical text. It is substantially correct. Hort has put the matter well: “With regard to the great bulk of the words of the New Testament, as of most other ancient writings, there is no variation or other ground of doubt, and therefore no room for textual criticism” (*Introduction*, p. 4). . . . But the case is even better than this presentation, for Hort concludes, “Recognizing to the full the duty of abstinence from peremptory decision in cases where the evidence leaves the judgment in suspense between two or more readings, we find that, setting aside differences of orthography, the words in our opinion still subject to doubt only make up about one-sixtieth of the whole New Testament. In the second estimate the proportion of comparatively trivial variations is beyond measure larger than in the former; so that the amount of what can in any sense be called substantial variation is but a small fraction of the whole residuary variation, and can hardly be more than a thousandth part of the entire text.” The real conflict in the textual criticism of the New Testament is concerning this “thousandth part of the entire text.”⁴⁴

⁴² Surret, 17.

⁴³ Greenlee, *An Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism*, 1.

⁴⁴ Robertson, *Introduction to Textual Criticism of the N T*, 21.

A thousandth part of the entire New Testament being in question is a far cry from the claims of most Textus Receptus advocates who have greatly exaggerated the differences between these texts. James White wrote this about the distinctions between the Greek texts,

Westcott and Hort, the two men most vilified by KJV Only advocates, indicated that only about one eighth of the variants had any weight, the rest being “trivialities.” This would leave the text, according to Westcott and Hort, 98.33 percent pure *no matter whether one used the Textus Receptus or their own Greek text!* Philip Schaff estimated that there were only 400 variants that affected the sense of the passage, and only 50 of these were actually important. He asserted that not one affected 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.⁴⁵

Norman Geisler and William Nix also affirm that the differences in the various Greek texts are doctrinally inconsequential. They wrote, “The New Testament has about 20,000 lines; the *Iliad* about 15,600. Only 40 lines (or 400 words) of the New Testament are in doubt, whereas 764 lines of the *Iliad* are questioned. This 5 percent corruption compares with one-half of 1 percent of similar emendations in the New Testament.”⁴⁶

The observation of B. B. Warfield on the preservation of the text would constitute an appropriate conclusion to this chapter. He wrote, “. . . the great mass of the new Testament, in other words, has been transmitted to us with no, or next to no variations.”⁴⁷

Hence, King James Only advocates are busy making a mountain out of a molehill in order to dictate the exclusive use of their beloved translation by disqualifying all modern translations by exaggerating their corruption.

⁴⁵ White, *The King James Only Controversy*, 39.

⁴⁶ Geisler and Nix, *A General Introduction to The Bible*, 366-67.

⁴⁷ Warfield, *An Introduction to The Textual Criticism of The New Testament*, 14.

Chapter Four

FIGHTING FOR THE HOLY BOOK IN AN UNHOLY MANNER

The dictionary defines “casuistry” as subtle but misleading or false reasoning about moral issues. The term is used in theological circles to refer to the false reasoning that “the ends justify the means.” It is the unbiblical idea that it is right to do wrong if doing wrong results in good. Therefore, although it is biblically wrong to lie, it is acceptable to lie if lying helps to achieve good results. Casuistry is the opposite of the old adage, “it is never right to do wrong in order to do right.”

Western casuistry reaches back as far as Aristotle (384-322 B.C.). This philosophy reached its apex from around A.D. 1550-1650. It was during this era when the Jesuits, who were the storm troopers of the Catholic Church during the counter-Reformation, adopted the moral philosophy that the ends justify the means. The idea was that if torture and murder advanced the cause of the Catholic Church, then they were justified in murdering and torturing their victims. Since the seventeenth century, casuistry has been widely considered as a degenerative form of reasoning, although there have been some voices in its favor in recent years.

The unethical tactics used by many King James Only advocates make it appear that they too have adopted the moral reasoning of casuistry. It seems that some have concluded that God has granted them a special dispensation to violate biblical ethics in their battle to save the Church from the Modern Critical Text and modern translations. Hence, they are justified in fighting for the holy book in an unholy manner.

Many King James Only advocates viciously malign modern textual critics and translators as being deceitful greedy men who seek to destroy the faith while enriching

themselves. Others grossly overstate the corruption of all texts other than the texts underlying the King James translation. There are some who simply lie about the beliefs of their opposition and distort their statements to make them to appear to say the opposite of what they actually said. Far too many King James Only advocates have an unbiblical caustic attitude toward those who do not espouse their position. These unethical practices can only be justified by those who ignore the biblical plea for “speaking the truth in love” and have adopted casuistry as their moral guide in the King James Only debate.

A spirit of harshness and an attack mentality has characterized the movement it from its inception, although it seems to have intensified in recent decades. Dean Burgon, who is recognized today as the patron saint of the King James Only Movement, could be harsh and question the motives of his opposition just like so many modern King James Only advocates do. In a letter to Lord Cranbrook written in 1883, he questioned the motives of the revisers in his statement,

My one object has been to defeat the mischievous attempt which was made in 1881 to thrust upon this Church and Realm a Revision of the Sacred Text, which--recommended though it be by eminent names--I am thoroughly convinced, and am able to prove, is untrustworthy from beginning to end. . . It is, however, the systematic deprivation of the underlying Greek which does so grievously offend me: for this is nothing else but a poisoning of the River of Life at its sacred source. Our Revisers, (with the best and purest intentions, no doubt, stand convicted of having deliberately rejected the words of Inspiration in every page, and of having substituted for them fabricated Readings which the Church has long since refused to acknowledge, or else has rejected with abhorrence; and which only survive at this time in a little handful of documents of the most depraved type. . . The Revisers have in fact been dupes of an ingenious Theorist, concerning whose extraordinary views you are invited to read what Dr. Scrivener has recently put forth.¹

Notices how Burgon calls into question the motives of the revisers by referring to their work as a “mischievous attempt” to thrust upon the Church a Revision of the Sacred Text, which is untrustworthy from beginning to end. He referred to those involved in the

1. Dean John William Burgon, *The Revision Revised* (Collingswood, New Jersey: Dean Burgon Society Press, 2000), vi, vii.

revision as “dupes.” He referred to the variants chosen by the revisers as “fabricated readings.” He wrote that they had “deliberately rejected the words of inspiration on every page, and of having substituted for them “fabricated” Readings which the Church has long since refused to acknowledge”²

Benjamin Wilkerson is not as caustic as most King James advocates, although he clearly impugns the motives of the revisers of the critical text and the Revised Version of 1881.³ James Jasper Ray, who is one of the fathers of the recent resurgence of the King James Only Movement, states the foundational premises of the movement which give rise to much of the acrid language of King James Only advocates. His foundational premise is the purity of the Textus Receptus, which he viewed as being an exact replica of the autographs, and the corruption of all other texts.

This premise dictates the conclusion that only those translations made from this text are valid translations.⁴ His second premise, which was made prior to the publication of the New King James translation, was that the only valid translation for the English-speaking world was the King James since, at that time, it was the only translation made from the Textus Receptus. Interestingly, he closes his book with the statement that one cannot be saved by using a modern translation translated from these corrupt texts.⁵

It is this “attack and take no prisoners” mindset which permeates and drives a large portion of the King James Only Movement. Once an individual assumes that the Textus Receptus and the King James translation are the only text and translation which contain the preserved message of the autographs, then it is easy to assume that those who do not espouse these assumptions are not spiritual or discerning men whose motives are obviously

² Ibid., vi-viii.

³ Wilkinson, *Our Authorized Bible Vindicated*, 181, 183.

⁴ Ray, *God Wrote Only One Bible*, 24, 32, 34, 96, 102.

⁵ Ibid., 122.

questionable. This mindset justifies their vicious attacks upon all modern texts, translators, translations, and publishers.

Peter Ruckman and Gail Riplinger are two of the movement's best known voices. In both language and in spirit, they are more acerbic than most of their predecessors. They have taken the "slash and cut" approach to a new level. They are also very reckless with the truth. William Grady is a close second to Ruckman and Riplinger. However, the scary thing about the movement is the almost deafening silence about these unbiblical and unethical practices.

There have been a few voices of opposition, but there should have been a widespread public outrage and outcry that rose up from within the King James Only movement denouncing these ungodly practices and holding these people accountable. The Sword of the Lord ran an excellent article confronting the false claims of Ruckman about the King James containing advanced revelation.⁶ There have been a few voices from within the movement about the grossly unbiblical tactics of Gail Riplinger, but not nearly the outrage which should have been sounded.

Many are silenced by peer pressure and fear of being seen as compromising on the translation issue. Silence is not always golden, sometimes it is yellow and speaks a language all of its own. It implies consent of these unethical practices and further emboldens those involved. Sometimes silence cries out that the advancement of one's career is more important than obeying the Scriptures in matters of Christian ethics. Silence in the face of obvious unethical practices clearly cries out of cowardice.

Although he at one time cast a large shadow across the King James Only Movement, Peter Ruckman's heyday is past, but his unethical and caustic behavior lives on in the pens of many modern King James Only writers. James White wrote this about him, "To say that Dr. Peter Ruckman is outspoken is to engage in an exercise in understatement.

6. Gary R. Hudson, "Ruckman's Unscriptural Claims for The K.J.V.," *The Sword of the Lord* (March 1989).

Caustic is too mild a term; bombastic is a little more accurate. His devoted followers see him in prophetic terms. He is the best-known advocate of KJV Onlyism in the United States.”⁷

Gail Riplinger’s sensational book *New Age Versions* made her the darling of the movement and one of their chief spokesmen for several years. She quickly gained star status and was introduced as a hero of the faith despite the fact that she published one of the most mean spirited, vicious, and deceitful publications ever published under the guise of being a Christian publication. For years she has spoken at King James Only churches and conventions as the modern day patron saint of the movement. Those who have read Ruckman’s writings and know his corrupt theology can find this same corrupt theology in Riplinger’s writings.

Few ever challenged her false reasoning, her unchristian spirit, and her many distortions of the writings of her opposition, her outright false statements, and here heretical theology, and when they do, it is usually far too timid.

Another popular King James Only Advocate is Dr. D.A. Waite, who is one of the better educated advocates. Although he operates on the same unfounded assumptions that mark the movement, he is not nearly as caustic as many King James Only advocates. He also follows in their steps and slanders his opposition by impugning their motives as being driven by monetary gain. He also claims that the error of modern translations is responsible for the theological error of the Charismatic Movement.⁸ Dr. Waite clearly has been infected by the sacred halo syndrome and states that he has by faith assumed the plenary preservation of the texts underlying the King James translation. He also believes that the King James translation is without an error in translation which makes it the only translation which accurately translates the message of the autographs. He wrote,

⁷ White, *The King James Only Controversy*, 109.

⁸ D. A. Waite, *Defending The King James Bible* (Collingswood, New Jersey: The Bible for Today Press, 1992), 249, 256.

If we really want to know what the Hebrew in the Old Testament says and what the Greek in the New Testament says in the English language today, the KING JAMES BIBLE—in my studied opinion—is the only translation that completely and accurately reflects, in English, the original Hebrew/Aramaic and Greek . . . When we use versions other than the KING JAMES BIBLE, we cannot be absolutely certain that in every verse, sentence, and word, they **accurately** translate the Hebrew and Greek words God has given us. Instead, we have man’s words all mixed up in them throughout.⁹

Later, in response to the question “Do you believe the KING JAMES BIBLE to be without translation errors?” he wrote,

I have not found any translation errors in the KING JAMES BIBLE. . . It is my personal belief and faith that the HEBREW/ARAMAIC and GREEK TEXTS that underlie the KING JAMES BIBLE have been PRESERVED by God Himself so that these texts can properly be called “**INERRANT**” as well as being the very “**INSPIRED and INFALLIBLE WORDS OF GOD.**”¹⁰

In order to demonstrate how the sacred halo syndrome blinds one’s mind to rational thought, we need to analyze Dr. Waite’s views on the accuracy of the King James translators. First, he affirms that the King James is without any error in translation. Next, he affirms that it is the only translation which *completely* and *accurately* reflects, in English, the original Hebrew/Aramaic and Greek. These two affirmations dictate that the translators did not make any mistakes. Rational thought demands that conclusion, but he argues against using the word “inerrant” to describe the translation. Thus, he argues that it is without an error in translation, but it is not an inerrant translation.

This same type irrational reasoning is seen in regards to the printers who have printed and published the King James translation over the years. Dr. Waite readily admits that there have been numerous and some famous printer’s mistakes in printing the King James, but somehow the translators could not err. One would think that if God were going to preserve the translators from error that He would also have preserved the printers from error.

9. Ibid., 1.

10. Ibid., 240

Dr. Waite leaves his readers with the idea that the translators did an exact word for word trade off in translating the King James as they sought to follow the formal equivalency method of translating instead of the dynamic equivalency which is more of a thought translation than a word for word translation. The truth of the matter is that it is impossible to make a word for word trade off in any translation from any language.

There are a number of places in the King James Bible where the translators made dynamic translations. For example, in Romans 6:2, where in answer to the question “Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?” The King James translators translated Paul’s response with the words “God forbid.” Neither of these words are found in the Greek text. The Greek literally says “May it never come to be.” So, the King James translators were guilty of using the dynamic method of translation in this particular passage.

It is the candid opinion of this author that many of the unethical practices discussed below grow out of the preceding emotional assumptions which characterize the movement. Having assumed that they are the defenders of God’s chosen text and translation, they then view those who oppose them as the enemies of God and His Word. This completely changes the debate from a disagreement between brothers in the Lord to a life and death struggle between truth and error, right and wrong, and darkness and light.

This chapter will confront some of the unethical practices of King James Only advocates which clearly suggest that many have adopted the philosophy of casuistry in their battle to demand the continued and exclusive use of their beloved translation. It appears that they have concluded that the nobility of their cause justifies their lack of nobility in their character.

Unholy Exaggerations about the Omission of the names Satan and Lucifer

The claim that all modern translations leave out the name of Satan as a part of a devious scheme to destroy the faith is common among King James Only advocates. Dr. Robert Picirilli, in his excellent paper presented at the National Association of Free Will Baptists in July of 1996, makes the following observation about this false charge.

I decided to check this criticism out myself. In the KJV, the name "Satan" occurs 55 times.... [Dr. Picirilli then gives each verse in which the word is found.] In all these places except two (53 out of 55), the NIV has the name Satan! That doesn't seem like a very serious attempt on the part of the NIV to downplay, much less leave out the name Satan.

What about the two places where it doesn't have the name: In Ps. 109:6 the NIV translates "an accuser (adversary)" rather than Satan. Indeed the King James itself translates this same Hebrew noun (Satan) "adversary" six times in the O.T. (and another time as one who "withstands")! So the NIV does 8 times what the King James does 7 times. I really can't see any conspiracy in that. Furthermore, if the two lines of the verse are parallel (as seems very possible), the NIV translation may well be right--although I have no desire to either defend it or to say it's wrong.

The other time is Luke 4:8. Here there is a manuscript difference. Some manuscripts don't have the words, "Get thee behind me, Satan!" (These include the manuscripts known as Aleph, B, D,L,W, 1, 33, 579, 100, and 788.) This is therefore illustrative of the very kind of thing that the manuscript differences present to us. Perhaps the words should be there, perhaps they shouldn't; but one thing is clear: they do not manifest any tendency to play down the name of Satan. (The words which mean essentially the same thing are in the temptation account in Matt. 4:10.)¹¹

This author took the time to compare the New King James Version, the New American Standard Version, and the 1901 American Standard Version to see if this same pattern prevailed, and it did. The New King James Version contains every occurrence except in Psalm 109:6. Here it translates the word as "adversary" as the other two do, and as the King James Version does in other places. The other two translations contained the name Satan in 54 of the 56 occurrences with the same explanation being applicable to the other two which Dr. Picirilli gave above.

The New King James Version translates the word for "Satan" as "adversary" in Psalm 109:6, but it does retain the phrase "*Get thee behind me Satan*" in Luke 4:8 where there is a textual problem. This means that the New King James Version has the word "Satan" in 55 out of the 56 places it is found in the King James Version. The omission of the phrase "*Get thee behind me Satan*" by the New International Version and the American Standard

¹¹ Dr. Robert E. Picirilli, "King James Seminar," part II, at the National Assoc. of Free Will Baptist in Houston, Texas, in July of 1996.

Version does not mean that there is an attempt to eliminate the name Satan or to deny that Jesus uttered these words. That is not the issue. The issue is whether or not Luke was led of the Holy Spirit to record this saying in his Gospel. There is a legitimate textual problem, not a devious scheme to pervert the Word of God.

So, it is clear that the accusation that all modern translations seek to remove the name "Satan" from the Word of God is simply not true. One of the obvious problems is that one King James Advocate reads accusations like these in other King James Only publications and simply passes them on as fact without ever investigating. It is high time that there arise a loud and wide-spread cry from within the movement for old-fashioned biblical honesty and integrity.

The accusation that all modern versions seek to downplay the Devil by omitting the word "Lucifer," is the basis for the following lengthy quote which is also taken from Dr. Picirilli's notes on the Greek text:

They say the new versions omit "Lucifer" as Satan's name (in Isa. 14:12). The NIV uses "morning star" rather than "Lucifer." The accusation is true, but the implication that this is some sly way of downplaying Satan (note that these two charges were made one after the other) is way off base.

The Hebrew word is *heylel*, which is not a proper name. The word "Lucifer" is something the KJV translators picked up from the Latin Vulgate of the Roman Catholics (this isn't the only place they did that, by the way), where the word *Lucifer* means essentially "light-bearer" or "morning star." The Hebrew word has a similar meaning, and here in Isaiah it apparently refers to that particular star known as the "morning star." In other words, the NIV has translated more literally than the King James (and has avoided the influence of the Latin Vulgate), which is something that we surely wouldn't disapprove of. Even when we relate the passage to Satan (and there is much difference of opinion among interpreters, including fundamentalists, about how it does that), it is describing him as the morning star (In the OT the angels are often represented by stars) before his fall! (The next words, also referring to Satan, are "Son of the Morning," which is a parallel expression.)

I am not saying there is anything wrong with "Lucifer," of course, but even fundamentalist Bible scholars aren't confident that it is meant as the devil's personal name here. (Using "Lucifer" as his personal name here has exactly the same basis as using "Dives," the Greek word for "rich man," as a personal name in Jesus' story about Lazarus.) Fundamentalist scholars agree that this passage, first and directly, refers to the king of Babylon; that any reference to Satan is

indirectly to him as the power behind the king of Babylon. The idea that the NIV is trying to weaken our concept of Satan is completely unjustified: just see all the other places where the devil is very prominent, very personal, and very powerful in the NIV—as in the list above! (And keep in mind that I'm not commending the NIV.)¹²

Unholy exaggerations about the Corruption of Modern Texts and Translations

Overstatement to the point of being maliciously slanderous and blatantly untrue is a trait of far too many King James Only advocates when it comes to their claims about the corruption of all critical texts and modern translations. The following quote from Jasper James Ray, which goes back to 1955, is illustrative of the typical King James Only approach to texts and translations. He wrote,

Already, before our very eyes, we see both the clergy and laity turning away from the King James and turning to various new versions and paraphrases which omit portions of God's word which are essential for salvation . . . Because the majority of mankind are turning away from the TRUE Word of God, as revealed in the Greek Textus Receptus and the King James Bible; and turning to "man-made" versions; it is "high-time" to consider the following prophecy.¹³

He states that all translations other than the King James are "man-made versions." Finally, he asserts that modern translations omit portions of God's Word which are essential for salvation. This writer certainly has not read all modern translations and certainly does not defend all modern translations, but he has read the best known conservative translations in use today such as the New King James, the English Standard Version, the Holman Christian Standard, and the New American Standard. They do not "omit portions of God's word which are essential for salvation." This slanderous accusation is simply not true.

In a matter of one paragraph, Willian Grady, in his book, *The Final Authority*, manages to call the Nestles-Aland text (27th edition) a *liberal* text although he admits has 467 readings adopted from the Textus Receptus. In this same paragraph he also manages to

¹² Picirilli, "King James Seminar," National Association of Free Will Baptist.

¹³ Ray, *God Wrote Only One Bible*, 116.

refer to the Alexandrian manuscripts (codices *Vaticanus* and *Sinaiticus*) as *corrupt* texts. Then he castigates all who do not accept his “King James exclusivity” as a self-styled “Christian scholar” and an “end-day apostate.”¹⁴

Dr. Grady has no kind words for those who do not espouse his King James Only position. Modern translations are all “bogus” Bibles and those who use them are nothing more than “professing” Christians who are a part of the “tremendous apostasy” of the twentieth century. He wrote, “It is significant that this escalating demand for bogus Bibles continues to stem from professing Christians . . . Obviously, the modern ‘Bible movement’ is one facet of a tremendous apostasy within twentieth-century Christendom.”¹⁵

These acrimonious terms coming from a secular author writing without the guides of biblical ethics and the loving disposition of Christ could be expected, but these savage attacks upon the person of the opposition should never be a part of a Christian response to anyone. It is sin to maliciously malign the person instead of his position. It is also a sign of a weak defense to attack the messenger instead of his message.

Dr. Gail Riplinger’s book, *New Age Versions*, is littered with acrimonious slander. On the first page of her introduction she claims to have discovered an alliance between modern translations and the New Age movement. She falsely claims to have found an,

. . . alliance between the new versions of the bible (NIV, NASB, Living Bible and others) and the chief conspirators in the New Age movement’s push for a One World Religion . . . The New Age movement’s expressed goal of infiltrating the evangelical church and gradually changing the bible to conform to its One World Religion is evident in the current new versions .¹⁶

Not only is this a very serious charge, it is built upon irrational and contradictory logic which could also be used to implicate the King James translation. Here is how Dave Hunt

¹⁴ William Grady, *The Final Authority* (Schereville, Indiana: Grady Publications, 1993), vii.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 1,2.

¹⁶ Riplinger, *New Age Versions*, 1.

described her irrational logic.

“. . . New versions are accused of being New Age because they use the phrase “the Christ,” while there are more than dozen such verses found in the KJV. “The Mighty One” is said to be New Age; the KJV has four examples. References to God as “the One” in new versions indicate New Age influence, according to Riplinger; the KJV has dozens of verses where the term “One” is a referent for God (Holy One, Mighty One, Lofty One, etc.). There are too many other instances where the author fails to apply her New Age version theories to the KJV, to assume an oversight on her part. Clearly, either they disprove her theory, or the KJV is also a New Age version—which also disproves her theory.¹⁷

There are major problems with Dr. Riplinger’s spurious charges. First, she lumps all modern translations together as if all are equal. They are not. Second, this author has read every translation that she named from Genesis to Revelation and not one of them is any more a New Age translation than the King James is a New Age translation. Finally, as Dave Hunt pointed out, the same New Age words that make these modern translations New Age translations are also found in the King James translation.

Gail Riplinger denies that the term “only begotten Son of God” refers to the deity of Christ. She writes, “From this we gather that “begotten” is used in reference to the body of ‘flesh’ ‘beheld’ by mankind.”¹⁸ Although the Church has disagreed over the precise definition or explanation of the sovereignty of God when it is cast against the free will of man, Riplinger describes Edwin Palmer’s five point Calvinism as a “Satanic pentagram” and compares his view on limited election to being a Jehovah’s Witness.”¹⁹

Another King James Only advocate wrote, “I believe all modern versions are corrupted, and I stand 100% behind the Received Text and the King James Bible. I do not believe there any errors in the King James Bible . . . I have no doubt that there are demonic

¹⁷ Dave Hunt, “The Berean Call”, May, 1994.

¹⁸ Riplinger, *New Age Bible Versions*, 337.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 231-232,252,563.

involvement in modern versions.”²⁰ Tragically, the malignant language about the critical text used by this author is far too typical of far too many King James Only advocates.

In a matter of three sentences the author manages lump all modern versions together and attack them all as being corrupt. Next, he makes the indefensible, irrational, and unbiblical statement that the King James translation is without error. Finally, he makes the vicious accusation that there is demonic involvement in modern versions.

Peter Ruckman refers to modern translations as “Science-Fiction Bibles” and denies that the original King James translation included the Apocrypha along with denying the existence of the Septuagint prior to around A.D. 300. He further makes the heretical claim that the English text of the King James Version constitutes advanced revelation in every place where it does not harmonize with the underlying Hebrew or Greek text.”²¹

Ruckman’s statements about the Apocrypha and the Septuagint are universally recognized as being untrue. They clearly contradict the established facts of history. His statement that the King James contains advanced revelation in every place where it disagrees with its underlying texts is pure heresy.

Overstatement to the point of misrepresenting the facts is an accepted practice among many King James Only advocates, but the Ten Commandments are still binding upon God’s people today. Some sound advice for many King James Only advocates would be to advise them to see Dr. Moses and take two of those tablets which he brought down from the mountain with him.

Unholy Exaggerations of Textual Omissions

In general, King James Only literature goes to great lengths to denounce all modern critical texts for their omission of scores of verses and words from the Bible as a part of a

²⁰ Norman Pyle, “King James Controversy,” *Christian View of the News*, March 1995.

²¹ Ruckman, *The Christian’s Handbook of Manuscript Evidence*, 55, 54, 53, 126-127

devious scheme to undermine the faith, but the facts do not harmonize with their overstatements.

Here are the facts as revealed in the analysis of the missing verses from the critical texts in the previous chapter. Excluding the long ending of Mark (verses 9-20 - 11 verses) and the adulterous woman in John eight (7:53-8:11 - 12 verses) there are a total of 32 other verses which are found in the Textus Receptus but are not found in the Modern Critical Text. If the long ending of Mark and the adulterous woman of John eight are included, the total comes to around 55 verses.

However, twenty of these verses have parallel readings in other places in the New Testament. This means that the message of these twenty verses is still in the Bible and left there by textual critics because there was no question about their authenticity. This means that, excluding the verses in the long ending of Mark and the adulterous woman of John eight, there is a grand total of twelve verses or portions of verses which have been dropped which have no parallel reading.

As was pointed out in chapter three, none of these verses bring into question any doctrine of the faith. The long ending of Mark and the adulterous woman of John eight are kept in most texts, but they are set apart by brackets to let the reader know that there are questions about them being in the autographs. They have not been deleted!

The fact is that these variants were not arbitrarily dropped as part of a devious scheme to deny the faith. They were dropped because there are legitimate textual problems which bring into question their authenticity. The long ending of Mark and the John eight passage have been debated by scholars for hundreds of years. *Not one of these verses was arbitrarily dropped. In every instance there was a genuine textual problem.* These verses have been dropped because textual critics and the translators are convinced that, based upon the evidence, these passages were not in the autographs.

One writer clearly exaggerates the omissions of the Modern Critical Text. He wrote,

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. This certainly does not sound like “no cause for concern.”²²

First of all, modern translations are not made exclusively from the Westcott and Hort text. They are made from the Modern Critical Text (Standard Text) and it does rely heavily upon the Westcott and Hort text, but not exclusively.

Second, statistics can be made to say more than they actually say due to the nature of what constitutes a variant. For example, there are approximately 5300 complete or fragmentary copies of the Greek New Testament. If the same word is misspelled in 5200 of them, this constitutes 5200 variants. If the word order differs, even if it does not alter the meaning, then every manuscript where the order differs constitutes a variant. If a word has a different ending this constitutes a variant in every text which has a different ending.

If a word is missing in 3,000 manuscripts this constitutes 3,000 variants which could be construed as 3,000 missing words. However, to do this would constitute a reckless use of these statistics and of the truth.

Just exactly how the author came up with this figure of almost ten thousand words which are found in the Textus Receptus but not found in the Modern Critical Text is uncertain, but it is factually incorrect. It is commonly agreed that there are over a thousand words found in the Textus Receptus which are not found in the Modern Critical Text. Comfort writes, “The text of the TR has about one thousand more words than that of Westcott and Hort, and about fifty more verses.”²³ William Grady, who is a strong Textus Receptus Only advocate, writes that there are 1284 words found in the Textus Receptus which are not found in the Modern Critical Text.²⁴ Once again, it appears that we are

22. Thomas M. Strouse, *From The Mind of God?* (Pensacola, Florida: Pensacola Seminary, 2001), 2-3.

23 Comfort, *Essential Guide to Bible Versions*, 152.

24 Grady, *The Final Authority*, 288.

dealing with a casuistry philosophy which says that if points can be scored for the King James translation then exaggeration is acceptable practice.

King James Only advocates would do well to remember that error always weakens their case. Error mixed with truth also weakens the truth which then weakens their case. The word “overstatement” and “exaggerations” are euphemistic terms for dishonesty by overstatement rather than dishonesty by understatement, but both are sinful violations of the law of God which says “*Thou shall not bear false witness.*” The King James Bible makes exaggeration a course of action which must always be repudiated by Christians.

Unholy Cultic "me-only" Mindset

The general tenor of the movement is that, as defenders of the King James Bible, they constitute *the godly remnant of the last days* called by God to save the Church by saving it from modern texts and translations. Those who do not espouse their King James Only position are a part of the end-times apostasy. This “me-only” mindset is the same mindset that the cults have. They too are convinced that they are the only people who correctly interpret the Scriptures and are truly right with God.

The vast majority of today’s fundamental or conservative believers do not espouse a King James Only position. If an individual judged them by the writings of Peter Ruckman, Gail Riplinger, William Grady, and a host of other King James Only advocates, the vast majority of today’s believers are apostate Pharisees or New Agers who are only “professed” Christians. The only people who are truly right with God are those who espouse their adamant Textus Receptus/King James Only position which is clearly a cultic mindset.

Godly and scholarly men whose lives and ministries have been a blessing to the work of God over the years are mercilessly attacked simply because they did not espouse their King James Only position. Louis Gaussen, whose classic work on the doctrine of inspiration was published in 1841; Lewis Sperry Chafer, who helped in founding Dallas Theological Seminary; Henry C. Theissen, whose systematic theology has been widely used by

conservatives; and such a stalwart of the faith as J. Greshen Machen, who dedicated his entire life to the cause of Christ and died while behind the pulpit preaching, are all vilified by William Grady.²⁵ He calls their attempts at explaining how the Holy Spirit worked inspiration in and through these as intellectual “mumbo-jumbo.”²⁶

It was Dr. Machen who stood at the forefront in defense of the fundamentals of the faith during the early decades of the twentieth century when theological Liberalism in the form of higher criticism was invading this country from Germany. He was a brilliant and a godly man who penned the classics *The Virgin Birth* and *Christianity and Liberalism*, in which he defends the Christian faith against the attacks of Liberalism and lays bare their unbiblical teachings. It was he who was among the first to conclude that Liberal Christianity is a non-Christian religion. He never married, devoting his entire life to the work of the Lord. Yet, he is attacked unmercifully simply because he did not espouse a radical Textus Receptus/King James Only position and limited inspiration to the autographs.

Dr. Grady admits that his advocacy of the King James Version as being an inspired translation is a departure from the historical view of the Church which limits inspiration to the penning of the original manuscripts. He writes,

The present alignment of thousands of frustrated independent Baptists behind the King James Bible is far from a departure from orthodoxy; rather, it is consistent with established patterns of church history...God's people have stood ready to abandon *any* "historic position" when so led by the liberating Spirit of God.²⁷

He justifies abandoning the historic position of the church on inspiration because of being “so led by the liberating Spirit of God.” Most cultic leaders also make similar claims. His statement clearly implies that the vast majority of believers are not led by “the

²⁵ Ibid., x, viii.

²⁶ Ibid., x

²⁷ Ibid., xi.

liberating Spirit of God.” His “me-only” mindset is seen in the fact that he places those who espouse his new unbiblical revelation on a superior spiritual level far above those who reject his King James Only doctrines. This cultic mindset will be developed more fully in chapter five.

The Unholy Practice of Willful Deception

The Devil works by two primary tactics. He works by deception and destruction. He is the master of deception. According to Jesus, he is first and foremost a liar (Jn. 8:44). In striking contrast to this, Jesus is truth personified (Jn. 14:6). A commitment to Christ also involves a commitment to truth.

This makes it difficult for one to understand how Gail Riplinger could so consistently misrepresent her opposition and not be repudiated by the King James Only Movement. One author said this of her repeated misrepresentation of those who disagree with her, “*New Age Bible Versions* contains a plethora of out-of-context citations and edited quotations, frequently misrepresenting the positions of the authors it attacks.”²⁸

On the top of page 455 Dr. Riplinger has a chart preceded by the explanation that while attempting to counsel a college student by the use of Isa. 26:3, she realized that the New American Standard Bible left out the key words "on Thee." Below is an exact quotation of the verses as she presented them.

KJV

Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee.

NASB

The steadfast of mind Thou wilt keep in perfect peace.

Notice that there is a period after the word "peace" in her so-called quotation of the New American Standard translation. In English grammar, when a quote is given, a period at the end of the quote represents the end of a sentence. Four periods at the end of a quote

²⁸ White, *The King James Only Debate*, 97.

mean that something has been omitted. Riplinger ended her quote from the New American Standard Bible with a period which suggests that this is the end of the sentence, but it is not. She simply omitted a key phrase from the verse which clearly contradicts her claim that the New American Standard Bible omits words "in Thee."

Here is the Isaiah 26:3 passage as it actually appears in the New American Standard Bible, "*The steadfast of mind Thou wilt keep in perfect peace, because he trusts in Thee.*" She omitted the entire clause "*because he trusts in Thee.*" The words "*in Thee*" in the New American Standard cannot be differentiated from the "on Thee" in the King James. What happened to the commandment "*Thou shalt not bear false witness?*" Does it not apply to King James Only advocates also, or do the ends justify the means?

In a chart on the bottom of page 294, she says that the King James translates the Old Testament Hebrew word *sheol* as "hell" in each of its 67 appearances in the Old Testament. Once again, Dr. Riplinger misrepresents the truth by exaggeration since the King James translates the word as grave approximately 30 times in the Old Testament.

She follows the same pattern of deception in her discussion of the famous Philippians 2:5-7 passage in her dishonest attempt to make all modern translation deny the deity of Christ. Concerning their translation of the passage, she writes, "They could not use another version here because *all* other versions *deny* Christ's deity in this verse."²⁹ She gives the following as a supposed quote of modern translations of this verse, "*...did not consider equality with God something to be grasped.*" Here is how the New American Standard actually translates the verse, "*Who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped.*" Thus, when presented in its entirety, this verse does not deny the deity of Christ, it actually constitutes a stronger affirmation of Christ's deity than the King James does. That is a clear violation of the commandment, "*Thou shalt not bear false witness,*" but it seems that many King James Only advocates feel that

²⁹ Riplinger, *New Age Versions*, 306.

god has granted to them a special dispensation to violate biblical ethics because they are involved in a noble cause.

If there were only one or two occurrences of distortions of this nature in Riplinger's *New Age Bible Versions*, one could and should seek to excuse them as a human error or oversight. However, the sad truth is that this type of distortion and deceit characterizes Gail Riplinger's writings, and that is inexcusable, especially for a Christian.

Gail Riplinger is not a hero of the faith. Nobody can be a hero of the faith and defend the holy Bible in an unholy manner. There should be an outcry against her unethical practices among King James Only advocates heard around the world.

Unholy Claims of the Denial of Doctrine of Hell

King James Only advocates commonly slander modern translations of attempting to deny the doctrine of Hell. Often they claim that the translators change "hell" to "grave" as a part of their devious scheme to water down the doctrine of hell. This constitutes another slanderous distortion of the facts.

We have chosen to compare the New International Version and the King James Version because it is probably the most often attacked modern translation by King James Only advocates. The choice to translate the Old Testament word *sheol* as grave probably has more to do with translation philosophy (dynamic equivalence versus formal equivalence) than it does with theological considerations. Furthermore, there has been a long-standing debate among conservative scholars on how to consistently translate this word based upon its context. On this subject Picirilli wrote,

There is a great deal of difference of opinion, even among Bible-believing scholars, about the proper translation of the Hebrew *sheol*. To start with, the word apparently means, at its root, "the abode of the dead" -- not "grave" literally, and not "hell" literally, although it might have either of those meanings indirectly. While not all conservative scholars agree on this point, my perception is that the great majority would agree that "sheol" is often used in the OT in such a way that it is the abode of both the righteous and wicked dead.³⁰

³⁰ Ibid.

The Christian doctrine of Hell is established primarily by the teachings of the New Testament. Therefore, although the New International Versions does translate *sheol* as grave in places where the King James translates it as Hell, this does not have much bearing on the Christian doctrine of Hell.

The Hebrew word *sheol* occurs 64 times in the Old Testament and the King James translates it as “hell” 31 times, as “grave” 30 times, and as “pit” 3 times. The New International Version renders the word as “death” or “grave” almost every time it appears on the Old Testament. The King James translators rendered it as grave almost half of the time which then brings up the question, “If it is good theology to translate it as grave half of the time as the King James translators did, then why not all of the time?”

Ultimately, one is faced with the question of whether or not the inspired writer was making reference the grave as the abode of the dead, or to the grave as the conscious abode of the dead beyond the grave. Obviously, this is not easily resolved. Hebrew parallelism often dictates grave rather than hell. This is because Hebrew parallelism repeats itself for the sake of emphasis by using a similar word to refer to thing cited in the previous line. On several occasions the first line refers to death or the grave which would then dictate that *sheol* be translated as grave.

There are primarily two Greek words used in the New Testament to refer to hell. The first is *geehenna* which is used twelve times in the New Testament of a “fiery place of punishment or the place of eternal torment for the godless after death.”³¹ The New International Version translates *geehenna* as hell every time the King James does. The other word is *hades*, which the rough equivalent of the Hebrew word *sheol*. The New International Version transliterates the word into English as *hades*

31.Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider, ed., *Exegetical Dictionary of The New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing House, 1980), 1:239.

except in Acts 2:27, 31 where it is rendered as grave to be consistent with the Old Testament passage which it is quoting. There is another Greek word for hell which is found only in II Peter 2:24 which both translations render as “hell.”

Here is the truth about this charge. If the doctrine of Hell were under siege by the New International Version translators, they would have watered down the New Testament words for hell, and especially the word *geehenna*, but it is as strong on the doctrine of Hell in the New Testament as the King James is.

Unholy Claims of the Denial of the Blood of Christ

One of the worst overstatements of the King James Only Movement is the claim that modern translations are a part of a devious scheme to deny the blood of our Lord. Here are the facts. The King James has 32 references to the blood of Christ. The New International Version has 31 references to Christ’s blood which are translated in the same way that the King James translates it.

The only omission, which is Col. 1:14, is not only missing in the critical text, but it is also missing in the majority of the Byzantine type texts from which the Textus Receptus was derived, which is the Greek text from which the King James was translated. The New International Version did not simply drop the verse as a part of a devious scheme to deny the blood of our Lord.

There is a legitimate textual problem with this passage which led them to conclude that it was not in the autograph penned by the Apostle Paul. What happened to giving a Christian brother the benefit of the doubt instead of denouncing him as a devious heretic out to destroy the faith because he does not espouse your King James Only views?

Once again, we are faced with casuistry, which boils down to a matter of honesty. Someone has accurately said that Christians have to tell the truth, even about the Devil. The nobility of a cause does not justify the use of unethical tactics which are not noble in order to promote a a cause they deem to be noble. The ends do not justify the means.

The unholy Tactic of Attacking the Person instead of his Position

Another manifestation of casuistry is the King James Only tactic of attacking the person instead of his position. This is rampant within the movement. The name of the game is to discredit the man in order to discredit his message. Contaminate the worker and you contaminate his work making it unclean and unusable by Christians.

We have already pointed out the vicious attack by modern King James Only advocates like Peter Ruckman, William Grady, and Gail Riplinger upon those who hold opposing views on the exclusive use of the King James Bible or the Textus Receptus. There is almost a unanimous consensus among King James Only advocates that the men involved in translating and publishing modern translations are all ungodly men driven by greed and a desire to destroy the faith.

King James Only advocates feel free to viciously attack the doctrinal and spiritual integrity of some of the giants of the faith simply because they were not King James Only advocates.³² They misrepresent the trustworthiness of all modern translations, suggesting that they were all translated by ungodly and greedy men whose goals are to enrich themselves while at the same time destroying the faith.³³ They refer to all modern translations as perversions.³⁴ One wonders what ever happened to the biblical admonition of “speaking the truth in love” (Eph. 4:15).

They viciously attack all the men involved in modern texts, translations, and publishers. This is a part of their “clean hands” approach to dictating the exclusive use of the King James Bible. If you discredit the man, you discredit his work. This explains their vicious attacks upon these men.

Once you adopt this philosophy you can then write a book called *Touch Not the*

³² Grady, *Final Authority*, vii-x.

³³ Bebee, “Which Version of the Bible Should I Use?” *Church Bus News*, April-June 1992.

³⁴ Grady, *Final Authority*, x

Unclean Thing and make all texts other than those underlying the King James translation unclean texts because they were handled by spiritually unclean hands. In the process of doing this you never give those you wish to contaminate the benefit of the doubt. Instead you place the worst of all possible interpretations on the data about their lives and writings while placing the most positive interpretation upon the lives and writings of those involved in the process of the publication of the King James Bible.

This can be observed in Bro. Sorenson's scathing denunciation of Westcott and Hort and his attempt in the very next chapter to sanctify and canonize Erasmus and King James.³⁵ It is very interesting to read his attempt to transform King James I into a fundamentalist by rejecting the testimony of history about him. (King James did not authorize the translation that bears his name purely for spiritual reasons. He was probably driven more by politics and self-preservation than anything else.)

One does not have to be a rocket scientist to discern the strategy behind this move to demonize the opposition in order to discredit their work.³⁶ Sorenson works very hard to clean Erasmus up and turn him into "Erasmus the Fundamentalist."

Even if he could promote Erasmus to sainthood, he still would not be out of the

³⁵ Sorenson, *Touch Not the Unclean Thing*, 166-184.

³⁶ Sorenson quotes in an approving manner two Catholic enemies of Erasmus, one who said of the origin of the Reformation that Erasmus "laid the eggs and Luther hatched the chickens." The other is quoted as having said "Erasmus was the father of Luther." Sorenson explains that it was the *Textus Receptus* produced by Erasmus which so greatly influenced Luther. He seeks to purify Erasmus doctrinally and justify his refusal to join Luther as a part of the Reformation. First of all, Luther was a brilliant scholar and a thinker himself. His thinking was taking shape long before Erasmus ever published his Greek text. After all, Erasmus' Greek text was published in March of 1516 and Luther nailed his Ninety-Five Thesis on the church door in October of 1517 which is just 17 months later. Anyone vaguely familiar with Luther knows very well that one of the greatest influences upon Luther's thinking was the teachings of Hus on the supremacy of Scripture. Augustine was probably more influential than Hus. Furthermore, Luther had an earned doctorate in theology and was a theology professor in a college and probably had access to Greek texts prior to the publication of Erasmus' printed text. We also know that his study and teaching through the book of Romans had already greatly impacted his thought about justification by faith apart from works long before he ever saw the *Textus Receptus*. *Ibid*, 187.

woods. He still has to deal with the men who produced the texts which Erasmus, Stephanus, and Beza used to compile the Textus Receptus and history is clear that some of the texts Erasmus were from a Roman Catholic monastery in Basle. Ultimately, they must purge the hands of everyone who handled the manuscripts from the first man who made the first copy of the autographs all the way down to the last man who made the copies which were used by those who compiled the Textus Receptus. Anyone who has any knowledge of the textual families knows full well that this is an impossible task.

If the text underlying the Textus Receptus came to Erasmus via the Waldenses who got it from the Apostles, instead of the Textus Receptus being a Byzantine Text type, it would be a distinctive Waldenses Text. It would of necessity be a unique text unlike any other text in existence having been copied and preserved exclusively by the Waldenses since the days of the Apostles, but it is not. It is distinctively a Byzantine Text type which destroys their vain attempts to remove the texts underlying the Textus Receptus from the unclean hands of the Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox churches.

The reason the Greek texts underlying the Textus Receptus and the King James Bible are called the Byzantine Text is because it came to us via the Greek Orthodox Church, which is the church of the Byzantine Empire which continued to speak Greek for a thousand years after the West has shifted to Latin. King James Only advocates know that this church was far from being a fundamentalist Church so they must invent some means of removing the texts used by those who compiled the Textus Receptus from their hands. The only way that this can be accomplished is to ignore the facts of history and rewrite it to suit their ends.

Then there is the problem of purifying the hands of the 70 Jewish men who translated the Septuagint which is quoted in the New Testament. They must then purge the hands of Jerome who translated the Latin Vulgate since Erasmus copied verses from it which are not found in any extant Greek text. They must then purge the hands of all who copied the text during the 1100 years between the time it was translated by Jerome and the time Erasmus

copied passages from it into the Textus Receptus.

The problem continues to grow and intensify as one begins to consider the Hebrew text underlying the King James translation. Their biggest problem is with the Masoretes who produced the Hebrew Masoretic Text which underlies the King James Old Testament. They were unbelieving Jewish scholars who rejected Jesus as the Messiah. They were legalistic Jews who still lived under the Old Testament law as far as practical and rejected the New Testament as being a part of their sacred canon. These men obviously did not have doctrinally pure hands and any attempt to purge them will be both futile and false.

If the validity of a text depends upon the doctrinal purity of all the hands which handled it, the Church is in serious trouble. We cannot rewrite history in order to maintain that untenable position. We must always be guided by the truth and the truth is that the whole presupposition underlying Sorenson's book *Touch Not the Unclean Thing* is invalid. Regardless of his claims to the contrary, the texts underlying the King James Version were not always copied and preserved by men whose theological integrity was impeccable.

This is where the critical doctrines of divine preservation and the sovereignty of God come into play. God can and does override the free will of man in order to accomplish His sovereign purposes in every area except salvation. (Although He could, God does not override the free will of a man and force him to believe. He has made the sovereign choice to grant to man the limited freedom to, after having been enlightened and enabled by the Holy Spirit, to accept or reject His gracious offer of salvation.) The divine preservation of His Word is an act of our sovereign God as He moves in history to accomplish His purposes.

We have good and reliable copies of the autographs (not perfect since no two of them are exactly alike) because God has sovereignly watched over the transmission of His Word down through the centuries, even when those who handled it did not have clean hands. This is what the doctrine of divine preservation is all about.

The Holy Practice of Listening to the Other Side

When I was a boy, my godly grandmother used to tell me, “son, there are two sides to every story.” In my early days as a pastor I learned not to jump to conclusions when a husband or wife attributed all of their marital problems to the other mate. I quickly realized that it is human nature to tell the story in a manner to make self and self’s position look good and that few people will be completely candid in telling something that will make them look bad.

Later, I read that in regards to education, that to only be exposed to one side of an issue is indoctrination and not education. Rational thought readily recognizes that it is impossible to properly evaluate any issue and reach a rational conclusion by only hearing one side. Therefore, if one only reads what the King James Only advocates have to say about the character and motives of all modern translators and publishers, he is only getting one side of the issue. He is being indoctrinated and can never make an informed conclusion based on only reading or hearing one side of the story.

Having been repeatedly told by King James Only advocates that all modern translators and publishers are greedy ungodly men whose motives in making a modern translation are to destroy the faith and get rich, anyone interested in truth has no recourse but to at least hear the other side of the story from modern translators and publishers. Christian ethics demand that we give them a fair and objective hearing also.

At the very least an individual should be exposed to what modern translators and publishers say about their reasons for making a modern translation. Therefore, the following introduction copied from the Holman Christian Standard Bible is presented to at least expose the reader to what they say motivated them to translate and publish this modern translation.

King James Only advocates are not omniscient and cannot possibly know the motives behind all modern translators and publishers. Only God can know this. It just might be possible that there are still godly men and women who actually love the Lord and His Word enough to desire that twenty-first century Christians have His Word in a language

that they can readily read and understand. It just might be possible that God is still God and can still produce spiritual godly scholars in the twenty-first century who are just as spiritual and scholarly as those He produced in 1611.

The reader needs to read their own statements about their belief in the inspiration and inerrancy of the Scriptures, the authority of the Scriptures, and their translation philosophy. Christian ethics says they deserve a fair and objective hearing.

Introduction to the Holman Christian Standard Bible

The Bible is the inspired Word of God, inerrant in the original manuscripts. It is the only means of knowing God's specific plan of salvation and His will for life. It is the only hope and the only answer for a rebellious, searching world. Bible translation, both a science and an art, is a bridge that brings God's Word from the ancient world to the world today. In acknowledged dependence upon God to accomplish this task, Broadman and Holman Publishers presents the Holman Christian Standard Bible, a new English translation of God's Word.

THE GOALS OF THIS TRANSLATION

The Holman Christian Standard Bible has been created:

- to provide English speaking Christians with an accurate, readable Bible in contemporary, idiomatic English.
- to equip the serious Bible student with an accurate Bible for personal study, private devotions, or memorization.
- to produce a readable Bible--neither too high or low on a reading scale--that is both visually attractive and suited to oral reading.
- to affirm the authority of the Scriptures as God's inerrant Word and its absolutes against the inevitable changes of culture.

The name, Holman Christian Standard Bible, embodies these goals: Holman Bible Publishers presents a new translation of the Bible for all Christians that will set the standard for Bible translations for years to come.

Why another New Bible Translation in English?

There are several important answers to this question.

1. The Bible is the world's most important book, confronting each individual with issues that affect all of life, both now and forever. Since each generation must wrestle in its own language with the message of God's Word, there will always be the need for new translations such as the Holman Christian Standard Bible [HCSB].

2. English is the first truly global language in history and the modern *lingua franca* of education, business, travel, research, and the Internet. More than 1.3 billion people speak English as a primary or secondary language across the world: the HCSB exists to meet the needs of a large cross section of those people. **English is also the most rapidly changing language today.** (Emphasis Added.) HCSB seeks to reflect many of these recent changes by consistently using modern punctuation, formatting, and vocabulary, while avoiding slang, regionalisms, or deliberate changes for the sake of political correctness.

3. This has been called the "information age," a term that accurately describes the field of biblical research. Never before in history has there been as much information about the Bible as there is today--from archaeological discoveries, to analysis of ancient manuscripts, to years of study of individual Bible books. Translations made as recently as ten or twenty years ago do not reflect many of these advances in biblical research. The translators of the HCSB have sought to use as much of this new data as possible.

4. One of the most important developments in the modern world is computer technology. The HCSB has probably used computer technology and telecommunications more than any translation in history. Electronic mail was used daily and sometimes hourly for communication and transmission of manuscript. The most advanced Bible software available was used to review the translation at each step in its production. A developmental copy of HCSB itself was used with this software system so that it could be cross-checked during the translation process--something never done before on Bible translation.

TRANSLATION PHILOSOPHY

Translators usually follow one of three following approaches in translating the Scriptures:

Formal Equivalence: Often called "word for word" translation, formal equivalence seeks to represent each word of the original text with a corresponding word in the translation so that the reader can see word for word what the original human authors wrote. The strength of this approach is that the Holy Spirit did inspire the very words of Scripture in the original manuscripts. A formal equivalent translation is good to the extent that its words accurately convey the meaning of the original words. However, a literal rendering can often result in awkward English or in a misunderstanding of the original.

Dynamic Equivalence: Often called "thought for thought" translation, dynamic equivalence seeks to translate the meaning of biblical words so the text makes the same impact on a modern reader that the original text had on its readers. Strengths of this approach include readability and understandability, especially in places where the original is difficult to render word for word. However, a number of serious questions arise with dynamic equivalence: How can a modern translator be certain in the idea of

the original author's mind? Is not meaning always conveyed by words; if so, why not insure the accuracy of meaning by using words that are as close to the original as possible? How can a modern person even know the impact of the original text upon its readers?

Optimal Equivalence: This method seeks to combine the best features of both formal and dynamic equivalence by applying each method to translate the meaning of the original with optimal accuracy. In the many places throughout Scripture where a word-for-word rendering is clearly understandable, that literal rendering is used. In other places where a literal rendering might be unclear in modern English, then a more dynamic translation is given. The HCSB has chosen to use the balance and beauty of optimal equivalence for a fresh translation of God's Word that is both faithful to the words God inspired and "user friendly" to modern readers.

TEXTUAL BASE

The textual base for the New Testament [NT] is the Nestle-Aland *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 27th edition, and the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament, 4th corrected edition. Footnotes immediately below the text indicate significant difference among Greek [Gk] manuscripts of the NT. In a few cases, brackets are used to indicate texts that are omitted in some ancient Gk manuscripts.

No honest ethical Christian can read the above introduction without reaching one of two conclusions. First, he can conclude that, based upon the preceding statements, those involved in translating and publishing the Christian Holman Standard Bible were orthodox believers with the highest Christian motives. These brethren have an earnest desire to place into the hands of God's people a reliable translation in language readily understood.

Second, he can conclude that they are all liars and heretics, but before a Christian can reach that conclusion about another Christian, he must have incontrovertible evidence that they are not orthodox or truthful. Christian ethics demand that a Christian brother be taken at his word unless the facts of the case dictate otherwise.

I have personally read this translation from cover to cover and have found nothing in it that contradicts their stated intent to publish a reliable and understandable translation of the autographs. This translation contains every doctrine of the Christian faith that is found in the King James translation. There is no obvious scheme to destroy the faith.

At no place in the King James translation does it designate the King James translation

or the Textus Receptus as being the translation and text of God's choice. Nor does it forbid the making of modern translations. Unbiblical doctrines demanding the exclusive use of the King James or its underlying texts are the concoctions of fallen men.

Noah Webster best explained why people have turned to modern translations when he wrote, "Whenever words are understood in a sense different from that which they had when introduced, and different from that of the original languages, they do not present to the reader the Word of God."³⁷

Summary and Conclusion

Regardless of the nobility of the cause, Christians must still be guided by Christian ethics which are set forth in the Word of God. It is never right to do wrong in order to do right. Casuistry was the philosophy of the Jesuits in the counter-reformation movement of the Roman Catholic Church, but they have always been free to make the rules as they go. Such is not the case with conservative or fundamental Christianity. They are bound by the authority of the Scriptures, not only in doctrine, but in practice also. Because of this, there should have been a loud outcry among King James Only advocates about the unethical practices of those who have bought into the philosophy of casuistry in their King James Only advocacy.

The following quote sums up what is going on within the King James Only Movement in its attempts to defend an unbiblical position with unbiblical practices.

I have tried to write this volume without heat or rancor, but I confess I must either laugh or weep when I read merciless diatribes that speak of "apostate texts"; or that "many of our good, fundamental ministers of the gospel, have been caught in the Satanic 'Religion Trap,' i.e., the idea that there are better manuscripts than those used in the translation of the King James Bible in 1611."³⁸

³⁷ Noah Webster, "Preface," *The Holy Bible in the Common Version with Amendments of the Language*.

³⁸ Carson, *The King James Version Debate*, 76.

Chapter Five

WHO MAKES THE RULES?

The Reformation Church was a “Back to the Bible” movement. It rejected the man-made doctrines and practices of the Catholic Church and returned to the policy of the early Church where Jesus was the Head of His Church as He exercised that authority through His Word. In doctrine and practice the Bible became the sole and supreme authority of the Reformation Church. They rejected the deadly doctrine of Dual Authority of the Roman Catholic Church.

The very critical question which the King James Only Movement has to answer is this exact same issue. They must decide on “who makes the rules?” They desperately need to decide if Jesus is going to be the sole Head of the movement, or are they going to continue their drift toward the deadly dangerous doctrine of a dual authority by allowing certain of their own spokesmen to make up doctrines not found in the Scriptures?

There are three very troubling things that characterize the King James Only Movement which should be a major concern to those on both sides of the controversy. However, in setting forth these concerns one should recognize that there are always exceptions to any general statement made about human beings. Not all King James Only advocates can be characterized by all of these troubling concerns, but they are prevalent enough in the writings of enough King James Only advocates to cause real concern to the body of Christ.

Each of these concerns grows out of their attitude toward the sole and supreme authority and the complete sufficiency of the Scriptures. In their demand for the exclusive use of the King James translation, they violate the sole and supreme authority and sufficiency of the very Bible they seek to defend. They bow before a translation whose

authority and sufficiency they violate in advocating their man-made King James Only doctrines and practices.

When the King James Only Controversy is boiled down to its core, it is ultimately an issue of the sole and supreme authority and total sufficiency of the Bible they claim to defend but they refuse allow it to determine their position on the texts and translations issue. Instead, they create doctrines not found in the King James Bible to justify their King James Only position which constitutes a denial of its complete sufficiency. So, ultimately, their unbiblical King James Only doctrines and practices constitute an attack upon the very Bible they seek to defend by not allowing it to be their guide.

I sat in the office of a strong King James Only advocate one day and we discussed the issue. After listening to him present his case, I made one request and this promise to my brother. I said to him, "If you can show me just one verse in the King James Bible that teaches that it is the only translation that we can use, then I promise you that I will never use any translation other than the King James translation. I will also admonish others to use it exclusively."

I was completely amazed and appalled at his response. Here is exactly what he said as he shook his head violently from one side to the other, "I do not care what the Bible says, I am going to preach it anyway." When he made that statement, I realized that his mind was closed to both reason and the truth. His belief on the issue was based upon his emotional attachment to the King James translation and not upon the authority of the very Bible he claimed to be defending. He had been infected with the sacred halo syndrome. His mind was made up and neither the truth of God's Word nor reason was going to change it.

I am still not sure that this good brother realized that he had just elevated his personal opinion to the same level of authority as the authority of the Bible he sought to defend. Neither am I sure that he realized that, in practice, he had created an extremely dangerous and deadly dual authority which he fervently sought to impose upon the Church of Jesus Christ.

I quietly and graciously dismissed myself and this dear brother became an avowed enemy of mine from that day forward, although I have never struck back at him personally. I did determine that his position, which will be explained in the first concern below, was a serious threat to the body of Christ and that I would speak out on the issue, but I would never attack him personally. I certainly wish that he had responded in the same manner.

Concern # 1

Dual Authority

The Sole and Supreme Authority and the Complete Sufficiency of the Bible

The year was A.D. 1414. He was a godly respected man with an earned doctorate and served as professor of theology at the local University. Along with being a published author, he was also the pastor of the city of Prague's leading church, Bethlehem Chapel. However, even with these outstanding credentials, he was involved in a battle for his very life with the hierarchy of his church. John Hus (1373-1415) was the leader of a Bohemian movement that had challenged many of the Roman Catholic Church's doctrines and practices. He had been summoned to appear before a church council in Constance and was guaranteed safe passage to and from Constance by King Wenceslaus, Emperor Sigismund, and Pope John XXIII.

His studies of the Word of God, and of the writings of John Wycliffe, had led John Hus to believe that Rome had greatly erred doctrinally, morally, and in practice. In his book, *De Ecclesia*, he had renounced the doctrines of transubstantiation, papal infallibility, complete subservience to the pope, the pope's right to wage war, the pope's right to excommunicate believers, Peter as the first pope, the belief in saints, unconditional obedience to earthly rulers, and simony, among other things.

At the source of these disagreements with Rome was Hus' belief in the sole and supreme authority of the Scriptures (*sola Scriptura*), which, along with the doctrine of justification by faith, became the marching songs of the Protestant Reformation. Peter Waldo, who died in 1217, and his followers, the Waldenses, sowed the germ seed of this

critical doctrine.¹ It was later more fully developed by the English Bible translator, John Wycliffe (1329-1384), which is the primary reason Wycliffe is called “The Morning Star of the Reformation.” David Schaff wrote, “Wyclif’s chief service for his people, next to the legacy of his own personality, was his assertion of the supreme authority of the Bible for clergy and laymen alike and his gift to them of the Bible in their own language.”² Wycliffe, who died when Hus was eleven years old, cast a large shadow across the life and thinking of John Hus.

After being in Constance for a few days, on November 28, John Hus was imprisoned in a dungeon in a Dominican convent where he languished for three months. Fever and vomiting set in because he was imprisoned near some latrines. On March 24th the bishop of Constance had him transferred by boat to his castle where he suffered from hemorrhaging, headaches, and other infirmities. On June 5th he was transferred to a third prison, a Franciscan friary, which was a location more convenient to the commission. From June 5th to the 8th he was brought before the commission and an assembled crowd to be publicly mocked as a heretic without representation and little opportunity to defend himself.

In the early days of July, Hus was approached three times and asked to renounce his “heretical” beliefs. Once he was asked by a group of friends, one of which advised him that if he felt sure of his cause, rather than lie to God, stand firm, even to death. On one occasion Hus responded by declaring that he had rather be burnt a thousand times than abjure, because by doing this he would offend those whom he had taught.

After seven months of dismal imprisonment, on Saturday, July 6th, 1415, at 6 in the morning, John Huss was brought to the cathedral where he was forced to stand outside the doors until the celebration of mass was completed. He entered the giant cathedral and was

¹. David Schaff, “The Middle Ages,” vol. 5 of *The History of the Christian Church*, ed., author, Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1907), 502.

² *Ibid.*, vol. 6, 338.

placed in the middle of the church on a high stool. He was then forced to listen to a sermon justifying the extermination of heretics.

After the sermon, the commission entered the pulpit area and charges were read and sentence pronounced. He was degraded from the sacerdotal order, stripped of his priestly garments, and they placed a pointed cap on his head with pictures of the Devil and inscribed with the word “heresiarach.” At this point, Hus turned his eyes toward Heaven and exclaimed, “and I commit myself to the most gracious Lord Jesus.”

John Huss was turned over to Emperor Sigismund, the civil authority, for execution, as if this would cleanse the bloody hands of the Roman Church. A guard of one thousand armed men was standing by. The streets were crowded with curiosity seekers. As he was ushered to the site of execution, Hus passed the public square where he could see the flames which were consuming his condemned books and writings. Because of fear of the bridge collapsing, the larger part of the crowd was not allowed to cross over to the place of execution called the Devil’s Place.

Once, with tears in his eyes, Hus knelt and prayed. It was now high noon. His hands were fastened behind his back, and his neck was bound to the stake by a chain. Straw and wood were piled around his body up to his chin. Rosin was sprinkled upon the straw and wood to cause them to burn with greater intensity.

Once again, John Hus was given the opportunity to recant his “heretical” doctrines which grew out of his belief in the sole and supreme authority of the Scriptures. Once again, this man of God refused with the words, “I shall die with joy today in the faith of the Gospel which I have preached.” Then one of the council members who was standing by suggested a confessor, Hus replied, “There is no need of one. I have no mortal sin.” Then, at the suggestion of bystanders, they turned his face away from the East, and as the flames arose, he sang twice, “Christ, thou Son of the living God, have mercy on me.”

The wind blew in the martyr’s face and his voice was silenced. He died praying and singing. Then, in order to remove any possibility of preserving even his ashes, when his

heart did not burn it was impaled on a stick and burned to ashes. When his body was completely consumed, his ashes were placed into a wheelbarrow and dumped into the nearby Rhine River. The blood of this innocent and godly man still cries up from the ground of the Devil's Place against the Roman Catholic Church which has never apologized for this atrocity.

His lips were silenced in death, but truth cannot be killed. Truth can be temporarily silenced, but it never dies. The truth Hus espoused lives on even today in his followers and in his writings.

One hundred and two years later, another college professor, who also had an earned doctorate in theology, Martin Luther, came under the influence of Hus' writings. It was his belief in the sole and supreme authority of the Scriptures which led him to also oppose Rome when its teachings and practices differed with the Scriptures. So, on October 31, 1517, Martin Luther nailed his Ninety-Five Theses on the church door in Whittenburg, Germany in protest to Rome's unbiblical doctrines and practices.

Luther's Ninety-Five Theses grew out of his rejection of the elevation of the tradition and authority of the church to the same level as the authority of the Scriptures, although the catalyst which provoked it was Rome's sale of indulgences. Ultimately, the Protestant Reformation was a rejection of Rome's doctrine of Dual Authority and a return to the sole and supreme authority of the Scriptures.

It would be hard to exaggerate the critical importance of the doctrine of *sola Scriptura* on the history and development of the Church. This foundational doctrine was the guiding light of the early Church. Both its doctrine and its practice were gleaned from the inspired teachings of the Apostles. As long as the Church remained true to this doctrine it remained the true Church, but when she departed from this core doctrine and accepted a dual authority, she began her departure from the faith. Few Christians today are aware of the centrality of this doctrine in the early Church, the Protestant Reformation, and in the post-Reformation Church.

In regards to the centrality of the Scriptures as the Church's only authoritative guide, Loraine Boettner wrote,

Roman Catholics often attempt to represent Protestantism as something comparatively new, as having originated with Martin Luther and John Calvin in the sixteenth century. We do indeed owe a great debt to those leaders and to the Reformation movement that swept over Europe at that time. But the basic principles and the common system of doctrine taught by those Reformers and by the evangelical churches ever since go back to the New Testament and to the first century Christian church. Protestantism as it emerged in the 16th century was not the beginning of something new, but a return to the Bible Christianity and the simplicity of the Apostolic church from which the Roman Church had long since departed. *The positive and formal principle of this system is that the Bible is the Word of God and therefore the authoritative rule of faith and practice. Its negative principle is that any element of doctrine or practice in the church which cannot be traced back to the New Testament is not essential part of Christianity.* (Emphasis added)³

The essential nature of this doctrine is seen in the fact that no Christian movement can remain Christian for long once it moves away from the Scriptures as its sole and supreme authority in all matters of faith and practice. If one will analyze the history of the Church, he will find that the decline and transition of the true Church into what eventually became the Roman Catholic Church began in the fourth century when she abdicated the doctrine of the sole and supreme authority of the Scriptures in favor of a dual authority.

Church leaders began in the early fourth century accepting doctrines and practices not found in the Scriptures. She did this out of pragmatic reasons, but in doing this she not only denied the sole and supreme authority of the Scriptures, but she also denied their complete sufficiency in all matters of faith and practice. For the first time in her history, the Church had a dual authority, which involved the elevation of the teachings of her leaders, who were fallen and fallible men, to the same level of authority as the teachings of Christ through His Word.

³ Loraine Boettner, *Roman Catholicism* (Philipsburg, New Jersey: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1962), 1-2.

The ultimate problem with dual authority is the fallen depraved nature of man. Man's authority is fallible and mutable. The authority of the Scriptures is infallible and immutable. The authority of the Scriptures is God-centered while the authority of man is man-centered. The authority of Christ exercised through His Word is fixed and final. The authority of man is human and changes with time and with circumstances. It is never final and continues to expand and change according to changing circumstances. The authority of the Scriptures rises from a pure mind which always operates with pure motives. The authority of man rises from an impure mind which does not always operate with pure motives.

During the first three centuries of persecution, the Church expanded rapidly. Then, several factors came together in the fourth century which flooded the Church rolls with pagan "converts." First, Licinius and Constantine issued the Edict of Milan in A.D. 313, which halted religious persecution. Second, Constantine professed Christianity which gained favorable status for Christianity. Third, the Emperor Theodosius I made Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire in A.D. 381. This marriage of the Church and the state flooded the Church with pagan "converts." Many of them joined for political and financial gain rather than because they had been truly converted and were authentic followers of Jesus Christ.

The period between A.D. 313 and 590 was a very critical period in the history of the Church. Cairns, in his *Christianity Through the Centuries*, pays particular attention to this era of church history. Due to the rapid growth and expansion of the Church, there was a real danger of large scale fragmentation. Without a strong central authority figure, the Church would quickly be fragmented by doctrinal differences, worship distinctives, and strong leaders seeking to go in their own direction.

So, for pragmatic reasons to guard and promote unity, her leaders took three major steps. First, they rallied the Church around her great creeds, which were hammered out during this time. Second, they also sought to create a common liturgy. This liturgy,

because it had no real biblical basis, would evolve into the mass, but it would also unify the Church around a common liturgy. Finally, they created a leadership hierarchy to guard and promote the unity of the Church which also had no biblical basis. Of these three major unifying steps, only one, the great creeds, did not ultimately have a negative impact.

Of this unbiblical hierarchy, Cairns wrote,

Between 313 and 590 the Old Catholic church, in which each bishop had been an equal, became the Roman Catholic church, in which the bishop of Rome won primacy over other bishops . . . The Council of Constantinople in 381 recognized the primacy of the Roman see . . . Emperor Valentinian III, in an edict in A.D. 445, recognized the supremacy of the bishop of Rome in spiritual affairs.⁴

The best thing that came out of these three pragmatic steps to guard and promote unity was the great orthodox creeds around which the Church could unite. It should be recognized that these creeds are orthodox because they were founded upon the teachings of the Scriptures and not upon the teachings of man. At this point in the history of the Church, her leaders did not feel free to create doctrines of their own making. This would only come after the sole and supreme authority of the Scriptures had been fully compromised giving her leadership the authority to create doctrines for pragmatic reasons.

Error feeds off itself and the depraved heart of man naturally seeks power and control. Therefore, once the Church moved to a dual authority, the door was swung wide open for fallen depraved man to continually expand his oppressive authority over the laity by the creation of man-made doctrines having no biblical basis. The Roman bishop or pope and church councils would create doctrines to perpetuate themselves. The desire of fallen man for power, control, and money would guarantee the continued pronouncements of new doctrines and practices that would result in a church foreign to the apostolic Church of the New Testament.

The unbiblical doctrine of the Mass as a daily celebration was set in place in A.D. 394.

⁴ Cairns, *Christianity Through the Centuries*, 150-151.

The exaltation of Mary as the “Mother of God” was created by the Council of Ephesus in A.D. 431. Extreme Unction was set in place in A.D. 526. Purgatory was created by Gregory I in A.D. 593. He also imposed the exclusive use of the Latin language in worship and prayers to Mary and dead saints in A.D. 600. The official title of “pope” was conferred upon the Roman bishop, Boniface III, by emperor Phocas in A.D. 607.⁵

One would prefer to believe that these men initially acted out of good intentions and that they never dreamed where this tragic move to a dual authority would take their beloved Church. Their motive to promote unity was honorable, but their means of achieving that unity would ultimately destroy the Church that they sought to preserve. The price they paid for unity was far worse than the fragmentation they sought to avoid. Their cure was worse than the curse they sought to prevent. Here is how one author described this departure from the sole and supreme authority of the Scriptures and its tragic results.

Ever since New Testament times there have been people who accepted the basic principles now set forth in Protestantism. That is, they took the Bible as their authoritative standard of belief and practice. They were not called Protestants. Neither were they called Roman Catholics. They were simply called Christians. During the first three centuries they continued to base their faith solely on the Bible. They often faced persecution, sometimes from the Jews, sometimes from the pagans of the Roman Empire. But early in the fourth century the emperor Constantine, who was the ruler of the west, began to favor Christianity, and then in the year 324, after he had become ruler of all of the empire, made Christianity the official religion. The result was that thousands of people who still were pagans, pressed into the church in order to gain the special advantages and favors that went with such membership. They came in far greater numbers than could be instructed or assimilated. Having been used to the more elaborate pagan rituals, they were not satisfied with the simple Christian worship but began to introduce their heathen beliefs and practices. Gradually, through the neglect of the Bible and the ignorance of the people, more and more heathen ideas were introduced until the church became more heathen than Christian. Many of the heathen temples were taken over by the church and re-dedicated as Christian churches.

Thus in time there was found in the church a sacrificing and gorgeously appared priesthood, an elaborate ritual, images, holy water, incense, monks and nuns, the doctrine of purgatory, and in general a belief that salvation was to be achieved by works rather than by grace. The church in Rome, and in general the churches throughout the empire, ceased to be the

⁵ Boettner, *Roman Catholicism*, 7-9.

apostolic Christian church, and became for the most part a religious monstrosity.⁶

It is an undeniable fact that it was the Church's departure from the sole and supreme authority of the Scriptures which transformed her into the Roman Catholic Church. The Protestant Reformation was nothing more than a return by a segment of the Church back to the sole and supreme authority of the Scriptures. Boettner described it as follows, "The Reformation, under Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, and Knox, was literally a 'back-to-the-Bible' movement."⁷ The Reformers began with the basic presupposition that the Word of God was their infallible guide in all matters of faith and practice.

The purpose of discussing Hus and the transition of the early Church to the Roman Catholic Church is clearly demonstrate the deadly results of the ancient Church's moving away from the core doctrine of the sole and supreme authority of the Scriptures which also implied their complete sufficiency. *We have stressed this point because the exact same thing is taking place today in King James Only circles today.* The King James Only Movement is now allowing her leaders to simply make up doctrines which have absolutely no biblical basis in order to demand the continued and exclusive use of the King James translation of the Bible and its underlying Greek and Hebrew texts. In the process, they are creating a dual authority which is the mother of all cults.

The doctrine of an *inspired translation* is not found in the Scriptures. The doctrine of *Plenary Preservation* is not found in the Scriptures.⁸ Neither is the doctrine of *exclusive preservation* through the King James translation and the texts underlying it found in the Word of God. These are a unbiblical doctrines created by King James Only advocates which they are attempting to foist upon the Church of Jesus Christ.

⁶ Ibid., 11.

⁷ Ibid., 12.

⁸ Grady, *Final Authority*, 328.

The very instant any local church, institution, or organization accepts these doctrines as binding upon itself, that local church, institution, or organization has abandoned the sole and supreme authority of the Scriptures and has created for itself a dual authority. They have granted their King James Only leaders the extremely dangerous authority to legislate doctrine and practice for them. Without realizing it, they have taken the first step toward becoming a cult.

This dangerous transition is happening right before our eyes and the conservative Church is largely silent on this issue. This alarming silence is explicable in light of two things. First, very few Church leaders have taken the time to analyze what has transpired within the movement during the past couple of decades. They are aware of the controversy, but they are not aware of the serious theological shift which has taken place within the King James Only Movement. These new man-made doctrines have changed the translation one uses from a preference to a doctrine. This seriously alters the theological landscape.

Second, the spirit of the age has rubbed off on the Church and a false view of tolerance has captured the minds of many. Few church leaders today are willing to speak out on any controversial issue. They are especially reluctant to speak out on this issue because it is so volatile. King James only sentiments run deeply and those who speak out on the issue are summarily castigated and ostracized. The prevailing idea seems to be one of pacifying King James Only leaders.

The Word of God declares of Jesus Christ “*And He is the Head of the Body, the Church*” (Col. 1:18). The Scriptures are clear that the Church is the Body of Christ and He is her Head (Eph. 4:16-17). Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church because He loved her and gave Himself for her (Eph. 5:25). The Church is not her own, she was bought with a price (I Cor. 6:20). Absolutely no human being has the right to claim equal authority with Jesus Christ over His Church by making up doctrines and imposing them upon His Church.

This writer is convinced that many King James Only advocates, out of their emotional

attachment to, and their deep loyalty for their beloved translation, have accepted these unbiblical doctrines unethical practices without realizing the implications of what they were doing. Their motives are as pure as the driven snow, but pure motives do not guarantee pure doctrine or godly results.

Dual authority poses as much a threat to the King James Only Movement as it did to the ancient early Church. No church, institution, or organization is exempt from the fruits of this deadly doctrine, regardless of how fundamental they consider themselves to be. Error cannot be compartmentalized. Dual authority, once in place, cannot be limited to the King James Only issue. It will spread to other areas. The depraved nature of man guarantees this.

I humbly ask my King James Only brethren to take a moment and consider why Jesus so severely denounced the Pharisees. Why was He so hard on them? This issue is important because of the close parallel between what the modern King James Only movement is doing and what the Pharisees were doing. Jesus denounced the Pharisees for their dual authority which arose out of good motives and a noble cause.

These Pharisees were the ultra-separatists of their day. Their name meant separatist. They viewed themselves as the guardians of personal piety of that age. It was their divine calling to promote personal holiness in the lives of the children of Israel of their day. Like King James Only advocates, they saw this calling as a noble calling. Their cause was a spiritual cause which separated and elevated them above most Jews of their day.

However, like modern King James Only advocates, they made a very serious mistake when they began to make up rules (tradition of the elders) in order to promote holiness among the children of Israel. Although their motives were good, this move was a gross insult to God. Their actions implied that God was not intelligent enough to spell out the proper guides for personal piety in the Scriptures, so they felt compelled to help Him by making up rules to promote personal piety.

Then, like King James Only advocates today, they elevated their rules to be binding

upon the people of God. The children of Israel were to obey the Scriptures, but they were also to obey their man-made rules or “tradition” (Mt. 15:2,9).

Although the Pharisees were convinced that theirs was a noble cause, Jesus was not impressed. Here is what Jesus had to say about their rules which they had made up to help God in the promotion of personal piety, “*But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men*” (Mt. 15:9). Jesus was fully cognizant of the fact that their imposition of these man-made doctrines upon the people of God created several serious theological problems that greatly displeased Him.

1. Dual authority diluted the authority of God and removed Him as the sole authority figure over His people. It elevated the leaders of the Pharisees to equal authority with God. King James Only advocates are presently creating their own doctrines (commandments of men) to help God to promote the exclusive use of the King James translation. Any local church, institution, or organization that accepts these unbiblical doctrines has submitted themselves to the authority of the men who created these doctrines. This constitutes the deadly doctrine of a dual authority for which Jesus so severely denounced the Pharisees for.
2. Dual authority removed God’s Word as His sole and supreme authoritative voice to His people. Historically, the nation of Israel had accepted God’s Word as their final authority on all matters on which it spoke. God was the sole authority, but He communicated His will for His people primarily through His Word. Historically, the Church has also accepted God’s Word as their sole and final authority but His Word cannot be the sole and final authority when fallen depraved men can make up doctrines which are binding.
3. Dual authority brought into question the omniscience of God by implying that He was not wise enough to give sufficient guides in His Word to promote personal piety in the lives of His people. King James Only advocates imply the exact same thing about God, otherwise they would not feel compelled to make up doctrines to help Him

promote the exclusive use of the King James translation.

4. Dual authority brought into question the omnipotence of God by implying that God did not have the power to promote holiness in the lives of His people and needed their help. This same deduction can be made of those who make up unbiblical doctrines to help God promote the exclusive use of the King James translation. Their actions call into question His omnipotence.
5. Dual authority of the Pharisees clearly brought into question the complete sufficiency of the Scriptures. They were adding to it their own rules in order to promote personal separation which implied that the Scriptures alone were not sufficient to guide God's people in holy living. By making up doctrines to promote the exclusive use of the King James, advocates of its exclusive use are clearly suggesting that the Word of God alone is not sufficient to promote the exclusive use of the King James translation.
6. Dual authority was a blatant power-grab on the part of the Pharisees in seeking to control the lives of God's people. This statement has to do with motives and we cannot read the motives of all King James Only advocates. However, we do know that they live in the same fallen depraved bodies of clay that the Pharisees lived in. They too suffer from the temptation to control the lives of others, but to what extent this drives them only God knows.
7. Dual authority was a move that elevated the proud heart of man to a position of power and authority over God's people that would have a negative impact upon the work of God by moving from grace to works. The Pharisees were the soteriological legalists of their day.

When a King James Only advocate says that one cannot be saved apart from the use of a King James translation, he is also a legalist. When he says that anyone using a modern translation is an apostate, he is a legalist who has turned salvation into a matter of using the translation that they have legislated without scriptural basis.

Without understanding the long-range implications of what they are doing, King James

Only advocates are setting in place a doctrine that will ultimately destroy the very Church they seek to save. It will take several generations for the transition to take place, but history proves that fallen man cannot be granted the authority to legislate to Christ's Church without gradually destroying it.

Error is never static. Error tends to feed off itself. One erroneous doctrine will almost always require another to prop it up. What begins as a small doctrinal error will not remain small. The gap between truth and error widens with the passing of time. The Church cannot mix truth and error and strengthen truth. Error mixed with truth always weakens truth and strengthens error? Error is just as dangerous to the King James Only movement as it is to those who use modern translations. All error will someday somewhere hurt.

The heart of King James Only advocates is just as depraved as those who use modern translations. The proud depraved heart of man cannot handle being granted authority equal with Christ. Once granted that authority, he will continue to legislate doctrines for the Church, and he will ultimately legislate to promote his own selfish interests rather than Christ's. Any King James Only advocate who thinks that creating doctrine to promote the King James translation can be limited just to this one area is dreaming.

It is no accident that the unbiblical doctrine that Jesus' body had divine blood has also become a new fundamental of the faith among many King James Only advocates. They teach this even though Heb. 2:14 clearly teaches that Jesus had human blood. However, once they have taken the step toward dual authority on the translation issue, it is easy to take that same step on other doctrinal issues such as the blood issue. They then have the freedom to impose their beliefs upon the Church regardless of what the Word of God teaches.

Concern #2

A Disregard for the Moral Authority of the Scriptures

The second concern has to do with the violation of the moral authority of the Scriptures

as is evidenced in the unethical practices of many King James Only advocates which were discussed in the fourth chapter. There is a direct connection between submission to the authority of the Bible in the realm of doctrine and submission to the authority of the Bible in the realm of ethics. Once the doctrinal authority of the Bible has been repudiated, it is only a matter of time before its moral authority will also be repudiated.

In the Christian realm, doctrine controls deeds, precepts control practice, and belief controls behavior. The child of God is called upon to love the Bible, learn the Bible, live the Bible, and finally to lip the Bible. However, practicing it must precede proclaiming it. Doing the Word must always precede declaring the Word. With God, it is always being before doing.

Right behavior is as much a part of Christianity as is right belief. Neither can take precedence over the other. Moral actions are doctrinal truths applied to life. They are interrelated and cannot be separated. *Bad doctrine and bad deeds both reflect a lack of submission to the sole and supreme authority of the Scriptures.* Once the sole authority of the Scriptures in doctrinal matters is compromised, it is only a matter of time before the sole authority of the Scriptures in ethical matters is also compromised.

The reverse is also true. Once the ethical or moral authority of the Scriptures has been compromised, it will only be a generation before the doctrinal authority of the Scriptures will also be compromised. This is because people do not like to live a lie or a contradiction. If their moral or ethical standards do not measure up to those of the Bible, then the moral standards of the Bible must be lowered to justify their lowered moral standards. When the church begins to tolerate ungodly living, it will not be long before she begins to tamper with the Word of God in order to justify her ungodly life-style.

The doctrine of casuistry is but the result of a dual authority that elevates this philosophy to accepted practice even though the Bible condemns it. Once it is accepted practice, it will spread. Sin can never be compartmentalized. Casuistry cannot be limited to the King James Only debate once it becomes accepted practice. If it is acceptable to

malign one's opposition in the King James Only debate, it will soon become acceptable to malign one's opposition in other debates.

The troubling thing is that many of these people who make up doctrines not found in the Scriptures and viciously attack and malign their opposition are presented at large King James Only conferences as heroes of the faith. There is an alarming silence about the unethical conduct of some King James Only advocates.

To willfully misquote one's opposition, or to say that he said one thing when the record is clear that he said the opposite, is a violation of the moral authority of the Bible. The last time I checked, the ninth commandment applied to King James Only advocates as well as to the rest of the body of Christ. *Truth is a straight line that favors neither the right nor the left.* Deceit on the part of the right is as sinful as deceit on the part of the left. The moral authority of the Bible applies equally to both the right and the left.

There are several things which make these unethical practices so very dangerous. First, it is ultimately a repudiation of the moral authority of the very Bible they seek to defend. Second, it violates the Christian spirit of tolerance toward Christian brothers with whom you disagree. Third, the translation one uses is not a fundamental of the faith. It should not be allowed to divide the body of Christ. The Bible does not even speak to the translation issue, yet some have made the translation one uses into a doctrinal issue that determines their orthodoxy and also makes it the test of fellowship.

A fourth danger is the fact that this mean un-Christ-like spirit of intolerance is a means of control by intimidation. These same people will turn viciously upon opposition from within their own ranks when they dare to disagree with them. It becomes a tool to silence the opposition and propagate their views by means of intimidation. Ultimately it becomes a tool to propagate their authority and control over those who follow them.

Fifth, this mean un-Christ-like attitude cannot be compartmentalized just to the King James Only Controversy. Once that spirit is tolerated, it will spread. If it is permissible to be mean-spirited to the opposition in the King James Only debate, it will become

permissible to be mean to the waitress at the restaurant when she does not perform up to one's expectations. This may be a contributor to the fact that the Sunday crowds at restaurants are not the most popular patrons with the average American waitress.

Sixth, the nobility of a cause never justifies unethical practice. A lie told by a Fundamentalist King James Only advocate is just as wicked as a lie told by an apostate liberal. Silence about lies told by the right is just as dangerous as silence about lies told by the left. Truth is a straight line that never apologizes, it favors neither the right nor the left. God is no respecter of persons. He is no more tolerant of sin on the right than He is of sin on the left.

A Christian is known more by his reactions than he is by his actions. It is how one reacts under the gun that reveals the true depths of his devotion to Christ. It is how an individual reacts in the stormy crises of life that reveal his true character and dedication to Jesus. One of my college professors, Tommy Burch, said in chapel one day, "Any old piece of driftwood can drift down stream with the current, but it takes a genuine love for Jesus to stem the tide and go against the flow." To go against the flow is to respond to our opposition with the mind and heart of Christ.

Concern #3

A Cultic Mind Set

It is wrong to characterize an entire group by its extremes and this author does not seek to do this. It is also essential that it be understood that anytime one makes a generalization about a group of human beings, there will always be exceptions. So, I want to be very clear that I am not trying to imply that all King James advocates are cultic. As a matter fact, I have been somewhat reluctant to give these signs for fear of being misunderstood as seeking to wrongfully malign all of those who disagree with me on the translation issue. I can assure the reader that this is not my intention.

However, I do believe that as one reads the following traits of the cults that he will see that many of them are prevalent in the King James Only movement and need to be spoken

to, even at the risk of being misunderstood or having one's motives questioned. It is also critical that the reader be aware that this cultic mindset is but a natural outgrowth of the acceptance of the deadly doctrine of dual authority. It is allowing man to make the rules instead of Jesus through His Word.

Given below will be an abbreviated discussion of some of the troublesome cultic signs evident within the King James Only Movement. This subject is of a nature that it merits a detailed discussion which cannot be attempted at this time. Dr. Walter Martin, in his classic work, *The Kingdom of the Cults*, has an excellent chapter devoted to "The Psychological Structure of Cultism." The next chapter, which has been added to the revised edition, deals with the mind control tactics of the cults. David Breese, in his book, *Know the Marks of Cults*, also gives some key signs of a cult. As one reads these works he readily recognizes that several of these traits are evident within the King James Only Movement today.

I. Cults Operate with a Closed Mind

Dr. Martin observed that cults share common belief-systems and that the outstanding trait is a closed mind. He wrote,

"First and foremost, the belief systems of the cults are characterized by closed-mindedness. They are not interested in a rational cognitive evaluation of the facts . . . Although many people are closed-minded about their religious faith, including many Christians, cultists are usually closed-minded not only because of their own determinations, but also because the cults almost invariably teach their followers not to question, not to interact with outsiders (especially ones critical of their cult's beliefs), and to depend on the cult authority structure to tell them what to believe without any personal reflection at all."⁹

A closed mind does not function rationally. It did not arrive at its position of exclusive truth based upon the evidence to begin with. King James Only advocates reached their conclusion about the exclusive use of the King James translation based upon their

⁹ Walter R. Martin, *The Kingdom of the Cults*, gen. ed. Hank Hanegraaff (Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1997), 36.

emotions which has blinded them to reason. Their emotional attachment to the King James will not allow them to consider contrary evidence. The fact that their beloved King James Bible never specifies a text or translation as being the text or translation of God's choice does not alter their emotional conclusions. They operate more on emotions than on light or reason, which is what this author has labeled as the scared halo syndrome.

The closed mindedness and irrationality of the movement is seen in the fact that, although they have never seen the autographs, they are nevertheless fully convinced that the Textus Receptus is the pure text which replicates the autographs and all other texts are corrupt. Some go so far as to teach that the Textus Receptus is a perfect replica of documents which they have never seen. Then, to further demonstrate their blind irrational thought, they fail to tell us which of the eighteen revisions of the Textus Receptus it is which replicates these documents since they are all different.

Another factor which reveals the closed irrational mind of so many King James Only advocates is their inability to produce a replica of the autographs until the Textus Receptus was compiled in 1516. If plenary preservation is a biblical doctrine, then there had to have existed a replica of the autographs somewhere throughout the history of the Church. Yet, nobody seems to be able to produce that replica until Erasmus, Stephanus, and Beza produced it and they still have not designated which of its eighteen editions replicates the autographs which they have never seen.

Then, to further complicate things, the Textus Receptus is not a replica of any single Byzantine text. It is a compilation of several texts, each of which were different. If plenary preservation were a biblical doctrine, then Erasmus should have located the existing replica and copied it for publication instead of creating a text unlike any in existence.

If the King James translation is the only translation which preserves the message of the autographs, then which edition of the King James preserves the message of the autographs? Was it the 1611 or the 1769 edition? Further, since they have never seen the

autographs, how did they find out that the King James is the only English translation which preserves the message of the autographs? Are they now receiving divine revelations?

The closed mindedness of the movement is seen by the fact that they seem to be oblivious of the fact that their divisiveness has done far more damage to the Church of Jesus Christ than the New International Version which they so vehemently despise. They justify further fragmenting the body of Christ by their belief that they are the true remnant charged with saving the Church from apostasy by protecting it from corrupt texts and modern translations.

They seem to be oblivious to the fact that the Church has fought these same battles during other translation changes in times past and faced the same basic arguments which they use today. Their closed mind seems to be incapable of grasping the fact that in 1611, the King James translation was at that time a modern translation. It had not been used by God for four hundred years, and had no track record to stand on. At that point in time it had not been awarded a sacred halo, and, based upon the arguments of modern day King James Only advocates, it should have been rejected in favor of an existing translation.

One of best illustrations of their closed mind is their blind refusal to admit that the seventeenth century language of the King James translation is no longer spoken and understood in the twenty-first century. Some have gone so far as to publish a King James Version with over six hundred modern English words or explanations in footnotes so that twenty-first century King James Only readers can figure out what its seventeenth language means.

They are willfully blind to the fact that the autographs of the New Testament were written in the language of the common man of that day, which this author calls the *Koine* Principle. God chose to have the New Testament recorded in the language of the common man of that day because He wanted His Word in a contemporary language form that the average man of that day could readily read and understand. Yet, they blindly insist on imposing on the English-speaking world a four hundred year old translation while insisting

that its archaic language is still intelligible. That is a closed mind.

King James Only advocates seem to have been blinded to the true function of any translation, but especially the translation of the Word of God. The function of a translation is to communicate the message being translated from the mother language into the receptor language in a manner that those reading the translation gets the same message and impact that those who read the original message in their mother tongue did. If the translators use confusing language and the message of the mother language is a receptor language which is no longer used or understood, then the translation has failed. It has failed because the validity of any translation is determined by how well it communicates the message from the mother language into the receptor language.

Yet, they insist that the modern church use a translation that was translated four hundred years ago using language that was contemporary then but has drastically changed over the centuries. What was an excellent contemporary translation four hundred years ago has lost much of its ability to accurately and effectively communicate the message of the autographs to people who no longer speak or understand the language of seventeenth century England. Only an individual with a closed mind would fail to face and admit something so obvious.

II. Cults are Antagonistic to Their Opposition.

On this subject Dr. Martin wrote, “Secondly, cultic belief systems are characterized by genuine antagonism on a personal level since the cultist almost always identifies his dislike of the Christian message with the messenger who holds such opposing beliefs.”¹⁰ The subject of the unethical antagonistic attitude of many King James Only advocates toward those who do not espouse their adamant King James Only position has already been thoroughly discussed. It is mentioned here because Dr. Martin labels it as the second most outstanding trait of a cult which should cause some serious concern among King James

¹⁰ Ibid., 37.

Only advocates and the Church in general.

III. Cults have new extra-biblical revelations which constitute a dual authority

Here is how Dr. Martin expressed this truth, “The organizational structure interprets the facts to the cultist, generally invoking the Bible and/ or its respective founder as the ultimate source of its pronouncements.”¹¹ David Breese writes,

How has God Revealed Himself? The Christian answer to that question is that God has revealed Himself ‘on many occasions in diverse manners’ in days gone by. In these last days, however, He has revealed Himself fully and finally to us in Jesus Christ as revealed in the Bible, the Word of God (see Heb. 1:1-2).

The Word of God is therefore, God’s final and complete revelation, and this revelation can be supplanted by no other. The cults have no such commitment, believing in the heretical doctrine of extrabiblical revelation . . . The cults continue to beguile unstable souls with their false claims to special discoveries.¹²

The King James Only Movement does not have a single charismatic leader who creates its new doctrines or revelations. It has several men who have created new and unbiblical revelations that have resulted in a dual authority for the movement. Listed below are some of the new doctrines that King James Only advocates have made up which creates a dual authority for the movement.

- A. **Inspired Translation:** The King James translation is an inspired translation.
- B. **Exclusive Use:** The King James translation is the only translation which the English-speaking world can use.
- C. **Exclusive Anointing:** A person not saved under the ministry of someone using the King James translation did not get saved.
- D. **Exclusive Preservation:** Providential Preservation applies only to the texts underlying the King James translation and to the King James Version itself.
- E. **Plenary Preservation:** The Old Testament Hebrew Masoretic Text and the Textus Receptus text of the New Testament are exact replicas of the originals.

¹¹ Ibid., 36.

¹² David Breese, *The Marks of Cults* (USA: Scripture Press Publications, 1975), 26, 66.

F. **Ecclesiastical Text:** The ecclesiastical text is determined by the extended use of a text by the orthodox church.

G. **Terminal Translation:** Providential preservation ended with the completion of the Textus Receptus and the translation of the King James translation. This dictates that the King James Version is God's final translation to the English-speaking world, and it can never be revised.

H. **Perverted Translations:** All modern translations are perversions.

Since none of these doctrines can be found in the Scriptures, they are new revelations which constitute a dual authority, both of which are signs of a cult.

It will take a few generations, but if the English-speaking Church bows to the demands of doctrines and practices not found in the Scriptures, she will be headed down the same road that gradually transformed the New Testament Church into the Roman Catholic Church. So, at all cost, the Church of Jesus Christ must refuse to bow to unbiblical King James Only doctrines created by mortal, finite, and fallen men.

IV. Cults Ignore the Established and Accepted Rules of Interpretation

The futile attempt to construe passages like Matthew 5:18 to teach Plenary Preservation is an illustration of their willingness to ignore the established rules of biblical interpretation. Sorenson, in his attempt to prove his unscriptural belief in perfect preservation of the message of the originals, wrote, "The contention of this author is that the Word of God is inerrant in its original inspiration and that God has providentially preserved an infallible transmission of it to this very hour. Jesus said, *"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."*¹³

Sorenson is not the only King James Only advocate to follow this pattern of interpretation. This verse and similar verses are widely quoted by King James Only advocates to prove perfect preservation of the message of the autographs.

¹³ Sorenson, *Touch Not the Unclean Thing*, 13.

The context of the passage makes it clear that Jesus was not speaking about the plenary (perfect) preservation of the *written Word*. The context is clear that Jesus was speaking about the abiding or unchanging nature of the law. In the preceding verse He makes it clear that He did not come to destroy the law but to fulfill it. Jesus said, *“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. 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.”*

Jesus is setting forth His relationship to the law of Moses which some had said that He would abrogate. He is stating that this assumption is incorrect. Jesus asserts that instead of relaxing its restraints upon men, or overthrowing its authority, He came to complete it.

The formula *“For verily I say unto you”* is introduced by Jesus for the sake of emphasis. It reminded those listening to Him that the next sentence would be extremely important. That critically important truth is the truth that the law of God is an unchangeable law and will be binding upon man as long as the heavens and the earth stand, or until everything predicted in it is fulfilled. Until that happens, not even the smallest part of a letter of the alphabet used in writing the law will pass away or cease to be binding.

The verse has absolutely nothing to do with the providential perfect preservation of the *written Word*. Jesus is speaking to the abiding nature of His Word. Even if it did apply to the written Word, one still wonders how King James Only advocates can limit perfect preservation only to the Textus Receptus and the King James translation. There is absolutely nothing in the text which limits its application exclusively to the King James translation and its underlying texts.

They do the same thing with Mt. 24:34-35. In this chapter Jesus is giving the prophetic signs of His second advent to this earth. He concludes by reminding them of the certainty of the fulfillment of these prophetic signs by saying, *“Verily I say unto you. This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.”*

Jesus is speaking of the enduring nature of His prophetic promises. They are certain. They will be fulfilled. They will be valid even after heaven and earth passes away. One has to reject the rule of context and imposes upon it something completely foreign to what Jesus was speaking about to find the perfect preservation of the message of the original autographs and then limit that preservation to the King James translation and its underlying texts.

There are other instances which could be cited. Probably the most outstanding is the fact that many of King James Only advocates are able to find a veiled reference to the King James translation in Psalm 12:6-7.

Cults ignore the rule of congruity. The Bible is a congruous harmonic whole. All of its teachings are congruous with each other. They complement each other and never conflict. Therefore, Bible doctrines can be laid side by side and they never conflict. On the other hand, cults have a "compartmentalized theology" which allows them to believe contradictory doctrines. Dr. Martin described this practice as "isolation." He wrote,

The fourth and final point of any analysis of the belief system of cults is the factor of isolation. Within the structure of non-Christian cult systems, one can observe the peaceful coexistence of beliefs that are beyond a shadow of doubt logically contradictory and which, in terms of psychological analysis, would come under the heading "compartmentalization." In 1984, George Orwell describes this as "double think."¹⁴

In justifying his doctrine of the King James being an inspired translation, which he acknowledges is not the historic position of the Church, William Grady writes, ". . . Gods people have stood ready to abandon any 'historic position' when so led by the liberating Spirit of God."¹⁵

The irrationality of this compartmentalized theology is seen in how they are able to violate all logic and construe the term "*all Scripture*" to apply and limit inspiration to the

¹⁴ Martin, *The Kingdom of the Cults*, 39.

¹⁵ Grady, *The Final Authority*, xi.

original authors of the autographs and to the King James translators. The word *pasa*, which is translated as “all,” must be limited to all of the autographs. If it is going to be expanded to apply also to translations, then it must be applied to all translations. There is absolutely no way to rationally construe the word *pasa* to apply to one group of translators to the exclusion of all others. Cults ignore the rules of interpretation and read into a text their desired meaning which is exactly what many King James Only advocates do.

V. Cults Manifest a "me only" Mentality

Cults are characterized as being folk who are fully convinced that they are the only people who are truly right with God. They are convinced that they are the exclusive possessors of the real truth. This results in an intolerance for any position but their own. Dr. Martin held this trait to be the third most outstanding trait of the cults. He wrote, “Thirdly, almost without exception, all cultic belief systems manifest a type of institutional dogmatism and a pronounced intolerance for any position but their own.”¹⁶

The fact that their extreme views separates and isolates them from most of the great saints of the ages and dooms most of the body of Christ to hell is of little consequence to them. Most King James Only brethren view as theologically suspect those who do not espouse their radical King James Only views.

In their view, since most of today's Church does not espouse their extreme view on the exclusive use of the Textus Receptus and the King James translation, then most of the Church has taken the first step that will ultimately transform them into theological liberals. Therefore, in their thinking, they are fully convinced that they are the godly remnant of the last days who are called to save the Church from its drift toward apostasy by saving it from the use of modern texts and translations.

VI. Cults have little Regard for the Great Orthodox Creeds

If Charles Taze Russel, Mary Baker Eddy, and Muhammed had accepted the great

¹⁶ Martin, *The Kingdom of the Cults*, 39.

creeds of the Church, the religions of the Jehovah's Witness, Christian Science, and Islam would not be in existence today. They were ignorant of them or had no regard for them.

I remember pointing out to a King James Only brother that his position on Christ's blood and on translations were not in keeping with the ancient creeds or Reformation and post-Reformation creeds of the Church. His response was, "we do not put much confidence in creeds."

I recognize that creeds are not inspired. However, the great creeds of the Church do represent what the Church has for over fifteen hundred years agreed upon as expressing what the Bible teaches upon a many of the fundamentals of the Church. Any movement that is arrogant enough to ignore the godly scholarship of the greatest minds of the Church down through the ages is in serious trouble. That is a cultic mindset.

Conclusion

Although he certainly is not omniscient, Satan is too intelligent to seek to destroy an orthodox movement by a bold denial of any of the fundamentals of the faith. His goal is to mix just enough error with truth to make truth ineffective. He knows that error never strengthens truth, it always dilutes and weakens truth making it less effective. Satan can get far more mileage out of corrupted truth than a blatant denial of truth. So, he seeks to dilute the sole and supreme authority and the complete sufficiency of the Scriptures with additives created by men that will dilute the authority of the Scriptures by elevating the false teachings of fallen man to equal authority. He knows that, once this transition to dual authority takes place, he will then be free to introduce other man-made doctrines that will further corrupt the true Church of Jesus Christ moving her further and further away from the truth destroying its effectiveness for the King of God.

His goal is also to get those who have a deep emotional attachment to the King James translation to allow their emotions to usurp authority over their reason. Once this transition takes place, reason will be ruled by emotions. One can then make the statement "I do not care what the Bible says about it, I am going to teach it anyway."

Chapter Six

SO WHAT!

This work is titled *A Balanced Biblical Approach to the Translation Controversy* by design. The title presumes a biblical approach to resolving the current translation controversy. However, foundational to a biblical approach to the issue is the presumption that both sides are willing to submit to the authority of the Scriptures as the only and final solution to the debate. Jesus Christ, who is the Head of His Church, must be allowed to determine the final outcome through His Word. This is the only viable option that will honor and please Him by bringing a biblical resolution to the issue.

In the first two chapters of this work we sought to explain the rise of the King James Only Movement out of man's natural resistance to change. In chapters three and four we sought to demonstrate how King James Only advocates justify clinging to their beloved translation. In the fifth chapter we moved to the crux of the matter which is their reluctance to bow to the authority of the Scriptures which results in creating a dual authority.

Until leaders on both sides of the issue are willing to humble themselves and bow to the sole and supreme authority of the Scriptures and allow the Head of the Church to dictate His will through His Word, egotistical men will continue to fragment His Church and seriously hinder its effectiveness and its witness to the perishing souls of men.

The concluding chapter of this work is titled "So What" for a specific reason. The ultimate "so what" about the translation debate is "*so what does the Bible say about the issue?*" Among genuine Christians, this is always the ultimate question. The highest court of appeal is always the Christian Scriptures. The inspired and inerrant living Word of the

living God is the sole and supreme authority of Christ's Church. Jesus was truth personified and His Word is His truth codified for His Church. He exercises His headship over His Church today primarily through His truth revealed in His Word.

Another reason for titling this final chapter "So What" has to do with the nature of Christian truth. Christian truth, which is Christ's truth, because it is living truth, always demands a living response or responses on the part of Christ's followers. Thus, the question must be asked "so what will be the responses dictated by the truths revealed in the preceding chapters?" There are a number of responses which could be demanded by Christian truth, however, there are two fundamental responses that are always demanded by any Christian truth.

First, living truth demands validation from the living Word. Any supposedly Christian truth, including those made up by King James Only advocates, that cannot be clearly validated from the Christian Scriptures is not Christian truth and must be rejected by His Church. Second, God never imparts His truth to His children simply to be stored away in the human brain. Living truth always demands a living response on the part of God's children. Christian precepts do govern Christian practice. Christian doctrine is given to regulate Christian deeds. Christian belief serves as the guide for Christian behavior. Christian truth is to be ingested by the head, digested by the heart, and practiced by the hands.

A belief of the head that does not affect the behavior of the hands is a belief that has never made the long trip from the head to the heart, since it is the heart which controls the will of man which deeds of his hands. Jesus clearly implied that the heart controls the mouth when He declared that it is from the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks (Mt. 12:34). The wiseman implied that the heart controls man when he wrote, "*as a man thinks in his heart so is he*" (Prov. 23:7). This same truth is also implied when he admonished, "*keep our hearts with all diligence for out of it are the issues of life*" (Prov. 4:23). The Psalmist recognized this same truth when he wrote, "*The fool has said in his heart, there is*

no God” (Ps. 14:1). It is the heart of man that controls his will which in turn controls his hands.

Intellectual assent to a set of facts does not constitute genuine Christian belief in those facts. Those facts must be transferred from the head to the heart before they will ever be acted upon by the hands. The heroes of the faith in Hebrews eleven all acted on what they believed. They were not hearers of the Word only. They did not look into the mirror of God’s Word and walk away and forget what they had seen. They acted upon it and lived out in their daily lives the truth they had received.

These two demands of Christian truth (validation and submission) have serious ramifications in resolving the translation debate. First, both sides must bring every argument for their position and every practice of their advocates before the throne of Jesus and have them validated from His Word which is Heaven’s legal code. Every practice and every precept must be validated by the clear teachings of the Scriptures, otherwise, they are to be rejected as being of man and not of God.

The spiritual future of an individual or a group can be accurately predicted by their attitude toward these two foundational truths. The moment that either rejects the authority of Jesus as revealed in His word, at that historic moment, they have created a dual authority for their individual life or for their group. That is the first step toward becoming a cult. It may take a few generations, but once the sole authority of Jesus as revealed in His Word has been replaced with a shared authority (the authority of an individual or a group and Jesus), the door to all types of human inventions, heresies, and practices has been swung wide open. Dual authority is the mother of all cults.

Any area of life or practice that is not surrendered to the complete lordship of Jesus Christ is an area ruled by a dual authority. Jesus has to share His authority in that area and that is an extremely dangerous move. Dual authority in one area cannot be limited to that one area. It will spread to other areas of the individual’s life or to the life of the group, be it a local church, a district, a denomination, or an institution. Rebellion against the

authority of Jesus cannot be compartmentalized, like the roots of a deadly cancer, it will inevitably spread and contaminate.

The ball is now in the court of both parties to bring their beliefs and practices in regards to the translation debate before the court of divine rule. Jesus Christ is still the Head of His Church and He does not share that Headship with any individual or group.

Those who use modern translations need to bring their translations before the Supreme Court of the Universe and allow all them to be scrutinized and measured in light of His revealed will in His Word. They need to ask some of the following questions.

1. Do these translations deny any of the fundamental doctrines of the faith?
2. In their attempt to communicate to the common man by lowering the language to the level of the common man, have they cheapened the Word of God to the point that it loses respect and authority?
3. What translational philosophy do they use? Are we reading a legitimate translation or are we reading the interpretation of a man or a group of men?
4. Were the translators theologically sound, or is there an obvious theological bias reflected by the translators?
5. Would I want this to be the only translation that my child ever heard or used? If I have second thoughts about this critical issue, then I must reject the translation.
6. Am I willing to admit that my King James Only brethren do provide a needed challenge to modern translations in that not all of them are biblically sound?
7. Is my attitude toward my King James Only brethren biblical?
8. Are we not in violation of the spirit of the Word and the historical practice of the Church when we, who do not espouse the King James Only position, still use and impose a translation upon our people that we know contains over six hundred archaic words which they will not understand? Are we not guilty of bowing to peer pressure and the intimidation of our friends who are King James Only advocates, rather than bowing to the spiritual needs of our people? Are we not guilty of knowingly

withholding the Word of God from those under our influence? Are our loyalties to our Lord and His flock, or are they to our peers?

There are a number of assumptions, beliefs, and practices of the King James Only Movement which must also be brought before the divine throne of the Son of God and analyzed according to His will as revealed in His Word, which we will subsequently refer to as Heaven's legal code. Every belief and practice of both sides must be validated on the basis of Heaven's legal code if they are to be binding upon the Church of Jesus Christ.

Human assumptions will not hold up in the divine court of the Son of God. This court only recognizes as legal and binding upon Christ's Church that which can be validated by Heaven's legal code as expressed in the inspired and authoritative Word of the Judge, the Word of God.

1. The first and fundamental question which King James Only advocates must answer is; what is the source of their assumption for *the exclusive and perpetual use of the King James translation?*

The entire King James Only Movement rests upon this one assumption and unless it can be validated from Heaven's legal code, the entire movement collapses. The Bible does not speak to the translation issue? Where in the Word of God do they find a single verse or verses that limit Christ's Church to the use of one particular translation or text?

The doctrine of the complete sufficiency of the Scriptures is the doctrine that the Scriptures are completely sufficient to guide the church and the individual in all matters of faith and practice, including the choice of translations. The complete sufficiency of the Scriptures rests upon the omniscience of God. Total sufficiency means that our omniscient God had the wisdom to lead the authors of the Scriptures to give divine counsel that is completely adequate to guide His Church in all matters of faith and practice.

God said all that needed to be said on any matter on which He has spoken in His

Word. He did not forget or omit any guides or counsel that should have been given on any subject. God does not need man's help to supplement His counsel on any issue on which He speaks or does not speak. On the issues on which He is silent, such as the text/translation issue, God does not need finite man to make up any rules to help Him, which is what the Pharisees tried to do to promote their view of holiness.

God's silence on a subject or an issue is not accidental. He did not overlook or forget to speak to any issue. His silence is a choice made by His infinite wisdom. Some choices He left to His people as individual priests guided by the Holy Spirit and the truth principles set forth in His Word. God does not need any individual or body to make up rules to help Him guide His people on the translation issue on which He chose not to speak. Any attempt to do so constitutes an attack upon His omniscience.

If the King James Only advocates would simply admit that they have no biblical authority which demands the continual and exclusive use of the King James Bible the whole debate would be immediately resolved.

2. Where does the Bible grant them the authority to teach their second assumption that *longevity equals divine approval*?

King James Only advocates are thoroughly convinced that the extended use of the King James translation and its underlying texts for four hundred years dictate God's divine approval of them and His rejection of all other texts and translations. The movement accepts this as a truism without challenge although they cannot point to one verse in the Word of God that validates this assumption.

3. Where in their appeal to Heaven's legal code do they cite one legal code (biblical passage) that teaches the *exclusive providential preservation* of the King James translation and its underlying texts?

This is the third step in their circular reasoning. Their first assumption provides the basis for their second assumption, and the second provides the basis for their third assumption. Having assumed that the King James translation is the translation of

God's choice, and based upon this they assume that the longevity of both the Textus Receptus and the King James translation is proof of God's divine approval, they then assume the exclusive providential preservation of the message of the autographs through this divinely approved text and translation.

Some go so far as to assume that the Textus Receptus is an exact replica of the autographs and that the King James translation is an inspired translation making it to be the only translation which preserves the message of the autographs. Neither of these assumptions can be validated from Heaven's legal code and therefore will not hold up in the courts of Heaven.

4. What passage from the legal code of the divine court of the Son of God can they cite that validates their fourth assumption of the *superiority of the King James translation and its underlying texts to all other texts and translations?*

The fourth assumption of their circular reasoning naturally flows out of their third assumption which is further evidence of their circular reasoning. If the texts underlying the King James translation and the translation itself are exclusively and providentially preserved by God to the point that they alone contain the message of the autographs, this makes them superior to all other texts and translations.

This assumption provides the basis for their constant attacks upon all other texts and translations as being corrupt in the places where they differ from the Textus Receptus or the King James translation. Therefore, they do not need to prove their corruption by means of textual criticism, they do it by means of their unscriptural assumptions concerning the King James translation and its underlying texts.

5. What passage from Heaven's legal code can they cite that validates their assumption that *if a reading appears in the Textus Receptus which does not appear in the Modern Critical Text, it was in the autographs?*

King James Only advocates automatically assume that a variant reading found in the Textus Receptus but not in other texts was also in the autographs. It seems to have

never occurred to them that there are only two ways they could rationally make this assumption. First, the Bible could state that anything found in the Textus Receptus or the King James translation was in the autographs, which it obviously does not. Second, they could point to the autographs to prove their assumption, but they do not have them, nor have they ever seen them. Yet, they are confident that anything found in the Textus Receptus and the King James translation which is omitted in a modern translation or a modern critical text was in the originals. They then accuse modern critics and translators who reject a variant reading of tampering with the Word of God, although in every instance there is a genuine textual problem. They seem to never consider that those who included these questionable readings could have been adding to the Word of God which would also constitute tampering with the Word.

6. What passage can our King James Only brethren cite that validates them fighting for the holy Bible in an unholy manner by their *unethical practices of malicious slander and unbiblical doctrines*?

They need to validate their use and promotion of Gail Riplinger's *New Age Versions* which is laced with distortions and deception. From beginning to its ending, the book constitutes repeated violations of and rebellion against the Ninth Commandment which is also rebellion against Christ and His Word. Their veneration and promotion of this woman who, not only is guilty of gross distortion and deception in her writings, but has also been married three times and married her third husband two months after divorcing her second husband constitute the willful violation of Heaven's legal code which is binding upon all Christians.

7. The ball is now in their court to validate from Heaven's legal code their tactic of *attacking the person who opposes them instead of attacking his position*.

King James Only advocates are notorious for their vicious attacks upon their opposition. King James Only writers like William Grady, Peter Ruckman, Gail Riplinger, are prime illustrations of this unbiblical tactic of maliciously attacking the

messenger instead of his message.

William Grady's book, *Final Authority*, is without a doubt one of the most vicious and mean-spirited books ever published under the guise of being a Christian publication. His entire defense of the King James Bible is based upon his repeated slanderous affirmations that all modern translators and publishers are devious evil men driven by monetary greed whose objectives are to destroy the faith and supplant the authority of the King James Bible. He consistently presents all modern translations as tools of Satan translated from corrupt texts which subtly deny the great truths of the faith.

Here is what he wrote about the New King James Version, "The truth of the matter is that the New King James Version represents Satan's ultimate deception to oppose God's remnant in the closing days of the New Testament age. Having enlisted the lukewarm materialist with his NIV, the devil sets a trap for the diligent soul-winner with the NKJV."¹

On the very first page of his book he calls modern translations "bogus Bibles." In the same sentence he says that the demand for these bogus Bibles stems from "professing Christians." On the first page of his introduction he refers to those who do not have his conviction of "King James exclusivity" as a "self-styled Christian scholar" and "end-day apostates." On the second page of his introduction he recognizes that his position on the exclusive use of the King James Bible does not harmonize with the "historic fundamentalist position" which he says was erected by "non-soul-winning theologians." He then attacks one of the great stalwarts of the faith, J. Gresham Machen by name only because he was not a King James Only advocate.²

So far there has been a real reluctance on the part of the conservative Church to speak

¹ Grady, *Final Authority*, 303-304.

² *Ibid.*, 1, vii, viii.

out on the dangerous doctrinal drift to dual authority. For whatever reasons, few have sounded the alarm about their dangerous drift toward the same doctrine which perverted the early Church from orthodoxy to Catholicism.

If a group as large as the King James Only movement had come on the scene preaching that the English Standard Version is an inspired translation making it the only translation which accurately preserves the message of the autographs, and the only Bible by which a person can be saved, the conservative Church would have immediately risen up in arms. They would have had little problem with labeling those teaching these unbiblical doctrines as heretics. But, somehow, we are strangely silent about those who teach these same heretical doctrines and apply them to the beloved King James Version.

At the core of these problems is a dangerous disrespect for the authority and sufficiency of the very Bible King James Only advocates seek to defend. They refuse to abide by the doctrinal and ethical guides taught in the very Bible they claim to be defending. Something about that just does not add up.

Like cults usually do, they have decided that they are the godly remnant of the last days. Many King James Only advocates are thoroughly convinced that they have a divine mandate from God to save the Church by saving it from all modern critical texts and translations. They view as theologically suspect anyone who does not espouse their radical views on the exclusive and perpetual use of the Textus Receptus and the King James translation. To them, the translation one uses is a test of orthodoxy and of fellowship.

The fact that they cannot point to one single verse in the King James Bible that mentions the Textus Receptus or the King James Version as being the text and translation of God's choice apparently makes absolutely no difference to them. They have the support of another authority, their man-made King James Only doctrines which grow out of their unbiblical assumptions.

The Church has a moral and a biblical mandate to warn them of what they are doing and where they are headed. They are involved in a movement which has no biblical

foundations that is doing great harm to Christ's Church by further fragmenting an already fragmented body. Many of their primary arguments are based upon irrational contradictory thought resulting from circular reasoning.

1. It is completely irrational to claim that a certain text or translation replicates a document which they have never seen.
2. It is irrational and impossible to make saints out of all the men associated with the production of the King James translation and its underlying texts. God has historically used flawed men to accomplish his work and the lives of these men clearly demonstrate that they too were flawed and fallen men.
3. It is irrational to assert that it is a sin to make a modern translation today and it was not a sin to make a modern translation in 1611.
4. It is irrational to assume that godly scholarship passed off the scene when the King James translators died.
5. It is irrational to reject the fact that knowledge is cumulative giving a distinct advantage to modern translators who now possess four hundred years of additional cumulative knowledge which the King James translators did not have.
6. It is irrational to reject the fact that modern computer technology places at the fingertips of modern translators an enormous amount of information which was not available to the translators of the King James. The truth is that conservative translators today can make a better translation than the very best of scholars could produce four hundred years ago. Cumulative knowledge and modern technology make this possible.
7. It is completely irrational to claim that fallen fallible man, apart from the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, could ever produce a translation without error.
8. It is irrational not to admit that the Bible limits inspiration to the authors of the autographs which has been the historic position of the Reformation church.
9. It is completely irrational to demand that a modern translation be measured by how closely it parallels the King James translation. This would defeat the purpose in

making a modern translation. The validity of a translation is measured by how accurately it translates the message of the autographs and not by how closely it parallels the King James translation.

10. It is very irrational to claim that I John 5:8 was in the autographs when the man who compiled the Textus Receptus, rejected it as being spurious.
11. It is even more irrational to claim that God guided Erasmus to correct the few remaining errors in the Byzantine text and create an exact replica of a document which he had never seen. This could only be achieved by the same guidance of the Holy Spirit that the authors of the autographs possessed. This is even more irrational in light of the fact that it was revised by Erasmus four times and a total of eighteen times.
12. It is irrational to claim that a just God provided the English-speaking world a perfect translation while passing over the rest of the world.
13. It is irrational and a violation of the sole and supreme authority of the Scriptures to seek to impose on the Church of Jesus Christ a practice or a doctrine not found in the Scriptures.
14. It is irrational to refuse to recognize that the English language is changing rapidly and that the younger generation does not speak or understand an archaic language spoken four hundred years ago.
15. It is irrational to claim that the preserved Word of God suddenly appeared when the Textus Receptus was composed which leaves the Church without the Word of God until then. Where was the Word of God prior to the composition of the Textus Receptus?
16. It is irrational to claim that the text is the problem and then not make a modern translation based upon the Textus Receptus. The fact that they do not stands as striking proof that the text is not the real issue.
17. Technically, it is irrational to claim that the King James Version is a translation when in reality it is a ninety percent revision of an existing translation which traces its roots

back to the Tyndale translation.

18. It is irrational to glorify the men associated with the King James translation and give so little praise to William Tyndale, the man who translated about ninety percent of the King James translation.
19. It is irrational to make Dean Burgon the patron saint of the King James Only Movement when he would not be allowed to join the movement if he were alive today because he recognized errors in the Textus Receptus and in the King James translation. He would have denounced the unbiblical King James Only doctrines which have been made up over the last three decades.
20. It is irrational to demand the exclusive use of the King James translation when its translators quoted from the Geneva Bible in their introduction to the 1611 edition.
21. It is irrational to maliciously slander the motives of all modern translators, critics, and publishers when only God can know the motives of all modern translators, critics, and publishers.
22. It is irrational to take a passage of Scripture out of its context and distort it to make it say what it was never intended to say especially when they cannot find two historic conservative commentaries which validate their interpretation.

As much as the body of Christ needs to be reconciled and function in harmony, it does not dare to seek reconciliation at the cost of doctrinal and ethical purity. For the Church of Jesus Christ to seek reconciliation without facing and admitting to these contradictory and unbiblical doctrines, assumptions, and practices would be spiritual suicide. Truth and error are incompatible partners. Peace at the cost of doctrinal purity and ethical practices is a price far too high to pay.

Error on the right is just as dangerous as error on the left. All error will ultimately hurt regardless of which side perpetuates it. God views sinful practices by the right with the same disdain He views the sinful practices of the left. The Church of Jesus Christ is equally as responsible for renouncing error on the right as it is for renouncing error on the

left.

Thousands of good conservative pastors have been intimidated into silence on this issue. Secretly, they understand that their people would more readily understand a modern translation, but they have been intimidated into by their King James Only acquaintances. Yet, they very well may be committing the greater sin by withholding from their people a translation which they will more readily read and understand.

Many are intimidated into silence by their awareness that if they speak out they will be ostracized by their King James Only peers. They will lose revivals, speaking engagements, and political promotions within their ranks. Their loyalty to their career, their popularity, their political standing within the movement, and their finances takes precedence over their loyalty to Jesus and His truth.

They cowardly and silently stand idly by while godly men are spiritually lynched because they are bold enough to speak out on this divisive and volatile issue. They not only cowardly stand by in silence and watch their brother being lynched, but they then turn their backs upon him out of fear because they have seen what happens to those who do not march goose step with the movement.

They leave him lying on the battlefield severely and maliciously wounded. They walk away hand-in-hand with those who wounded him and never look back. They never call to see how their wounded brother is weathering the storm. They never invite him to preach for them as they had before he was lynched. He has suddenly become a non-person to them, but not to Jesus.

Their cowardly silence only strengthens and emboldens King James Only advocates. Even though they do not espouse the King James Only position of their peers, they become a part of the machinery that propagates these unbiblical divisive doctrines which are fragmenting the body of Christ. Once again, silence is not always golden, sometimes it is yellow. The old saying is true which says that all that is necessary for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing.

However, in speaking out on the issue, one must speak the truth in love. He must disagree in love and with the mind and spirit of Christ. He must never personally attack those who do not espouse his position and who attack him personally. It is never right to do wrong in order to do right. Yet, truth is never neutral. It always demands a response. Truth measures men and truth divides men. Yet, truth is also the great unifier of the Church of Jesus Christ.

A believer has every right to make the King James Bible the translation of his choice, but he does not have the right to seek to impose his personal preference upon the body of Christ. Since the Bible is silent on the issue, he certainly does not have the right to create doctrines not taught in the Bible to seek to force the entire body of Christ to accept his preference. Neither does he have the right to personally attack those who do not espouse his preference.

He must always be guided by truth and love. He also has the obligation to warn that not all modern translations are good translations. He has the right to give legitimate reasons why he rejects certain modern translations, but, once again, he must be guided by truth and love. He dare not take two or three bad modern translations and unfairly present them as the norm and thereby malign all modern translations. That type dishonesty is a tactic of Satan, not of a Christian.

Those who accept and use modern translations need to recognize that our King James Only brethren do bring something to the table that we need. Balance is the key to orthodoxy. The tendency of the Church is extremes. When the pendulum swings too far to the right or the left, it tends to over-correct itself by over-reacting and swinging too far in the opposite direction.

Our King James brethren may very well provide us with a balance which the Church desperately needs. They provide us with a needed warning about the dangers of bad translations. Because a translation is new does not necessarily mean that it is good. We need to be very careful about adopting or recommending a translation before the Church

has had ample time to process it through the mind of thousands of godly conservative scholars.

Our sovereign God has watched over His Church for two thousand years and He will continue to do. Jesus told Peter that He would build His Church and that the gates of Hell would not overcome or conquer it. His Church has victoriously fought this same battle on at least two or three occasions during her two thousand year history. The Church has changed from a long-standing traditional translation to a new translation and has maintained her orthodoxy. She has abandoned traditional translations when they became outdated and adopted a more modern translation and has survived by the providential hand of her sovereign Lord who is her Head.

There was a great uproar in A.D. 406 when the Vulgate replaced the traditional Septuagint which had been in use for four hundred years. There was another loud outcry when the Greek text replaced the traditional Vulgate in A.D. 1506 which had been in use for eleven hundred years. But, once again, her Head took that Greek text and the English and German translations made from it, and purged His Church and created the Reformation Church, and, once again, she continued her victorious march in building the Kingdom of God.

Although they were not as strong, nevertheless there were voices of opposition when the modern translation, the King James translation, was published in 1611. Human nature never changes; we are naturally resistant to change, especially when it comes to changing from a long-standing translation.

The conservative or fundamental church is in the process of making that same translational transition again. And, just like on each previous transition, she faces fierce opposition from those who insist on clinging to their “tried and proven” translation which they have become deeply and emotionally attached to. And, once again, Jesus will bring His Church triumphantly through to victory. Truth may be temporarily restrained, but it cannot be killed. Christian truth and Christ’s Church will ultimately triumph!

Appendix A

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS PRECEDING THE KING JAMES TRANSLATION

The Tyndale Translation (NT -1526)

William Tyndale was born during the Renaissance and graduated from Oxford in 1515 which was just two years before Luther nailed his Ninety-Five Thesis on the church door at Whittenburg and almost one hundred years before the publication of the King James translation. It was the Renaissance which brought a return to the study of the original languages of the Scriptures. Up until then the Western Church had utilized the Latin language as the language of the church while the Eastern Church used the Greek. The Latin Vulgate had been the Bible of the Western Church since Jerome completed his translation in 405. However, at this time in England, only the socially elite could read and speak Latin. This left the common man to the mercies of an aristocratic clergy totally dependent upon them for spiritual truth and guidance. Ultimately, this lack of access to the Word of God kept them in bondage to what was often an oppressive clergy.

While a student at Oxford, Tyndale had become a student of the Hebrew and the Greek and had committed his life to translating the Bible from the original languages into English although Oxford was not especially friendly to the Reformation ideas of Luther. Oxford also accepted the long standing premise that Latin was the language of the cultured and of academia and therefore was the language of religion. Not only was Latin the language of religion, the Bible was considered as the book of the church and the clergy, not laymen. Yet, in spite of all this opposition, it was Tyndale who, according to John Fox, in his *Fox's Book of Martyrs*, reported that he made the now famous statement "If God spare my life, ere many years, I will cause a boy that driveth the plough to know more of the Scripture than thou doest."

Because of the opposition of Rome to putting the Bible in the hands of the laity, Tyndale fled

England to Germany, a state without a strong central government and therefore one in which Rome did not exert as much authority as in England. But even here, after having completed his translation from the Greek into English, the printer's shop at Cologne that had committed to print his work was found out and Tyndale and his assistant barely managed to rescue and salvage his translation and some printed pages. From here they moved up the Rhine to the city of Worms. There they avoided detection and were able to finish the first publication of the New Testament translated directly from the Greek into the English in February of 1526.

Copies of this first complete New Testament printed in English began to appear in England within about a month after publication. There are two copies of this Worms edition extant. One is in the Baptist College at Bristol and the other is in the library of St. Paul's Cathedral in London.¹

Tyndale's translation was completed just three years after Luther had completed his translation from the Greek into the German language. Both men used the 1516 Greek text of Erasmus. Fifteen thousand copies, in six editions, were smuggled into England over the next five years because his translation had been banned by the Roman Church which sought to confiscate as many copies as possible. Over the next ten years Tyndale labored to translate the Old Testament and to revise and correct his first edition of the New Testament. He finished translating the Pentateuch in Marburg in 1530 and the book of Jonah in Antwerp in 1531.

His final version of the New Testament appeared in 1535 shortly before he was arrested in May and imprisoned for over a year in a castle near Brussels. He was subsequently tried by the authorities and condemned to death with the approval of king Henry VIII. On October 6, 1536, William Tyndale was strangled to death at Vilvorde and burned at the stake. His final words were a loud cry to God, "Lord, open the King of England's eyes."

God heard and honored Tyndale's dying prayer. Within one year of his death, two of Tyndale's associates had received permission from the king to publish their English translations,

¹. F. F. Bruce, *The English Bible* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1970), 31.

both of which were revisions of Tyndale's New Testament and relied heavily upon those portions of the Old Testament which he had completed before his death. Within about seventy years the king of England, King James I, would commission the translation of the King James translation which would be the most influential English translation in the history of the English speaking people. It would be a revision of the Bishop's Bible which was a revision of revisions all tracing their roots back to Tyndale's translation.

Tyndale did not live to complete his translation of the Hebrew Old Testament. By the time of his death, he had translated the Pentateuch, Jonah, and some of the historical books. However, God, in His providence, arranged that while in prison one of Tyndale's associates, Miles Coverdale, would bring to completion the entire Old Testament. Coverdale's translation was based largely on Tyndale's translation of the New Testament and parts of the Old Testament. It is commonly designated as the Coverdale Translation, but in reality it is the completion of Tyndale's work.

Tyndale's translation of the Bible into English was a critical advance in the history of the English Bible. It was an excellent translation and became the standard by which subsequent English translations were measured. Geisler and Nix summarized Tyndale's work as follows,

Tyndale's version of the New Testament provided the basis for all successive revisions between his day and ours. The Authorized Version is practically a fifth revision of Tyndale's revision; and where it departs from his, the revision committee of 1881, 1885, and the 1901 return to it with regularity.²

Interestingly, the Tyndale Bible does not carry his name. Due to the danger of death at the hands of Rome, it was published simply as a "New Testament" without any mention of the printer who would also be put in jeopardy. It would provide the foundation for shaping all later English translations. He created words such as "scapegoat" and "atonement" to convey doctrinal thought. From the Old Testament he constructed the word "Jehovah" from the Hebrew construction known as the "tetragrammanon."

². Giesler, and Nix, *General Introduction to NT*, 407.

William Tyndale was a godly brilliant man who was martyred as a reformer and a translator. His greatest crime was that of a deep commitment to get the Word of God into the language of the common man which posed a serious threat to the stranglehold of the religious hierarchy over the laity.

This gifted man was a brilliant godly man whose influence and impact upon the work and the Word of God in the English-speaking world is grossly unappreciated by most modern Christians. Wycliffe was the first to give the English people a translation in their native tongue in 1384, but it was translated from the Latin of the Vulgate. It would be the scholarly William Tyndale who worked alone, unlike the King James translators who worked in teams, who produced a translation that would be the foundation for almost all subsequent English translations for the next two centuries. He would sacrifice his very life to get a translation made directly from the original languages into the hands of the English people.

Most folk do not know that their beloved King James Bible is largely the Tyndale Bible. Nicolson wrote, “Tyndale enthusiasts have calculated that 94 per cent of the New Testament in the King James Bible is exactly as Tyndale left it.”³ Concerning Tyndale’s overall impact upon the entire King James Bible, the great English Bible scholar, Neil Lightfoot, wrote, “How appropriate it is that more than 80 percent of Tyndale’s translation is preserved today in the King James Version. William Tyndale is truly the father of the English Bible.”⁴

This overwhelming influence of Tyndale upon the King James translators has led Nicolson to make the following observation,

Therefore, the argument goes, the Jacobean Translators [King James translators] were in some ways little better than plagiarists, promoting as their own work a translation that belonged essentially to another man, a Protestant martyr, who died a horrible death, attacked repeatedly and mercilessly by Thomas More, and who nevertheless reshaped the English language, who framed the phrases we all know: “Love suffereth long and is courteous, Love envieth not”; “When I was a child, I spake as a child, I imagined as a child”; “eat, drink and be merry”; “salt of the earth”; the “powers that be”; “as bald as a coot”; “Our Father

³. Nicolson, *God's Secretaries*, 222.

⁴. Neil R. Lightfoot, *How We Got The Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1963), 184,185.

which art in Heaven”, and so on.⁵

Coverdale Translation (1535)

Miles Coverdale (1488-1569) was an assistant to Tyndale who published the first complete Bible in the English language which was translated from the original languages. Unlike Tyndale, Coverdale was not proficient in Hebrew and Greek. He compared several Latin versions including Erasmus’ Latin version, the Latin Vulgate, Pagnini’s Latin Version of 1528, Luther’s German translation, and the Zurich Bible. However, Coverdale relied primarily upon Tyndale’s work much of which had not been published at his death. He revised Tyndale’s work in light of German versions he had available. He introduced chapter summaries and separated the Apocrypha from the Old Testament books, which is a practice followed by subsequent Protestant English translators.

The first edition of the Coverdale Bible was printed in 1535. It was reprinted twice in 1537, once in 1550, and once again in 1559. Interestingly, Henry VIII, because he had broken with Rome and needed an English translation, gave his approval to the Coverdale Bible in 1537. The irony of this is the fact that Coverdale’s Bible was, in essence, the work of Tyndale, the man he had condemned earlier. However, the Coverdale Bible soon fell from royal favor, probably because it was favored by Anne Bolyn, Henry VIII’s second wife who also fell into disfavor and was executed in 1536.

The Thomas Matthews Version; the Great Bible (1537)

Thomas Matthews was actually the pen name of John Rogers (1500-1555) who had also been an associate of Tyndale. Rogers was the first martyr under the persecution of bloody Mary, who was the devout Catholic daughter of Henry VIII who sought to force England back into the Catholic fold.

Rogers combined the Tyndale and Coverdale Old Testament with the 1535 Tyndale revision of the New Testament which, up until this point, had not been published. He

⁵. Nicolson, *God's Secretaries*.

also added copious notes with references to his edition which were illegal without specific approval of the king. His revisions in the text were based primarily upon the French versions of Lefevre (1534) and Olivetan (1535).

This revision of the Matthews Bible, which became known as the Great Bible, received King Henry VIII's approval and became the first English Bible authorized for public use. It was revised in 1538 and printed for distribution and use throughout the English Church. Richard Traverter, a layman who very proficient in Greek, revised it again in 1539 and improved it, especially in rendering the Greek article more accurately.

Technically, the Great Bible was not a genuine translation. In reality, it was a revision of Roger's revision of the Tyndale Bible. It was revised under the leadership of Miles Coverdale and with the approval of Thomas Cranmer and Cromwell. Cranmer, who became the first archbishop of Canterbury in 1532 after Henry VIII's break with Rome, wrote the preface to the second edition (published in 1540) which explains why it was sometimes referred to as "Cranmer's Bible."

It was called the Great Bible because of its large size and cost. It was also called the "Chained Bible" because it was chained to its stand in many churches. One new feature of the Great Bible was that the Apocryphal books were separated from the rest of the Old Testament and given the title of "Hagiographa" which means "holy writings."

At the instigation of Henry VIII, in 1543 the English Parliament passed a law forbidding the use of any English translation other than the Great Bible for public use making it a crime for any unlicensed person to read or explain the Scriptures in public. In 1546 Henry issued an edict making the use of any Coverdale or Tyndale Bible illegal. Many copies of the Tyndale and Coverdale Bibles were burned in London. The Great Bible went through several editions. The second edition was published in 1540 and was the first edition to contain Cranmer's preface which also stated that "This Bible is appointed for the use of the churches." Five other editions followed in 1540-41. It became the dominant Bible of the English Church.

Henry VIII died in 1547 and was succeeded by his son Edward VI who reigned from 1547-1553. Edward was only nine when he came to the throne and was therefore only a figurehead. However, it was during these years that Protestants made great gains in England and the English Bible gained a broader exposure and acceptance. When Edward, ascended the throne in 1547, the Great Bible was still the appointed Bible to be read in the English churches. It was reprinted again in 1549 and in 1553.

Edward died in 1553 and his half sister Mary (1553-1558), the daughter of Henry and Catherine of Aragon, succeeded him. She was a devout Catholic and took extreme measures to force England back into Catholicism. Over 275 Protestant clergy were martyred during her short five year tenure. Included in this number were John Rogers and Thomas Cranmer, both of whom were Bible translators. Coverdale was arrested and released and fled to Geneva where over 800 other English Protestants clergymen had fled. Out of this persecution and slaughter of Protestants she gained the title “Bloody Mary.”

The prestige of this Bible withstood the onslaught of Bloody Mary and remained the dominant Bible of the English world until the publication of the Geneva Bible and the King James Bible. Even then it took the King James several years to replace the Great Bible and the Geneva Bible as the most widely accepted Bibles of the English world.

However, this was the age of the Renaissance which took great pride in going back to the original sources. Neither the Coverdale nor the Matthews (which became the Great Bible) were based upon the original languages. They were basically revisions of Tyndale’s work. In the sections where Tyndale had not translated, they relied upon other translations. Because of this, the Renaissance spirit of the age would demand a translation which relied more heavily upon the Hebrew and Greek texts. This spirit demanded such a translation which led to the King James translation, although it too drew heavily upon Tyndale’s work.

The Geneva Bible (1550)

The Geneva Bible was translated in Geneva due to the persecution of Mary Tudor in England. When John Rogers and Thomas Cranmer were martyred, other translators fled and many landed in Geneva where John Calvin had established a Calvinistic theocracy.

Alister McGrath wrote this of its origin,

The Geneva Bible is generally agreed to have mainly been the work of William Whittingham (c. 1524-79), who was assisted by Anthony Gilby and Thomas Sampson. It is also thought that Miles Coverdale, John Knox, and Laurence Tomson were involved, although the extent and nature of their contribution is far from clear.⁶

Their translation was published in 1550 and quickly became popular among the Puritans of England due to its strong Calvinistic notes which would be expected of a translation made under Calvin's influence. Of the relationship between Whittingham, who was very influential in the translation, and Calvin, Alister McGrath wrote, "Whittingham's relationship with Calvin went considerably beyond that of the appreciative theological apprentice; he appears to have married Calvin's sister (or perhaps sister-in-law).⁷

The Geneva Bible was a pace setter in many ways. It introduced italicized words into the text where words not found in the Greek text were added for clarification. Chapters were divided into verses. The latest textual evidence was utilized only after careful review and collaboration. It went through 140 editions and maintained its popularity with English Protestants over the Bishop's Bible. Its influence is evident in the writings of Shakespeare. Even the preface of the King James contains quotes from the Geneva Bible. Of this Nicolson wrote, "Miles Smith, in the Preface to the new translation [King

⁶ McGrath, *In the Beginning*, 114.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 115.

James], quotes from the very Geneva Bible which it was, in part, intended to replace.”⁸ It became the Puritan Bible and remained so for many years after the publication of the King James in 1611.

The notes of the Geneva Bible rejected the popular political theory of that day called the Divine Rights of the King which was the political theory that the king ruled by divine right. His rule was based upon divine authority. God had made him king and his subjects had no voice in the matter.

Calvinists advocated the political theory called Popular Sovereignty which was the concept that all power resided with the people and the king ruled by their permission. And, if he was not a godly worthy king, the people had the right to remove him and replace him. Sovereignty resided with the people and not with the king.

It was the popularity of the Geneva Bible with its strong Calvinistic notes that would help to influence King James I to authorize a replacement translation which be known by his name. The popularity of the Geneva Bible is seen in the fact that this was the Bible the Puritans had when they landed at Plymouth Rock.

The Bishop’s Bible (1568)

The Bishop’s Bible, which was published in 1568, was much like its predecessors in that it was ultimately a revision of previous revisions, all of which traced their roots back to the Tyndale Bible. It was a revision of the Great Bible which was a revision of Roger’s revision of the Tyndale Bible. It was the popularity of the Geneva Bible among the Puritans and the common people and the lingering influence of Catholicism among the Anglican Church which prompted a demand for a new translation. It was called the Bishop’s Bible because it was translated primarily by bishops who were competent Hebrew and Greek scholars whose work made some advances in evaluating the work of recent scholars, and included the fruits of their labors in their translation.

⁸ Nicolson, *God’s Secretaries*, 229.

Having been sponsored by the Anglican Church for public reading, the Bishops Bible had to steer clear of the strong Calvinistic notes of the Geneva Bible. In that sense, it was a ‘safe’ version. It was endorsed by the Convocation of Canterbury in 1571, but it never caught on because of the popularity of the Geneva Bible among the populace. It was the official Bible of the Anglican Church from 1568 until 1611, but the Geneva Bible was still the Bible used in the homes of that day.

Appendix B

THE ALEXANDRIAN TEXT

The Alexandrian textual family is made up of those manuscripts which contain the peculiarities manifested in the writings of Origen, Clement, and others who lived in Alexandria, Egypt. This family includes Papyri 46, 47, 66, 75, B, Aleph, and about 25 other manuscripts ranging from the fourth to the thirteenth century. The Coptic versions also belong to this family. Westcott and Hort viewed this text as being the closest to the autographs which explains why they are so savagely attacked by so many King James Only advocates.

The earliest extant copy of the entire New Testament, the Codex Sinaiticus, or Aleph, is of the Alexandrian textual family. It was compiled between A.D.325-350 and is widely considered to be one of the best and most important witnesses to the original text of the New Testament because of its antiquity and lack of omissions. The Codex Sinaiticus was discovered in St. Catherine's Monastery, which was situated at the foot of Mount Sinai, by Constantine von Tischendorf. The initial find was made in 1844, but the New Testament was not secured until fifteen years later, which means that it was not available to the translators of the King James Version.

It contains over half of the Old Testament (LXX) and the entire New Testament except Mark 16:9-20 and John 7:53-8:11. Contrary to the claims of some, the manuscript was not discarded by monks because they viewed it to be a corrupt text. The fact that Tischendorf rescued portions of the Old Testament from a trash can where monks were using leaves of this manuscript to light their fires speaks volumes about their lack of appreciation of ancient witnesses to the text of the Bible. What is even more revealing is the fact that it contained over half of the Old Testament, almost all of the New Testament, the Apocrypha, the *Epistle of Barnabas*, and a large portion of

The Shepherd of Hermas.

The Codex Vaticanus, or “B” is dated somewhere between A.D. 325-350. It has been in the Vatican library since at least 1475, but how long prior to that time is uncertain.¹ It was not known to textual scholars until after 1475. They were prohibited from studying this text for the next four hundred years. It was not made available to scholars until the middle of the nineteenth century. Therefore it was not available to the translators of the King James Version.

Metzger describes the contents of the Codex Vaticanus as follows, “. . . at the beginning forty-six chapters of Genesis are missing; a section of some thirty Psalms is lost; and the concluding pages (from Heb. ix. 14 onwards, including I and 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, and Revelation) are gone.”² It is also missing Mark 16:9-20, John 7:53-8:11.

This text is regarded as a good type of the Alexandrian text. Westcott and Hort held the B manuscript in very high regard, viewing it as a remarkably pure text. For a hundred years, most textual critics accepted the conclusions of these men almost without question. However, others have questioned their conclusions in that many modern textual critics no longer give the same primacy or weight to these ancient texts as did Westcott and Hort since modern critics no longer give as much weight to the Westcott and Hort theory that the older text is the purer text.

The Codex Alexandrinus (A) is dated around A.D. 450 and is also considered as a good testimony to the autographs due to its well-preserved condition and its antiquity. Many textual critics rank it only behind B and Aleph as being a better text of the autographs. Some have ranked it earlier than the fifth century. In 1078, this codex was presented to the Patriarch of Alexandria, after whom it was named. In 1621, it was taken to Constantinople by Cyril Lucar, who was transferred to patriarchal duties there. Lucar gave it to Sir Thomas Roe, who was the English ambassador to Turkey. Roe was asked to give it to King James I, but he died before the actual presentation was made.

¹ Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, 47.

² Ibid.

It was presented to Charles I in 1627, but too late for use in translating the King James Version. In 1757, George II presented it to the National Library of the British Museum. It contains the entire Old Testament except in several places where it has been mutilated. It contains most of the New Testament except Matt. 1:1-25:6; John 6:50-8:52; and II Cor. 4:13-12:6. The Gospels are early witnesses to the Byzantine text, and the remainder is of the Alexandrian type text which is considered to be a good witness to the New Testament text.

The idea of reconstructing the original text would not have been a new pursuit for the Alexandrian scholars. There was a world famous library in Alexandria, which was known to seek to recover the original texts of its ancient documents. Zenodotus, the Alexandrian librarian, was the most famous and the most sought after librarian of his day. He followed the same type of textual criticism instituted by Aristotle who collected and classified manuscripts as to their date and value.

It was under Zenodotus' scholarly leadership that the scribes of the Alexandrian library sought to secure all the available copies of ancient documents and compare them in order to produce from them a standard text. It was from this standard text that all subsequent copies were to be made. He employed trained philologists, grammarians, and textual critics. It is most likely that the Christian scholars of the Didaskelion (the Christian catechetical school in that same city) would have been influenced by this famous librarian and would have greatly profited from the knowledge and experience of these Alexandrian scholars.

From the late second to the fourth century, the Alexandrian scribes worked to reconstruct a text like the original. They recognized that sound doctrine demanded a sound text, and they began the slow tedious process of comparing existing texts seeking to establish the original text. Origen (185-254) produced the *Hexapla*, which is a work containing several Hebrew and Greek versions of the Old Testament arranged in parallel columns.

It is considered by most textual scholars as the best ancient Greek text available, although this conclusion is obviously questioned by those who prefer the Byzantine Text. The Alexandrian textual family is represented by only a few manuscripts when compared to the thousands of

available Byzantine texts.

Unfortunately, shortly after A.D. 400, Greek ceased to be the international language of the day. The people of the Egyptian Church and the Western Church ceased to know and use Greek. Therefore, the demand for Greek texts of the Alexandrian type ceased. They were no longer produced, since there would have been no demand for them.

The Western Church and the Egyptian Church did not throw their Greek texts away or lay them aside because they were no good, as some say. They simply ceased to use them because they no longer spoke or read Greek. The result of this linguistic change is that there are very few of the Alexandrian type texts available today. There are a number of witnesses, including early papyri witnesses, which are not mentioned.

Concurrent with the Alexandrian text was the Western text. Some have argued that the Western text is older than the Alexandrian and that the Alexandrian is a refined form of the primitive Western text. Others, including Tischendorf (1868), Westcott/Hort (1881), and Metzger (1964), have argued that the Alexandrian is the older and purer text and that the Western text is a corrupted form of the Alexandrian text. One of the reasons that Westcott and Hort gave for the superiority of the Alexandrian Text was the ability to trace its roots further back toward the autographs than other text types.

Appendix C

THE BYZANTINE TEXT

(Called the “Syrian” text by Westcott/Hort; the “Koine” text by Von Soden; the “Ecclesiastical” text by Lake; and the “Majority Text” by some modern King James Only Advocates)

The importance of the Byzantine Text to the King James Only debate lies in the fact that the Greek text from which the King James was translated, the Textus Receptus, was derived from the Byzantine Text. It is also important that we know not only about its origin as a text-type, but that we know who preserved this text-type and passed it down to the modern Church. This is especially important in light of those who seek to put the origin and preservation of this text into the hands of saints with the purest of hands.

The origin of the Byzantine text has been attributed by some to Lucian of Antioch although this is challenged by Textus Receptus advocates who seek to push the origin of the Byzantine Text much further back toward the time of the composition of the autographs. This conclusion of the late origin of the Byzantine Text is based primarily upon Jerome’s (A.D. ca 345-420) introduction to the Gospels in his Latin Vulgate (a translation which he made into Latin, published in A.D. 406).

The Byzantine Text is said to have been the work primarily of one man who created it as a smooth and readable text. For this reason it is often referred to as an edited text or a recension. Those who espouse this position believe that it was probably produced sometime around the time of the Diocletian persecution, which was instigated in 303 and ended by Constantine's Edict of Toleration in 311, which explains why many argue that this text-type is not quoted by any of the church fathers prior to Nicea, which was in A.D. 325.

There are some Textus Receptus advocates who seek to push the date of origin of the Byzantine Text much further back toward the time of the composition of the autographs. Wilbur Pickering, in his work *The Identity of the New Testament Text*, cites witnesses much earlier in time than the date of origin suggested by Westcott and Hort. Here is how D.A. Carson responded to Pickering's argument.

. . . the mature Byzantine text-type appears nowhere before the fourth century. I do not deny that readings found in the Byzantine text-type are found in the ante-Nicene period; but almost all of these readings are also found in other text-types (mostly Western). In any case the early existence of a text-type can be established not merely by appeal to numbers of readings, but only by appeal to numbers of readings in conjunction with discrete patterns of readings. Discrete readings that are Byzantine *and* something else offer, at best, ambiguous evidence . . . The fact remains that all the text-types except the Byzantine antedate Origen. That is historical fact.¹

This text is called the Byzantine Text because it was the text used by the Church of the Byzantine Empire, which stood for a thousand years after the collapse of Rome and the western section of the Empire in 476. By this time the Western Church was speaking Latin while the Eastern Church of the Byzantine Empire continued to speak Greek until its collapse in 1453. This linguistic factor explains why the Church of the East continued to manufacture Greek texts for a thousand years after the Church of the West began using and manufacturing copies of the Latin Vulgate. The following quote will help explain the multiplicity of the Byzantine Texts.

The year 200 represents an important watershed. Alongside the Greek New Testament manuscript tradition, Latin manuscripts came into use at this time throughout the West, Coptic manuscripts in Egypt, and Syriac manuscripts in Syria (i.e. the exclusively Syriac-speaking region around Edessa, with the Roman province at first taking second place). The number of simple church members whose knowledge of Greek was inadequate at best had become so great that translation into the regional languages was an absolute necessity. By A.D. 250 the church in the West was a Latin church.²

The Byzantine Empire came into being as the result of Constantine moving the capital of the Roman Empire from Rome to Constantinople, which is modern Istanbul, Turkey. He did so

¹ Carson, *The King James Version Debate, A Plea for Realism*, 44,75.

² Barbara and Kurt Aland, *Text of the N T*, 68.

because of defensive purposes which proved to be correct since this section of the Empire survived for a thousand years after Rome fell. The church of the Byzantine Empire was a part of the Roman Catholic Church until 1054 when it split into the Roman Catholic Church of the West and the Greek Orthodox Church of the East. Functionally, the church had been divided since the relocation of the capital to Constantinople with the pope in Rome the authority figure in the West and the Bishop in Constantinople, who was subsequently called the patriarch, in charge in the East.

Theologically, the Greek Orthodox Church is very similar to the Roman Catholic Church. There are some doctrinal distinctives, but both essentially teach a works salvation and a strong hierarchal control of the church. Neither of these two branches of Christendom would qualify as orthodox in the post-Reformation sense of the word.

On the all-important issue of salvation by grace through faith alone, both pervert the true Gospel with a mixture of law and grace. Both celebrate the mass. Both give priority to the sacraments. On the critical issue of the authority of the Scriptures, the Greek Orthodox Church differs very little from the Roman Catholic Church. Both hold tradition and the authority of its councils and leaders to be of equal authority with the Holy Scriptures. This constitutes the deadly doctrine of dual authority.

The major difference between the two was and still is on church polity and not theology. The Greek Orthodox Church refuses to recognize the supremacy of Rome and has its own head who is called the patriarch instead of pope as Rome calls their head. Therefore, neither church could be classed as fundamental or evangelical.

This brief history lesson is important because it is from the Greek Orthodox Church that we get the Byzantine Text from which was the basis for the Textus Receptus which was compiled. It is from the Roman Catholic Church that we get the scholar, Erasmus, who compiled the Textus Receptus.

In a 1906 study of the Byzantine texts, Von Soden concluded that there had developed smaller families within the Byzantine textual family. Each of these three families had a set of

distinctives which were peculiar to each other. Based upon his 1929 study, Kirsopp Lake initially denied this, but he did later confirm these distinctions based upon a study he made in 1940. The study was to demonstrate the basic harmony of the Byzantine texts, and they did that. However, their studies also make it clear that of the thousands of Byzantine texts available, no two texts are alike and there are groupings or smaller textual families within this textual family.

Some argue that this numerical advantage proves this to be the text of God's choice. However, just because more copies of one type text have been made than another type text proves nothing about their purity. Neither does numerical majority prove God's approval. As a matter of fact, this argument raises more questions than it solves.

Since when did God begin to determine right based upon a head count? If we took that approach we would be forced to use the Vulgate since there are twice as many extant witnesses to it than to the Byzantine Text. Most people practice infant baptism, but I do not believe that any of our King James Only advocates would want us to take that approach to deciding doctrine.

Here is the rational explanation to text-types and numerical majority. Since there are in existence groupings of texts which have basically the same peculiarities which we call variants, the only logical conclusion is that the texts containing these same peculiar readings came from a common source which contained these peculiarities. This common source we call the mother text. Every time that mother text is copied the peculiar readings of that mother text will be passed on. Then, every time a copy is made of a copy of the mother text those same peculiar readings are passed on again. All subsequent copies will simply pass on the peculiar readings of the mother text from which they were ultimately derived.

Everything ultimately goes back to the purity or impurity of the mother text from which all of these copies were derived. Here is the critical point that the Majority Text advocates refuse to accept. Two thousand copies of the same peculiar readings of the mother text do not constitute two thousand separate witnesses. They only constitute two thousand copies of the single witness of the mother text.

The number of copies of the mother text does not determine the superiority of the mother text,

they only serve as additional witnesses to the variant readings of the mother text. Two thousand copies of the same mistake do not make the mistake to be right. They only serve as additional witnesses of the same mistake. On the other hand, if the mother text contained the correct reading then these two thousand copies only constitute two thousand copies to the correct reading. Numerical superiority certainly does not prove divine approval, otherwise we would all be Catholics.

There are two possible explanations for the distinctive readings of the various text-types. First, it must be assumed that these peculiarities originated from the mother text from which they sprang. Or, there is the possibility that one of these textual families has no “mother” text and it actually portrays the readings of the autographs. Those who favor the Alexandrian Text feel sure that this text comes closer to reflecting the autographs while those who favor the Byzantine Text are quite sure that it is the Byzantine Text which comes closer to reflecting the readings of the autographs.

Both sides have amassed “proofs” that their text comes closer to replicating the autographs, but the only way this can be resolved beyond a doubt is to have the autographs to compare these texts with, which we obviously do not have.

Appendix D

THE SUPERIORITY OF THE TEXTUS RECEPTUS

None of the early defenders of the Textus Receptus elevated it to the level of being an exact replica of the autographs as some modern Textus Receptus/King James Only advocates do today. They did not argue for its superiority on the basis of faith. They certainly did not seek to distort the Word of God to defend their views on its superiority. Neither did they seek to demonize all other text-types. The earlier Textus Receptus advocates took a more reasoned approach. They recognized that it was a good text, but they also recognized that it needed further repair.

Not being a textual critic, I do not pretend to be an expert on textual problems. I have taught Greek on the college level for twenty years, so I do have some familiarity with the subject. The responses given below are not text based responses, they are simple rational observations about fallacies of logic in arguments for the superiority of the Textus Receptus.

Longevity Demands Superiority

The textual family from which the Textus Receptus was derived, the Byzantine Text, was the traditional text of the Byzantine Church for almost fifteen hundred years and this implies divine approval.

Response: This same argument was made for the continued use of the Septuagint (LXX) when Jerome translated the Latin Vulgate in 406. It was also used for the Vulgate when Erasmus' Greek text was published. One individual who opposed the publication of Erasmus' Greek text wrote and assured him that no one would ever believe that the Vulgate contained errors. Further, he affirmed that the longevity of the Vulgate was proof of its perfection since God would not allow His Church to use a translation with errors in it for

such an extended period of time. And, like Peter Ruckman, he also argued that if the Vulgate differed with the Greek text, the Greek text was in error, not the Vulgate. He wrote,

For it is not reasonable that the whole church, which has always used this edition and still both approves and uses it, should for all these centuries have been wrong. . . . If however they contend that a sentence as rendered by the Latin translator varies in point of truth from the Greek manuscript, at that point I bid the Greeks goodbye and cleave to the Latins.¹

An individual has the right to accept the extended use of this text by the Greek Orthodox Church as a reason for accepting it as the superior text. However, we must keep in mind that such a conclusion is not a biblical conclusion. Nothing in the Word of God suggests that the text used the longest by a certain branch of the Church is the best text. After all, the Latin Vulgate was used by the Catholic Church as long as the Byzantine Text was used by the Byzantine Church. And, it has twice as many textual witnesses as the Byzantine Text.

One must recognize that the Byzantine Church used a Greek text because they spoke Greek and the Western Church used the Vulgate because they spoke Latin. They did not necessarily choose either text because they were convinced of their superiority, they chose them because they were in their native tongue.

If we use the argument that the extended use of the Byzantine and Textus Receptus texts dictates God's approval, then why can we not also argue that the extended use of the Vulgate makes it the text of God's choice? Or, why can we not argue that the extended practice of infant baptism by most of the Church dictates that the practice be approved by God?

Numerical Majority Demands Superiority

The Byzantine Text has thousands of extant manuscripts as witnesses (approximately 5200), while the Alexandrian type text and the other textual families have only about 400 surviving manuscripts. It is argued that this vast numerical majority proves that the Byzantine text is the superior text, or the text in which God has providentially preserved the message of the original manuscripts.

¹ Dorp, Ep. 304:109-111 Rummel, 123, Quoted by White, *The King James Only Controversy*. 56,

This would then dictate that the Textus Receptus is the best text because it was derived from the superior Byzantine text. John W. Burgon and Edwin Hills both argued this point. Zane Hodge and Wilbur Pickering argue almost the same thing, only with a slightly different approach. They argue that the variant reading which has the most readings which agree with it, is the correct reading. It is still an argument which is based upon numerical superiority, which would obviously almost always dictate a Byzantine reading since the Byzantine text constitutes such an overwhelming majority of extant texts. That argument is somewhat akin to the argument that might makes right.

Response: First, majority does not dictate superiority. Majority only means that there are more of one thing than another. If the majority thing is inferior, this only means that there are more inferior things like it than the superior things. That is all that numerical majority proves unless it has to do with rational human beings.

Second, if the best text is the text which outnumbers all other texts, then we need to go back to the Vulgate. There are 10,000 Latin texts which have been preserved. This is twice as many as the texts underlying the Textus Receptus. The Vulgate also has longevity on its side. It was used by a segment of the Church for as long as the Byzantine text was used by the Greek Orthodox Church.

Third, the Textus Receptus has in it several readings which Erasmus adopted from the Vulgate. Hills argues that God did preserve some correct readings of the originals through the Latin Vulgate. Would this argument based upon numerical superiority then mean that the New International Version is now the divinely approved translation since it has outsold the King James Version since 1988?

Fourth, this same argument when applied to the Textus Receptus would disqualify it as an acceptable text. Erasmus based his original edition upon no more than six to eight Byzantine texts. Stephanus and Beza had access to several more Byzantine texts, but the vast majority of the Byzantine texts were not available at that time. Therefore, if majority dictates superiority, then because the Textus Receptus is based upon a very limited number of

Byzantine Texts, it has to be inferior to the modern Greek texts based upon the majority of Byzantine texts available.

The purity of a textual family is determined by the purity of the source from which that textual family was derived, not from the number of extant copies. Subsequent copies of that text would simply perpetuate the same variant readings of the mother text. A thousand copies of the errors of the mother text does not make the mother text right.

In contrast to this numerical means of determining the superiority of a text, Westcott and Hort (and most modern textual critics) assumed that the texts which are closer in time to the originals are the purer texts. They based this upon the simple fact that the more ancient texts would have been copied fewer times and therefore would have been subject to fewer opportunities for copyist errors.

This theory also rests upon the purity of the mother text from which that textual family sprang. They also judged the credibility of a text by its character and type. Does the text appear to have been copied by a careful copyist, or is it obvious that the copyist was not a careful scholar who was not extremely careful in his work? These factors are as important as the antiquity of a text.

Witnesses to a variant are weighed, not simply counted. Numerical majority has value in counting the number of text-types which contain a variant reading and not in how many individual copies of that text-type are extant today.

This is not a humanistic approach to textual criticism as some *Textus Receptus* advocates maintain. Either God providentially led copyists to insert these the variant readings found in the textual families, or they simply got there due to human error. The more times a text-type was copied, the more times it was exposed to the possibility of human error which would then be passed down to the next generation of copyists.

Westcott and Hort had just as much right to make these assumptions about determining the validity of a text as modern *Textus Receptus*/King James Only critics do to assume that numerical superiority or longevity proves the purity or superiority of a text. The effects of

the fall on man certainly make Westcott and Hort's assumption about the frailty of fallen man's propensity to err a very tenable argument.

The Byzantine Text is the Older Text-type

This argument is based upon the logical assumption that the closer to the autographs a text-type reaches, the fewer times it has been copied which equals fewer opportunities for human error. This argument is not reasoning that longevity equals superiority. It is arguing that the older text is superior because there are fewer copies between it and the autographs which would obviously afford fewer opportunities for human copyist errors. Therefore, the superior text is the one whose history reaches closer to the date of the origin of the autographs. Therefore, if it can be demonstrated that the witnesses to the Byzantine Text reach further back toward the autographs, this would establish its superiority.

Response: The problem with this statement is that most textual critics do not agree that the Byzantine Text is the older text. The early Church fathers almost always quoted from an Alexandrian type text and not from a Byzantine type text.

Critics have found Byzantine type readings in some of the papyri discovered in Egypt. Of these finds Clarke wrote, "Secondly, the new papyri discoveries have apparently shown that an early form of Syrian/Byzantine readings, *not* Syrian/Byzantine text-types, existed prior to the fourth century, and perhaps as early as the second century."² D.A. Carson argues that these Byzantine readings are also Western readings and therefore cannot serve to validate earlier witnesses to the Byzantine Text.³

The explanation given by Jay Green explaining why we have no early copies of the Byzantine type text simply will not hold up under close scrutiny. He argues that lack of early witnesses to the Byzantine text is "... partly due to the fact that ancient manuscripts

² Clarke, *Textual Optimism, A Critique of the UBSs' Greek NT*, 37.

³ Carson, *The King James Version Debate*, 44,75

containing the Received Text were worn out by use, while the Alexandrian text-based manuscripts were preserved by the dry conditions in Egypt . . .”⁴

According to this logic, the only texts which were not worn out and discarded should have been those texts which were in use when Erasmus printed his Greek text of the New Testament. Yet there are thousands of extant Byzantine manuscripts some of which reach all the way back to the Nicene era. Should not they along with the pre-Nicene manuscripts been worn out and discarded also? Hence, this is an irrational explanation of the absence of Byzantine texts prior to Nicea which was in A.D. 325.

Faith Determines Superiority

There are those who, out of an emotional attachment, have, by faith, discerned that the texts which underlie their beloved King James Version is the text through which God has providentially preserved the message of the originals. Edwin F. Hills openly admits that his decision is a “faith” decision. In his discussion of the triumph of the Traditional Text, Hills wrote,

Naturalistic textual critics will never be able to answer this question until they are ready to think “unthinkable thoughts.” They must be willing to lay aside their prejudices and consider seriously the evidence which points to the Traditional (Byzantine) Text as the True Text of the New Testament. This is the position which the believing Bible student takes **by faith** and from which he is able to provide a consistent explanation of all the phenomena of the New Testament.⁵ [Emphasis. Added.]

His arguments for the superiority of both the Textus Receptus and the King James version grow out of his decision which he says “the believing Bible student takes by faith.” In another place he wrote, “For example, how do we know that the Textus Receptus is the true New Testament text? We know this through the logic of faith.”⁶ In the next paragraph, he also

⁴ *The Interlinear Greek-English New Testament*, Jay P. Green Sr., trans. and ed. (Lafayette, Indiana: Associated Publishers & Authors, Inc., 1976), ix..

⁵ Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, 183.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 113.

affirms that we can know that the King James Version is a good translation by “the logic of faith.”

Response: Hills openly admits that his decision about the superiority of both the Textus Receptus and the King James translation is not a decision which grew out of an analysis of the evidence. The decision was made by faith and this faith decision enabled him “to provide a consistent explanation of all of the phenomena of the New Testament.”

This logic is fraught with problems. Truth is never determined by faith unless that faith rests upon the clear teachings of the Word of God. Faith in the superiority of a Greek text or a translation is not a valid faith and certainly is not a valid means of arriving at truth.

Here is what Hills’ statement means. It means that because he had already, by faith, decided on the superiority of the Textus Receptus, all the evidence had to be construed to harmonize with his faith decision which he made before he ever began to analyze the evidence. Initially, this sounds very spiritual, but Hills’ “faith decision” is neither a spiritual or a faith decision. *No decision qualifies to be called a faith decision or a true spiritual decision which is not based upon the clear teachings of the Scriptures and the Bible at no place implies God’s approval upon either the Textus Receptus or the King James Version to the exclusion of all other Greek texts or translations.*

Therefore, this decision is neither a genuine faith nor an authentic spiritual decision. And, since nobody can read another’s mind or emotions, one can only presume that this decision was primarily an emotional decision which grew out of Hills’ love for and attachment to the King James translation.

Whether intentional or unintentional, Hills clearly implies that those who do not espouse this faith decision about the Textus Receptus and the King James translation are not “believing Bible students.” This position has become more widespread among King James Only advocates within the past two decades.

Hills does the exact same thing in regard to God’s providential preservation of the Textus Receptus. He assumes a providential guidance of God upon Erasmus which kept him from

making decisions about the Textus Receptus which would have been based upon his humanistic background. Once again, Hills makes an assumption which he calls a faith decision which has not one word of Scripture to back it up. He wrote,

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.⁷

There is no problem with recognizing God's providence in the preservation of His Word through the Byzantine Text and subsequently through the Textus Receptus and the King James translation. Conservative scholars have never questioned this. The problem arises when providential preservation is limited only to the Textus Receptus and the King James translation. The Word of God at no place specifies that preservation is limited to the King James Version and the texts which underlie it. The Bible is silent on the text and translation issues.

Hills does admit that the Byzantine texts did have a few mistakes in them, but he is quite sure that God providentially led Erasmus to correct them while he was compiling the Textus Receptus. Once again, Hills follows the King James Only Movement, and makes an emotional (sacred halo) assumption about God's guidance upon Erasmus which has not one grain of proof other than his emotional attachment.

Hills also argues that one of the ways God led Erasmus to correct the errors of the Byzantine Text was by his reliance upon the Latin Vulgate. He wrote,

Are the readings which Erasmus thus introduced into the Textus Receptus necessarily erroneous? By no means ought we to infer this. For it is inconceivable that the divine providence which had preserved the New Testament text during the long ages of the manuscript period should blunder when at last this text was committed to the printing press. According to the analogy of faith, then, we conclude that the Textus Receptus was a further step in God's providential preservation of the New Testament text and that these few Latin Vulgate readings

⁷ Ibid., 199

which were incorporated into the Textus Receptus were genuine readings which had been preserved in the usage of the Latin-speaking Church. Erasmus, we may well believe, was guided providentially by the common faith to include these readings in his printed Greek New Testament text. In the Textus Receptus God corrected the few mistakes of any consequence which yet remained in the Traditional New Testament text of the majority of the Greek manuscripts.⁸

Once again, this quote is likewise laden with serious problems of both doctrine and logic. Hills wants to have his cake and eat it too. He wants to limit preservation to the Byzantine Text, but, at the same time, he wants to selectively extend limited preservation to the various texts from which Erasmus drew in compiling the Textus Receptus. This even includes the Vulgate which King James Only advocates normally demonize.

It is obvious that Hills assumes that if it is in the Textus Receptus, it was in the autographs. He even argues that when Erasmus included verses from the Vulgate which have no support in any Greek text, he was providentially guided to correct the few remaining mistakes in the Traditional Text. Acts 9:5-6 is found in no Greek manuscript at all. Yet, Erasmus, who had never seen the autographs, was providentially guided to insert this verse into the Textus Receptus. Hills assumes that since it is now in the Textus Receptus, it was in the autographs.

This is an emotionally driven assumption disguised as a faith assumption. Hills has never seen the autographs. He does not know that this verse was penned by Luke or added by someone later, which seems to be the case since there not Greek texts which have this verse. One of the common unfounded and unprovable assumptions made by King James Only advocates is that if it is in the King James translation, it was in the autographs.

It is very interesting that the providential preservation of the Byzantine Text was only partial since it had a few mistakes in it, but the preservation of the Textus Receptus was complete since God providentially guided Erasmus to correct “mistakes of any consequences which yet remained in the Traditional New Testament text.” This statement clearly implies

⁸ Ibid., 200.

that there are no remaining mistakes of any consequences in the Textus Receptus.

One thing is clear from Hills' statements in this quote, providential preservation does not necessarily dictate perfect preservation as some suggest since the providentially preserved Traditional Text had a few mistakes of consequence in it.

Hills' statement, "Erasmus, we may well believe, was guided providentially by the common faith to include these readings in his printed Greek New Testament text" raises other questions. What is the "common faith" of a man who is a member of a cultic church that teaches a works salvation and denies the necessity of being born again? What is the common faith of a man and a church that holds the traditions of the church and the rulings of her councils to be of equal authority with the Word of God? What is this common faith of a man who was Luther's contemporary but refused to break with Rome and join the Reformation movement? Erasmus is sainted by the King James Only Movement only because he was the man who prepared the Textus Receptus. If he had not been involved in the preparation of the Textus Receptus, Erasmus would be viewed along with the other Catholic leaders of that day as a heretical member of a heretical church..

The idea that Erasmus could have been mistaken when he included readings from the Latin Vulgate which are not found in any Greek text, is beyond question. He says that "by no means ought we to infer this." To allow this to happen would constitute a "blunder" on the part of God's providential guidance. His view of providential guidance and of the common faith ultimately has Erasmus recreating the text of a document which he had never seen. Hills' view of providential preservation is tantamount to a second inspiration and places the Textus Receptus beyond question.

Hills uses some very pious sounding terms to validate his assumptions about the Textus Receptus. He bases them upon the "analogy of faith" which he never defines. In his second principle, he affirmed that the New Testament text was preserved via "the universal priesthood of believers" who watched over and assured the purity of the text. In his third principle, Hills says "The Traditional Text, found in the vast majority of the Greek New

Testament manuscripts, is the True Text because it represents the God-guided usage of this universal priesthood of believers.”⁹

First of all, Hills clearly contradicts himself when he says that God preserved the text through the “universal” priesthood of believers. The Traditional Text was not universally used by believers. The text that he references was the text of the Greek Orthodox Church which was from constituting a “universal priesthood of believers.”

The bottom line is that their assumption about the superiority of the Textus Receptus faces two irrefutable problems. First, their assumption of its superiority due to exclusive providential preservation is totally without biblical support. Second, they do not have the autographs to prove their claim of superiority.

What the Evidence Indicates About the Text Issue

1. There are differences in text-types, yet it is still possible to take either of these texts and make a translation which preserves every doctrine of the faith. Contrary to the claims of some, we are not debating over an extremely corrupt text versus an extremely pure text.
2. Since the Church no longer has the autographs, nobody can say for certain which text comes closer to replicating the autographs. They certainly can study the evidence and based upon the testimony of the evidence come to a reasoned conclusion, but that conclusion cannot be affirmed until they actually have the autographs to verify their conclusion.
3. The Word of God never limits preservation to a particular text or translation. There is not one shred of evidence in the Word of God that providential preservation was limited to the King James translation and its underlying texts. Neither does the Bible teach that God’s providential preservation of the biblical text ceased with the completion of the translation of the King James translation.
4. The decision to endorse the Textus Receptus to the exclusion of the Modern Critical Text demands some other decisions which violates rational thought.

⁹ Ibid., 111.

A. An Irrational Decision to Ignore Most of the Evidence: After the publication of the Textus Receptus, literally thousands of Greek manuscripts have been found, many of which are hundreds of years closer to the originals than those used by the men who compiled the Textus Receptus. The John Rylands Fragment, which contains portions of five verses from John, is dated as far back as A.D. 117-138. The Bodmer Papyri goes back to around A.D. 200 and contains most of the Gospel of John. The Chester Beatty Papyri contains most of the New Testament and is dated around A.D. 250. Other more complete manuscripts written on vellum and parchment were subsequently found which date back to around A.D. 325-350.

One of these is the Codex Vaticanus (B), which has been in the Vatican Library for centuries but not made available to scholars to study until 1904. This means that it was not available to the men who compiled the Textus Receptus nor to the translators of the King James Version in 1611. It contains most of the Old and the New Testaments, along with the Apocrypha. It is considered as an important witness to the original manuscripts of the New Testament.

The Codex Sinaiticus is dated around A.D. 340. It contains over half of the Old Testament and all of the New Testament, with the exception of Mark 16:9-20 and John 7:53-8:11. It was found in St. Catherine's Monastery at Mt. Sinai and purchased in 1859. Because of its antiquity, it too is considered as an important witness to the originals.

The Codex Alexandrius (A), which is dated around A.D. 450, was given to the English ambassador to Turkey as a gift to King James I in 1624. However, James died before the manuscript arrived. It was subsequently given to King Charles I in 1627, which is just 16 years after the publication of the King James translation. It contains almost all of the Old Testament and most of the New Testament.

The New Testament text is very interesting in that the Gospels were apparently copied from an early Byzantine type text while the remainder was copied from an Alexandrian type text. It too, because of its antiquity, is considered as an important witness to the

original New Testament text.

In light of this additional textual evidence which was not available to the compilers of the Textus Receptus, it would be appropriate to quote from the preface of the second edition of the Majority Text which was edited by Zane Hodge and Arthur Farstad, both of which are advocates of the Byzantine text. The statement was given as an argument for the Majority Text over the Textus Receptus because it is based upon the majority of the Byzantine texts which stands in striking contrast to the Textus Receptus, which was based upon a very limited number of Byzantine texts. They wrote,

The Majority Text is a text which employs the available evidence of the whole range of surviving manuscripts rather than relying chiefly on the evidence of a few. To us it is unscientific to practically ignore eighty to ninety percent of the evidence in any discipline.¹⁰

This is exactly what the TR only brethren are asking of the Church of today. They are asking the Church to ignore around 98% of the textual evidence and accept a text based upon less than 2% of the textual evidence. *It is a serious contradiction to argue for the superiority of the Byzantine Text based upon its numerical superiority and then advocate the Textus Receptus which ignores most of these same Byzantine texts?*

If the numerical superiority is what makes the Byzantine Text credible, then in order for a text compiled from the Byzantine Text to be credible, would it not have to be based upon a numerical majority of these texts?

B. An Irrational Decision that Ignores the Fact that Knowledge is Cumulative:

Each generation builds off past generations. The translators of the King James Version were very candid about this in the preface of the original 1611. Scholars today have the additional benefit of, not only the thousands of additional manuscripts which the

¹⁰ Zane Hodge & Arthur Farstad, *The Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text*, preface, p. v., Thomas Nelson, c.1985

compilers of the Textus Receptus did not have, but they also have the additional benefit of four hundred years of scholarship which they can draw from and build upon.

The last godly scholar did not die when the men who compiled the Textus Receptus and those who translated the King James died. It is irrational to turn one's back on four hundred years of scholarly research and refuse to be benefitted from their labors. It is irrational to assume that nobody has learned anything which would advance the Church's knowledge of the Hebrew and Greek languages and texts during the last four hundred years.

Rational thought must refuse to believe that modern conservative textual critics cannot take the labors of the past four hundred years of Bible scholars, and combine them with the knowledge gleaned from their study of the thousands of additional Greek texts, lectionaries, ancient translations, and other related documents discovered since the publication of the Textus Receptus, and either vastly improve the Textus Receptus or create an even better Greek text like the Majority Text.

C. An Irrational Decision to Ignore the vast Possibilities and Advantages of Modern Computer Technology: The compilers of the Majority Text and the Modern Critical Text have the advantage not only of the additional mass of textual evidence and of the four hundred years of additional scholarly research of godly men, but they also have the distinct advantage of modern computer technology. Modern scholars, through modern technology, have available at their finger-tips more information than the three men who compiled the Textus Receptus could have amassed in ten life times.

It is now possible to have each of the major Greek texts before one's eyes by pressing a few buttons on his computer. He can access libraries on the other side of the world. He can chat with another scholar in a distant city or in a distant country. There are computer programs which will provide helps and information in the study of the Greek and English text. Computers have revolutionized our world, even our scholarly world giving us advantages that were impossible just a few years ago

Appendix E

THE FALSE DOCTRINE OF PLENARY PRESERVATION

Historically, scholars have agreed that God has preserved the message of the autographs. They have also agreed that God has so watched over the transmission of His Word down through the centuries in a manner to retain His original message in a manner so that the Gospel message is not corrupted. There may be a disagreement over a word, a phrase, or even a verse, but none of these would alter the Gospel message. Concerning these differences Kevin Bauder wrote, “At no point does a true doctrine of the faith hinge upon a disputed word or passage.”¹

A new doctrine regarding the extent of divine preservation in the transmission of the texts of the autographs has been espoused and is being advocated by some Textus Receptus/King James Only advocates. This new doctrine is a radical departure from what the Church has historically understood the Bible to teach concerning the extent of preservation in the copying and transmission of the message penned by the original authors. This new doctrine is called “plenary preservation.” It teaches that the Masoretic Text of the Old Testament and the Textus Receptus Greek text of the New Testament are exact replicas of the original texts.²

The irrationality of this type thinking is but a further illustration of the irrationality of the sacred halo syndrome when one’s thinking is driven by his emotions rather than by rational thought. Given below are several things which demonstrate that this doctrine did not result from rational objective analysis of the Scriptures, but by unfounded and unbiblical assumptions

¹ Roy E. Beacham and Kevin T. Bauder, *One Bible Only?* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2001), 171.

² Thomas M. Strouse, Ph.D., *From the Mind of God?* p. 6, Published by Pensacola Seminary, May, 2001; Dr. Charles L. Surrett, *Which Greek Text*, p. 115, Surrett Family Publications, Kings Mountain, N.C. 1999. Dr. Surrett uses the term “precise” instead of plenary.

growing out of a deep loyalty and emotional attachment to the King James translation.

This new doctrine takes the “jot” and “tittle” of Matt. 5:18 and interprets them to dictate perfect preservation of every letter and word of the originals down to the smallest detail. What makes this new doctrine so amazing is that, not only can they now find the doctrine of the perfect preservation of the original texts in the Scriptures, they can also discern that this perfect preservation applies only to those texts which underlie the King James Version although neither are ever named in the Scriptures.

If one will check the conservative commentaries and theologies of the Church since the Protestant Reformation, he will search in vain to find any mention that the Masoretic Text of the Old Testament and the Textus Receptus Text of the New Testament are exact duplicates of the originals. He will also search in vain to find any suggestion that the Bible places God’s approval upon any particular Hebrew or Greek text to the exclusion of all others. Like the doctrine of an inspired translation, this doctrine must also be rejected and renounced for the following reasons:

Based upon a Faulty Hermeneutic

The doctrine is founded upon an erroneous interpretation of passages like Ps. 12:6-7; Ps.119:111, 160; Mt. 5:18; 24:35 and Lk. 21:33. The distortion of these passages to teach the plenary preservation of the texts underlying the King James translation violates the rule of context and of the teachings of the Scriptures as a whole. In light of the misconception which is being read into these passages, a brief look at a couple of them will be helpful in understanding how this faulty hermeneutic works.

Psalm 12:5-8

5. *For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the Lord; I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him.*
6. *The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.*
7. *Thou shalt keep them, O Lord, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.*
8. *The wicked walk on every side, when the vilest men are exalted.*

This Psalm is a prayer for deliverance of the poor and the oppressed. David cries out to his God for deliverance bemoaning the fact that the wicked have triumphed and the righteous have almost vanished. In the fifth verse, God responds to David's plea with a promise of His protection and deliverance. In the sixth verse God reminds David that he can count on His promise which He made in the fifth verse by declaring that His word is pure, which is a reference to its being trustworthy. In the seventh verse David, in response to God's promise of deliverance for the poor, declares that God will preserve them (the poor and the needy of the fifth verse) from this generation and forever.

Keil and Delitzsch, who are recognized as having been experts on the Hebrew language, say the following concerning who is being promised to be preserved in the seventh verse: "The suffix em in ver. 8a (7a in the KJV) refers to the miserable and poor; the suffix enmu in 8b (7b in the KJV) . . . refers back to the man who yearns for deliverance mentioned in the divine utterance of verse six."³ Perowne, who has long been recognized as an apt Hebrew scholar, wrote that the word "them" in the seventh verse refers back to "the afflicted and the poor" of the fifth verse.⁴ Another commentator who is also recognized as being a Hebrew scholar, H.C. Leupold, says this about who is being promised to be preserved in the seventh verse:

Since God may rightly be described in reference to His words as just indicated, the psalmist draws proper conclusions with regard to the situation in which he and other godly men like him find themselves. Addressing God in prayer, he expresses the confidence that God will keep His watchful eye on those that have suffered oppression ("Thou wilt regard") and will go further in that He will keep His protecting hand over them. The psalm here takes on a note of more personal feelings in that the writer includes himself ("Thou wilt guard *us*").⁵

This passage has absolutely nothing to do with plenary preservation of the original texts from which the King James was translated. It is a promise of God to keep and preserve the poor and needy.

I have also read of some who take the phrase "purified seven times" and, by some stretch of the

³ C. F. Keil & F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the OT*, the Psalms by Delitzsch, translated by James Martin, vol 5 of 10 vol., Eerdmans, Reprinted Jan. 86.

⁴ J.J. Steward Perowne, *Commentary on the Psalms* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1989), 178

⁵ H.C. Leupold, *Exposition of The Psalms*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1959), 133.

imagination, make this also apply to the King James translation by using a new math in making the King James translation to be the seventh translation or revision removed from the Tyndale translation. The King James is clearly not the seventh revision of the Tyndale translation.

This same approach of ignoring the context and reading a desired meaning into a passage is done with the following passage which is one of the key passages which is construed to teach plenary preservation.

Matt. 5:17-19

6. *Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.*

7. *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.*

8. *Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.*

The passage is speaking about the enduring nature of God's law and its enduring demands upon men, even down to the smallest detail. In verse seventeen, Jesus pointed out that He had not come to destroy (lit. loose, dissolve, pull to pieces) the law, which would mean that He had not come to set the moral law aside as binding upon man.

This affirmation of the enduring nature of the law by Jesus was dictated for two reasons. First, the Pharisees and the Saducces had already accused Him of not observing the law when He refused to observe their traditions which they had added to the law. Second, the Jews of that time had developed the idea that when the Messiah came and set up his Kingdom He would relax the requirements of the law. This was probably partially due to the stringent legalistic requirements of the Pharisees of that day. The proof that this was the thinking of many of that day is seen in Jesus' affirmation of the enduring nature of the law "*Think not that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets.*"

Jesus is clarifying the nature of His Kingdom. It will not be one in which the law of God is

relaxed or destroyed as some thought. As a matter of fact, Jesus declared that as long as heaven and earth stands, not even the slightest requirement of the law of God will be relaxed, not even the smallest detail (jot or tittle). This is true because the law is the codification of God's moral nature, and, since He is immutable and His moral nature can never change, not even the smallest detail of His law can ever be relaxed or dissolved. The proof of this assertion is given in the eighteenth verse. The clause "*till heaven and earth pass*" is an idiom denoting forever. It expresses the unchanging and enduring nature of the law. It will remain in effect as long as Heaven and earth exist.

Jesus used the "jot," which is the equivalent to the English dot over the English "i," and the "tittle," which is the small extensions on certain Hebrew letters which distinguished them from each other, to emphasize that even the smallest detail of God's law will endure forever. Thus, in striking contrast to the Jewish expectation of the Messiah relaxing the law of God, Jesus actually intensified its application by forbidding not only its physical violation, but also its mental violation (Matt. 5:27-28). Broadus wrote,

Not the smallest part of the law shall pass away till everything (*i.e.*, everything it contains) shall come to pass. The things predicted in the law must all occur; the entire substance foreshadowed by any ceremony or type must have come into existence; the civil regulations for the Jewish 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 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. State, after lasting while it lasts, must continue to serve as the germ and basis of much Christian legislation; the moral (ethical) precepts must be obeyed by every new generation. Not till all this has taken place shall the least particle of the law be annulled.⁶

Albert Barnes gave this explanation of the passage:

Till heaven and earth pass. This expression denotes that the law *never would be destroyed* till it should be all fulfilled. It is the same as saying everything else may change; the very earth and heaven may pass away, but the law of God shall not be destroyed till its whole design has been accomplished. . . .The expression, "one jot or tittle," became proverbial, and means that the *smallest part* of the law should not be destroyed.⁷

⁶ John A. Broadus, *Commentary on Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publishing, 1990) 101.

⁷ Albert Barnes, "Matthew and Mark," *Notes on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Bookhouse, 1949),

The passage has absolutely nothing to do with the preservation of the written Word of God. It only deals with the unchanging enduring nature and application of the law of God even down to the smallest detail. What makes this interpretation even more irrational is that by some imaginative scheme this supposed preservation of the written Word is limited to the texts underlying the KJV.

Another example of this new hermeneutic is their use of Matt. 24:35. The passage reads as follows,

32. *Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh:*
33. *So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors.*
34. *Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.*
35. *Heaven and earth may pass away, but my words shall not pass away.*

In His statement “*but my words shall not pass away*” Jesus is simply affirming that the things which He had prophesied in the preceding context would certainly come to pass. He was simply saying that you can take these prophecies to the bank. They are good. You can count on them. Before they fail, heaven and earth would have to pass away. Barnes wrote on this verse, “You may sooner expect to see the heaven and earth pass away and return to nothing, than my words to fail.”⁸

Dr. Surretts takes passages like II Tim. 3:15-17 and II Pet. 1:19-21 and reads into them the doctrine of precise word-for-word preservation of the Old Testament text. He writes that “both contexts also reveal that the Scriptures *had been precisely preserved.*”⁹ He bases his conclusion upon Paul’s words to Timothy when he wrote, “*And that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*”

His argument is that the “Scriptures” which Timothy had known from his childhood had to be an exact duplicate of the original Hebrew texts in order to make Timothy wise unto salvation. He

49-50.

⁸ Ibid., 261.

⁹ Surretts, *Which Greek Text?*, 115.

wrote, “Thus, even though Timothy did not have any original Hebrew MSS, some of which had been written at least fifteen centuries earlier, he still had accurately-preserved copies that were *precise duplications* of that which had been ‘God-breathed.’”¹⁰ (Emphasis added.)

First of all, Timothy did not have to have an exact duplicate of the original Hebrew text in order for it to make him wise unto salvation. From his declaration that the Scriptures, which Timothy had access to from his childhood, were able to make him “wise unto salvation,” it certainly must be recognized that they did preserve the message of the originals in a pure enough form for him to understand how to be saved. The ability to read into this statement perfect preservation goes far beyond what the text demands and what the Church has historically understood it to mean.

Second, if the Hebrew text referenced by Paul in this passage was an exact duplicate of the autographs, then the Masoretes were guilty of tampering with the Word of God when they later added the vowels to the Hebrew text. This would then mean that the text from which the King James was translated (the Masoretic Text) is a text which was corrupted by the Jewish scholars when they added the vowels to a perfect Hebrew text.

Third, there is good evidence that Paul was not referring to the Hebrew text at all. He was most likely making reference to the Septuagint since it was widely used by the early Church for the first four hundred years of her history. We do know for certain that it is quoted in the New Testament, even in places where it disagrees with the Hebrew text which is another strong argument against Plenary Preservation. The early Church’s use of the Septuagint and these New Testament quotations from the Septuagint create serious difficulties for those claiming plenary preservation through the Hebrew texts of the Old Testament.

How could the authors of the New Testament, while writing under inspiration, quote from a corrupt translation when, according to Dr. Surret, they had access to a perfect text? If, as Dr. Surret says, the Masoretic Text, which was derived from the earlier Hebrew text, is a precise or a perfect copy of the originals, the Holy Spirit would have led these men to quote from the perfect text and not

¹⁰ Ibid., 44.

from the corrupted Septuagint which disagrees with the Hebrew text in many places.

Plenary Preservation Contradicts Church History

For this doctrine to be true, there would have to have been at least one exact duplicate of the originals available to the Church throughout the entire history of the Church. Until recently, nobody knew that there was an exact replica of the autographs and did not know where it was. Therefore, for all practical purposes, the doctrine has been ineffective for most of the history of the Church. One thing which makes this recent discovery so unusual is that the men who compiled the Textus Receptus did not realize that they were creating an exact duplicate of the originals. They certainly would not have included alternate readings had they been aware that they were creating an exact duplicate of a document which they had never seen.

Another amazing fact about this recent discovery is that it was discovered by King James Only advocates and it just happens to dictate the exclusive use of the King James translation. That sounds like little children on the schoolyard making up the rules as they go in order to guarantee that they win.

If the Textus Receptus is an exact replica of the originals, then there was no exact duplicate of the originals in existence until the Textus Receptus was finalized by Theodore Beza around 1598 since it is unlike any text in existence. This means that the Church was without an exact replica from the time the originals were lost or worn out until the compilation of the Textus Receptus. The advocates of this new doctrine have never explained just exactly where the exact replica was until the compilation of the Textus Receptus since it is not a copy of an existing text but a new text unlike any of its predecessors. Hence, the doctrine was completely ineffective for the first fifteen hundred years of the Church's existence when the Textus Receptus was compiled.

Furthermore, for it to be an exact duplicate of the autographs, it would have to have been copied from another exact copy, but we know that the Textus Receptus is a composite of other existing texts none of which were exactly alike. The compilers of the Textus Receptus created a new text unlike any in existence but they managed to create an exact replica of a document which they had never seen, and which those who make this irrational claim have never seen.

The only other way for it to be an exact copy of the autographs would be for the men who compiled the Textus Receptus to have been inspired on the same level which the original authors were.

There are no Byzantine type texts of the Pauline Epistles prior to the ninth century. This cannot possibly be harmonized with the theory of plenary preservation via the Byzantine text since this would mean that the Church was without a credible text of the Pauline Epistles from the time the originals ceased circulation until the ninth century, and she still does not know exactly which of these texts is the exact replica. Further, the Byzantine text was not the majority text until the nine hundreds. Prior to that time, the Alexandrian type text outnumbered the Byzantine texts. Again, this would dictate that for much of the first nine hundred years of her history, most of the Church used an errant or corrupted copy of the Scriptures.

The Origin of the Textus Receptus Contradicts Plenary Preservation

If plenary preservation were true, then Erasmus, Stephanus, and Beza erred when they compared existing texts and created the Textus Receptus which was a new text unlike any in existence. They should have searched and found the Byzantine Text which was the exact replica of the originals and simply turned it over to the printers to be published. Any changes they made would constitute tampering with the Word of God. Yet we know for a fact that they made hundreds of changes over the years with the approximately eighteen editions between Erasmus, Stephanus, and Beza.

The Church is being asked to believe that the three men who compiled the Textus Receptus, each working separately and apart from the divine inspiration of the Holy Spirit, took a few Greek texts, each of which were very different from the other and from these texts, they created an exact replica of a document which neither of them had ever seen.

Apart from being inspired by the Holy Spirit of God, such a feat is humanly impossible, especially in light of the fact that the Greek texts from which they created this exact replica were so very different. This would have to be second inspiration.

Textus Receptus Scholars Reject Plenary Preservation

Erasmus clearly did not view his work as perfect and clearly questioned the authenticity of some

variant readings in the Textus Receptus. Theodore Beza, who was also one of the men who helped compile the Textus Receptus openly questioned the authenticity of the passage in John eight pertaining to the adulterous woman. F.H.A. Schrivner, who was one of the early defenders of the Textus Receptus, did not view it as an exact replica of the originals. John Dean Burgon, who also defended the Textus Receptus and is the patron saint of the King James Only Movement, clearly did not view it as an exact replica of the originals. He clearly stated that it “needs correction.” He wrote,

Once for all, we request it may be clearly understood that we do not, by any means, claim perfection for the Received Text. We entertain no extravagant notions on this subject. Again and again we shall have occasion to point out . . . that the Textus Receptus needs correction.¹¹

Exclusive Plenary Preservation of Textus Receptus Unbiblical

None of the texts which are misinterpreted to teach plenary preservation mention a specific text. Why does preservation not apply to the Alexandrian Text? There is absolutely nothing in the Bible which eliminates the Modern Critical text from also being used of God in preserving the message of the originals. Those who claim that the Textus Receptus is an exact duplicate of the originals have never seen them to verify this unfounded claim. Therefore, any claim that the Textus Receptus replicates the originals is a faith statement without biblical evidence since the Word of God never states that it is. In order for a faith statement to be a genuine faith statement it must be based upon the Word of God and not upon the emotional assumptions of man.

Timing of the Plenary Preservation a Serious Problem

Is it not strange that God stated the plenary preservation of the original texts in the Scriptures almost two thousand years ago, but waited until the debate over the King James translation arose to bring it to light? Is it not also a little strange that it was the King James Only advocates who discovered this unrecognized doctrine which just happens to support their King James Only views? Does that not sound like somebody making up new rules in the middle of the game in order to help

¹¹ Dean John William Burgon, *The Revision Revised*, p. 21, note 2., Green did not include this in his condensed version., Quoted in the article “Printed Greek Texts,” by William H. Smallman, in the book *From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man*, James B. Williams, General Editor, Pub. by Ambassador-Emerald, Greenville, S.C., c.1999.

them win?

The Variables in All Existing Greek Texts Contradict Plenary Preservation

The fact that all existing original language texts (both Hebrew and Greek) are different denies the doctrine of plenary preservation. There are fewer variants in the Hebrew text, but there are also very few Hebrew texts preserved for the Church of today. There are over 200,000 variants among the more than 5,000 Greek texts. Carson says, “It is also a fact that the closest manuscripts within a textual tradition average about six to ten variants per chapter.”¹² This fact alone disproves the doctrine of Plenary Preservation unless the advocates of this doctrine can point to a specific Byzantine text prior to the Textus Receptus and identify it as the text which replicates the originals.

As a matter of fact, this argument is in reality an argument against the Textus Receptus since no text like it existed until it was compiled. Logic dictates that if the Textus Receptus is an exact replica of the originals, then somewhere out there among the more than 5,000 Byzantine manuscripts there would have to be one text prior to the Textus Receptus which is exactly like it. This unbiblical and irrational doctrine is shot full of contradictions.

The Finiteness of Fallen man Contradicts the Doctrine of Plenary Preservation

The Church is being asked to believe that for over 1200 years, until the invention of the printing press in 1453, certain individuals were able to copy by hand the entire Old Testament and New Testament without making one single mistake. The evidence clearly disproves this irrational assumption since we have no two texts of any textual tradition which are exactly alike. As cited above, they average seven to ten variants per chapter.

It is true that the same God, who infallibly guided the original authors, could also have infallibly guided certain copyists down through the centuries so that they copied the text of the entire Bible without error. However, the variant readings in all existing texts prove that He did not do this.

The Nineteen Different Editions of the Textus Receptus

Disprove Plenary Preservation

¹² Carson, *The King James Controversy*, 68.

If the Textus Receptus is an exact duplicate of the original manuscripts, then those advocating this false doctrine are going to have to specify which edition constitutes that exact duplicate. Erasmus produced five editions. Stephanus produced four, and Theodore Beza produced ten editions. There are 19 versions of the Textus Receptus not counting the editions since Beza. Somebody needs to step forward and specify which edition is the exact duplicate of the autographs.

The Sources used in the King James Translation

Disprove Plenary Preservation

The translators that produced the King James Version did not rely exclusively upon a single edition of the Textus Receptus and the Masoretic Text for the Old Testament which would have been the case if they had believed in the modern day King James Only doctrine of Plenary Preservation.

They primarily relied on the later editions of Beza's Greek New Testament, especially his 4th edition (1588-9). But also they frequently consulted 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.

Further, they also compared their revision of the Great Bible with other translations and even included verses from the Vulgate which are not found in any Greek text. This fact alone creates major problems for the unbiblical doctrine of Plenary Preservation.

If the doctrine of Plenary Preservation were true, then the translators of the King James should have chosen the Hebrew and Greek texts which replicate the autographs and translated exclusively from them. Furthermore, in every place where these other texts differ with the two replicas, they are corrupt texts. Therefore, according to the doctrine of Plenary Preservation, the King James Version was translated from corrupt texts and even included verses from the Vulgate which are not found in any Greek text. This, according to their own arguments, would make the King James translation unclean and untouchable.

New Testament Quotations from the Septuagint Contradict the Doctrine of Plenary Preservation

Every Old Testament quotation in the entire book of Hebrews comes from the Septuagint. Mark quoted from it 25 times. Paul quotes from it in most of his Old Testament citations. Geisler and Nix wrote of its widespread use, “Furthermore, the Septuagint was the Bible of Jesus and the apostles. Most New Testament quotations are taken from it directly, even when it differs from the Masoretic text.”¹³

All of these men wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and He did not lead them to quote exclusively from the Hebrew text, it must not be the exclusive text of God’s choice. And, it cannot be the only text by which God has chosen to preserve the message of the autographs.

The early Church fathers apparently did not know that the Hebrew text was perfect and the only text they could use since the Septuagint was the text used by much of the early Church for the first four hundred years of its history.

This same problem is evident in the various translations used in translating the King James translation. Contrary to the thinking of many, the translators of the King James did not start with a blank sheet of paper and create a totally fresh translation. They were primarily revisers. They revised the Bishop’s Bible, which was basically a revision of preceding translations all of which traced their roots back to the Tyndale’s Bible, which was based upon Erasmus’ 1516 edition.

The King James Bible is 90% the Tyndale Bible. The translators themselves did not use a single edition of the Textus Receptus. The translators also relied upon the Latin Vulgate and the Complutensian Polyglot.

Ultimately, this unbiblical doctrine creates more problems than it solves. The rejection of the unbiblical doctrine of plenary preservation is not a rejection of the doctrine of divine preservation. Neither is it a rejection of the providential preservation of the Textus Receptus. God has indeed

¹³ Geisler & Nix, *General Introduction to the NT*, 254.

preserved His Word, and He utilized the Textus Receptus as a part of that process of preservation. However, the problem arises when providential preservation is limited exclusively to one text to the exclusion of all others. The use of both the Septuagint and the Masoretic Hebrew text in the New Testament destroys the concept of exclusive preservation limited only to the Masoretic and Textus Receptus.

The proof that providential preservation is not limited to the Textus Receptus is the fact that one can take the Modern Critical Text, the Majority Text, or the Textus Receptus and from either text make a translation which preserves every doctrine of the Christian faith. Neither text is perfect, but God has so watched over their transmission down through the centuries so that neither text is corrupted to the point that the Gospel message has been lost. They all retain the essential message that God revealed to the original authors. That is what divine preservation is all about. God has indeed providentially preserved His Word although He has not perfectly preserved His Word.

Perfect preservation is not essential to providential preservation. This is demonstrated by the New Testament quotes from two differing texts of the Old Testament. It is also demonstrated by the fact that the various textual families of the New Testament text do differ, but neither is so different that it no longer clearly communicates every doctrine contained in the autographs.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adams, John Quincy, *Baptists, The Only Thorough Religious Reformers*, Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Library, Scholarly Publishing Office, 2006.
- Aland, Kurt, and Barbara Aland, *The Text of The New Testament*, Translated by Enroll F. Rhodes, Second ed., Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishers, 1989.
- Bainton, Roland, H., *Here I Stand, a Life of Martin Luther*, New York: The American Library Press, 1950.
- Balz, Horst, and Gerhard Schneider, ed., *Exegetical Dictionary of The New Testament*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing House, 1980.
- Barnes, Albert, *Notes on the New Testament*, Vol. 1, Grand Rapids: Baker Bookhouse, 1949.
- Beacham, Roy E., and Kevin T. Bauder, *One Bible Only?*, Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2001.
- Beebe, Walter S., "Which Version of the Bible Should I Use." *Church Bus News*, Apr.- June, 1992.
- Bevan, Bryan, *King James VI of Scotland and I of England* (57 Cromwell Gardens, London: Rubicon Press, 1996), 84.
- Black, David Alan, *New Testament Textual Criticism*, Grand Rapids: BakerBooks, 1994.
- Bobrick, Benson, *Wide As The Waters, The Story of The English Bible and The Revolution It Inspired*, New York: Rockefeller Center, 2001.
- Boettner, Loraine, *Roman Catholicism*, Philipsburg, New Jersey: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1962.
- Brake, Donald L., *A Visual History of the English Bible*, Grand Rapids, Baker Books: 2008,
- Breese, David, *The Marks of Cults*, USA: Scripture Press Publications, 1975.
- Broadus, John, A., *Commentary on Matthew*, Grand Rapids: Kregel Publishing, 1990.
- Bruce, F.F., *The English Bible*, London: Lutterworth Press, 1970.
- Burgon, William John, *The Revision Revised*, Collingswood, New Jersey: Dean Burgon Society Press, 2000.
- Cairns, Earle, E., *Christianity Through The Centuries*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996.
- Carson, D. A., *The Inclusive Language Debate*, Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998.
- *The King James Version Debate*, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979.
- Carter, Mickey, P., *Things that are Different are not the Same*, Haines City, Florida: Landmark

- Baptist Press, 1993.
- Cavendish, Richard, and Pip Leahy, *Kings and Queens, The Story of Britain's Monarchs From Pre-Roman Times to Today*, New York: Barnes and Nobles, 2006.
- Clarke, Kent D., *Textual Optimism, A Critique of the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament*, 19 Kingfield road, Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press Ltd Mansion House, 1997.
- Comfort, Philip, *Essential Guide to Bible Versions*, Wheaton: Tyndale Publishing House, 2000.
- Custer, Stewart, *The Truth About the King James Controversy*, Greenville, South Carolina: Bob Jones University Press, 1981.
- DeMolen, Richard L., ed., *Essays On The Works of Erasmus*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978.
- Dorp, Ep. 304:109-111 Rummel, 123, Quoted by White, *The King James Only Controversy*.
- Farstad, Arthur, *The New King James Version*, Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1989.
- Geisler, Norman L., and William E. Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible*, Chicago: Moody Press, 1968.
- Grady, William, *The Final Authority*, Schererville, Indiana: Grady Publications, 1993.
- Graham, Marc A., "Should the Church be Concerned about Translations," *The Church Bus News*, Oct.-Dec., 1990.
- Green, Jay P. Sr., trans. & ed., *The Interlinear Greek-English New Testament*, Lafayette, Indiana: Associated Publishers & Authors, Inc., 1976.
- Greenlee, J. Harold, *Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism*, Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1995.
- Halkins, Leon, E., *Erasmus, a Critical Biography*, trans. John Tonkin, Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, 1993.
- Hills, Edward F., *The King James Version Defended*, Des Moines, Iowa: The Christian Research Press, 1973.
- Hodge, Zane, & Arthur Farstad, "Preface," *The Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text*, Thomas Nelson, Nashville, 1985
- Hudson, Gary R., "Ruckman's Unscriptural Claims for The K.J.V.," *The Sword of the Lord* (March 1989).
- King James I, *Baskilikon Doron*, quoted in Bryan Bevan, *King James VI of Scotland and King*

- James I of England* (London: The Rubicon Press, 1996).
- Keil, C. F., & F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the OT, the Psalms* by Delitzsch, translated by James Martin, vol 5 of 10 vol., Eerdmans, Reprinted Jan. 86.
- Mangan, John Joseph, *Life, Character and Influence of Desiderious Erasmus of Rotterdam, Derived From a Study of His Works and Correspondence*, New York: The Macmillian Company, 1927.
- Martin, Walter R., *The Kingdom of the Cults*, gen. ed. Hank Hanegraaff (Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1997).
- Metzger, Bruce M., *The Text of the New Testament, Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1968.
- McGrath, Alister E., *In The Beginning*, New York: Random House, Inc., 2001.
- Nelson's New Christian dictionary, The Authoritative Resource On the Christian World*, s.v. "Waldenses."
- Nicolson, Alan, *God's Secretaries, The Making of The King James Bible*, New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2003.
- Novum Testamentum Graece*, "Introduction," Stuttgart, Germany: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1979.
- Leupold, H. C., *Exposition of The Psalms*, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1959.
- Lightfoot, Neil R., *How We God The Bible*, Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1963.
- Luther, Martin, *The Bondage of The Will*, trans. J. I. Packer, and O. R. Johnston, United States: Fleming H. Revel Company, 1957.
- Patterson, W. B., *King James VI and I and The Reunion of Christendom*, New York: Cambridge, University Press, 1977.
- Pasley, Ian R. K., *My Plea for the Old Sword*, Greenville, South Carolina: Emerald House, 1997.
- Perowne, J.J. Steward, *Commentary on the Psalms*, Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1989.
- Peterson, Eugene, H., *Eat This Book*, Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2006.
- Picirilli, Robert E., "King James Seminar," part II, at the National Assoc. of Free Will Baptist in Houston, Texas, in July of 1996.
- Preus, Daniel, *Concordia Theological Journal*, "Luther and Erasmus: Scholastic Humanism and the Reformation," Vol. 46, Nu. 2-3, Fort Wayne, Indiana, April-July 1982.

- Pyle, Norman, "King James Controversy," *Christian View of the News*, March 1995.
- Robertson, A. T., *An Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, Nashville: Broadman Press, 1925.
- Rogerson, James, *AND THE LORD SAIDA Study of the Doctrine of the Bible*, Pine Level, N.C.: The Carolina Bible Institute, 2008.
- Ryken, Leland, *Understanding English Bible Translation*, Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books, 2009.
- Ruckman, *The Christian's Handbook of Manuscript Evidence*, Pensacola, Florida, Pensacola Bible Institute, 1970.
- Schaff, Philip, *A History of The Christian Church*, Vol. 7, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishers, 1910.
- History of the Christian Church*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, vol. 5, 1907.
- Schaff, David, "The Middle Ages," vol. 5 of *The History of the Christian Church*, ed., author, Philip Schaff, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1907.
- Schivner, F. H. A., *The Authorized Edition of The English Bible, 1611*, Cambridge: Cambridge, 1884.
- Sheldon, Henry C., *History of the Christian Church*, No address given, Hendrickson Publishers Inc., Vol. 2, "The Mediaeval Church," reprint, 1999.
- Sorenson, David, *Touch Not The Unclean Thing*, Duluth, Mn.: Northstar Baptist Ministries, 2001.
- Streeter, Lloyd L., *Seventy-Five Problems With Central Baptist's Book, The Bible Version Debate*, LaSalle, Illinois: First Baptist Church of LaSalle, Il., 2001.
- Strouse, Thomas M., *From The Mind of God?*, Pensacola, Florida: Pensacola Seminary, 2001.
- Sumner, Robert L., "Bible Translations," *The Biblical Evangelist*, January, 1979.
- Waite, D. A., *Defending The King James Bible*, Collingswood, New Jersey: The Bible for Today Press, 1992.
- Webster, Noah, "Preface," *The Holy Bible in the Common Version with Amendments of the Language*.
- Weigle, Luther A., "English Versions Since 1611," *The New King James Version*, Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1989.
- White, James R., *The King James Only Controversy*, Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1995.

Wilkinson, Benjiman, *Our Authorized Version Vindicated*, New York: Teach Services, Inc., 2006.

Wojahan, Karen Ann, "*The Real King James*," *Moody Monthly*, July-August 1985.

Zahn, Theodor, *Introduction to The New Testament*, vol. 1, trans. John Trout et al., Minneapolis: Klock & Klock Christian Publishers, reprint 1953.

VITA

PERSONAL

Born: September 25, 1938

Married: Barbara A. Heath, June 22, 1957

Children: Gregory Alan, born April 28, 1966

Susan Annette, born September 1, 1972

EDUCATIONAL

B.A., Free Will Baptist Bible College, 1969

M. Div. Covenant Theological Seminary, 1973

MINISTERIAL

Ordained: Piedmont Association of Free Will Baptist, 1969

PROFESSIONAL

Pastor: Beginning in 1964

Professor: Southeastern Free Will Baptist College, 1983-2002

Academic Dean: SEFWBC 1992-2001

Adjunct Professor: Liberty University, Beginning 2009