

**AS IT IS IN TRUTH  
THE WORD OF GOD**

By

Ben F. Vick, Jr.



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Shelbyville Road Church of Christ  
4915 Shelbyville Rd.  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46237



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## FOREWORD

This booklet is a compilation of articles which have appeared in similar form in *The Informer*, the bulletin of the Shelbyville Road Church of Christ, or were sent to periodicals for publication. We regret that some never saw the light of print. Two of the articles were written by my predecessor and brother in Christ, W. L. Totty. They were written for *First Century Christian* several years ago. They are included because of their relevancy to the issue at hand.

All of the articles are pertinent to the growing and grave issue which faces the church of our Lord – the modern versions. What brethren use in their private study is their business, but what is read from our pulpits and taught in our classrooms should be of public concern. Luke 8:11 says, “Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.” It has often been said that if we plant the same seed which was planted in the first century, we shall produce the same crop – Christians. But the modern versions, filled with modernism and denominationalism, are not the same seed. Therefore, those planting (either by word or deed) the modern versions into the hearts of people will not produce the same crop as in the first century. It is, therefore, incumbent upon us that we guard the unadulterated word of God.

This booklet goes forth with malice toward none, but with the hope and prayer that all who read it will have a deeper appreciation for the truth. It is sent out gratuitously by the Shelbyville Road Church of Christ as a part of its work. It is **NOT** for sale. I am a debtor to Shelbyville Road for its support in this effort and in many other endeavors in my attempt to preach and defend the Truth.

Ben F. Vick, Jr.  
4915 Shelbyville Road  
Indianapolis, IN 46237





## A BRIEF REVIEW OF SOME ARTICLES IN “A SERIES ON TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS”

### *Introduction*

In an editorial entitled “A Plea for Balance” which appeared in *The Restorer* in August, 1984, Gary Workman attempted to offset the teachings of a *small* segment of brethren advocating the King James Version only. These brethren are pushing this idea to the disrupting of the body of Christ. Though this writer believes the King James Version is the best translation on the market today, he has no intention of withdrawing from those who use the American Standard of 1901.

However, Workman’s decision to run his editorial along with a series of articles on texts and translations by Tom Gaumer, Wayne Jackson and Dick Sztanyo, in my view, was poor judgment. Alexander Campbell said,

I have learned, not only the theory, but the fact — that if you wish opinionism to cease or to subside, you must not call up and debate every thing that men think or say. You may debate any thing into consequence, or you may, by a dignified silence waste it into oblivion. I have known innumerable instances of persons outliving their opinions, and erroneous reasonings, and even sometimes forgetting the modes of reasoning by which they had embraced and maintained them. This was the natural result of the philosophy of letting them alone. In this way, they came to be of one mind in all points in which unity of thought is desirable in order to unity of worship and of action. (*Campbell-Rice Debate*, pp. 797-8.)

This would have been a good course for Workman to have followed, but he chose to magnify a small segment of KJV only advocates by a regurgitation of the Westcott and Hort theory which some brethren, who are neither of the said segment nor digesters of the Westcott and Hort text, are able to swallow.

If it be a balanced view to plead that the ASV is the most accurate translation available and also recommend the KJV, then why is one unbalanced if he considers the KJV to be the best and also makes allowances for the ASV of 1901? The latter has been Foy E. Wallace, Jr.'s, view, is Robert R. Taylor, Jr.'s, view and is also my position. No one without proper evidence shall move me from this stand. Those who have attempted to put me in the camp with brethren who have withdrawn from those who use the ASV have misrepresented my position.

The editor of *The Restorer*, in reference to the series of articles on text and translation, stated in March of 1985, "The writers in this series do not expect blind acceptance of the material presented, but they do hope for serious and studious consideration of it. Brethren Gaumer, Jackson and Sztanyo will be most happy to answer in print any reasonable questions from our readers. Please state them briefly, tell which writer you are addressing and send them to *The Restorer*. . . ." But such was not the case.

In June and August of 1985, I sent articles, reviewing Jackson's and Gaumer's articles, to *The Restorer* to be considered for publication. No response of any kind was received from the editor or written until I saw brother Workman in October of 1985 at Henderson, Tennessee, and asked him face to face about my reviews. He replied that he had sent them to Gaumer and Jackson and that, if they cared to respond, he might consider running my reviews with their responses in *The Restorer*, but he had not heard from them. Of course, if he had chosen to follow that course, that would have given his writers twice as much space as me. That sounds a little off balance to me.

My conversation with Workman led me to believe, contrary to what he had written in March of 1985, that he had no intentions of running my reviews. So, I wrote Jackson and Gaumer, requesting permission to reprint their articles in full and run my reviews with them and let our readers judge for themselves. Jackson granted permission as long as I represented him correctly and warned that I should follow the Lord's advice and "count the cost" in regard to the manner in which I reviewed his work. Gaumer refused on the basis that he had only given my articles a cursory reading and that he had no intention of writing any further on the subject, having done so in the first place at the

request of Workman. Yet he spoke on the same subject at the 1986 Magnolia Bible College Lectureship.

To these I respond, I have no intentions of misrepresenting anyone. That was the reason for wanting permission to reprint the articles reviewed in their entirety, and it has always been my desire to speak the truth in love (Eph. 4:15). If my manner is out of order, then accept my humble apology in advance. But if Jackson has the right to produce a booklet over "a matter" which he says is "of Christian liberty," then upon that same basis, we are justified in expressing an opposing viewpoint.

Gaumer's denial prohibits me from allowing the reader to conveniently compare his views with mine. Thus, the reader must refer back to the issues of *The Restorer* in which Gaumer's articles appeared. Why does he not allow my reprinting of his articles? Perhaps he fears they shall not stand in light of public perusal. We also suggest the reader refer to Wayne Jackson's article which appeared in *The Restorer* some time back. It is easy to spar with a dummy, but when a real opponent appears and the bell sounds, one may discover he is in a different ring. If my arguments and counter arguments will not stand, then I say, let them be defeated by a knock-out and let truth's hands be raised in victory. Truth has nothing to fear.

The following articles, except "The Eclectic Method," were sent to *The Restorer* for publication in the summer of 1985. The exception appeared, with minor changes, in *The Informer*, the bulletin of the Shelbyville Road Church of Christ, in July of 1985. These articles are sent out with the hope that those who read them will be stirred to a deeper study of the problems in textual criticism and that brethren may be assured that the King James Version is worthy and reliable and is the best translation on the market today. I am by no means an expert in this field, but the sources from which I have studied must be considered world class. The articles were written and are sent forth with no malice toward the writers reviewed, but to give a different view from what has been expressed. I do not ask that any man accept what I say because I said it, but let truth be the standard.



# Chapter 1

## “THE MAJORITY TEXT (1)” REVIEWED

In this and other articles to follow it is our intent to review a series of articles entitled “The Majority Text” by Tom Gaumer which, within the last year (1984-85), has appeared in *The Reformer*. We mean no ill will toward the author of said articles being reviewed nor toward the editor who published them. But if a balanced view of the issue at hand is desired, then, interested brethren ought to hear both sides of the question.

“The Majority Text” series deals with the basic Greek text which underlies the translation of the King James Version. In particular, it opposes the contention that the Textus Receptus (sometimes called the Majority, Syrian or Byzantine text) is the most reliable and faithful of the texts available as opposed to the Westcott and Hort text.

From the beginning, brother Gaumer states that the articles would not be “concerned with the English translation known as the King James Version.” His purpose was to deal with the text which underlies the King James Version. Such a purpose seems contradictory. If one’s purpose is not to destroy the house but only to demolish the foundation, he has, in essence, destroyed the house! An attempt to disparage the text of the KJV is to depreciate the KJV. I hardly could see how it could be otherwise.

In his introductory remarks brother Gaumer makes this fine statement regarding the KJV: “Presumably, we have great respect for the King James as an English translation: and viewed from the standpoint of the inherent excellence: and the lengthy term of duty it has served, we would judge it to be the best English translation ever produced.” We concur wholeheartedly with this statement thus far. He then adds, “But we do not

consider it the only safe translation, nor the only one Christians should use today.” Our questions are: What other translations does the author deem safe? Why not name them, so that the wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err therein? Who among us has ever said that the KJV was the only translation the Christian could use? What is meant by “use”? Does he mean in private study, or from the pulpit and classroom (if he be a preacher or teacher) he can use others?

After some background information on the Textus Receptus, or Received Text, from which the King James Version is based, we are told that the Westcott and Hort text (from which all other English translations have come except the KJV) “reflected thorough use of all the new discoveries.” It certainly did reflect “the new discoveries.” So much so that it rejected the manuscripts and text which had been received and accepted for 270 years – the Textus Receptus.

The Westcott and Hort text is based, in the main, on the codices Sinaiticus, Vaticanus, Alexandrinus, Bezae, and the Ephraemi Rescriptus. But, in the main, the Westcott and Hort text is based on the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus. Scholars, such as Burgon, did not discount the value of these new discoveries, but they refused to dogmatically accept them and reject the evidence from other manuscripts, versions, the ancient fathers and lectionaries. Burgon, in *The Revision Revised*, stated:

“... Let no one suppose that we deny their extraordinary value, — their unrivalled critical interest, — nay, their actual *use* in helping to settle the truth of Scripture. What we are just now insisting upon is only the *depraved text* of codices  $\aleph$  A B C D, [Sinaiticus, Vaticanus, Alexandrinus, Bezae, and Ephraemi Rescriptus] — especially of  $\aleph$  B D. And because this is a matter which lies at the root of the whole controversy, and because we cannot afford that there shall exist in our reader’s mind the slightest doubt on *this* part of the subject, we shall be constrained once and again to trouble him with detailed specimens of the contents of  $\aleph$  B, &c., in proof of the justice of what we have been alleging. We venture to assure him, without a particle of hesitation, that  $\aleph$  B D are *three of the most scandalously corrupt copies extant*: — exhibit *the most shamefully mutilated* texts which are anywhere to be met with: — have become, by whatever process (for their history is wholly unknown), the depositories of the largest amount of *fabricated reading*, ancient *blunder*, and *intentional perversions* of

*Truth*, — which are discoverable in any known copies of the Word of God.” (Article I, pp. 15-16.)

We have been told that the Westcott and Hort text “reflected thorough use of all the new discoveries.” Statements like this are often written to infer the text of the KJV (Textus Receptus) was not complete and that further revelation was discovered. However, Gaumer admits, “Since the majority of New Testament manuscripts discovered right up to the present time are in the tradition of the Textus Receptus, this text is also known as the Majority Text.” Thus, the new discoveries which led to the Westcott and Hort text and those subsequently found have not revealed any truth not already in the Textus Receptus. If this be not the case, the Lord’s statement, “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away,” (Matt. 24:35) would be false. Who will deny his statement? Not this writer.

It is true that “the consensus among scholars today” favors the Westcott and Hort text. From this we see that Fenton John Anthony Hort had accomplished his lifetime goal which he stated at age 23. He wrote to a friend, “I had no idea till the last few weeks of the importance of texts, having read so little Greek Testament, and dragged on with the villainous *Textus Receptus*. . . . Think of that vile *Textus Receptus* leaning entirely on late Mss; it is a blessing there are such early ones” (Pickering, Wilbur N., *The Identity of the New Testament Text*, p. 31.) Thus, we conclude that Hort’s purpose from the outset was to remove the Textus Receptus, and even before he had read the Greek Testament. An unprejudiced scholar indeed!

In the last paragraph of the article under review, Gaumer writes, “But the solution to the problem is not to rally around a single authority [by this I presume he means the Textus Receptus, or Majority Text – BFV] rather arbitrarily in the belief that holding to the old paths means getting everyone back to the King James and the Greek text which lies behind it.” But if, based on its “*inherent excellence*” (emphasis mine – BFV) and its length of service, Gaumer judges the KJV “to be the best English translation ever produced,” why not rally around it? Those who arbitrarily rally around the Westcott and Hort text as their single authority are guilty of the same. “Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?” The Westcott and Hort text is based, in the main, on two ancient manuscripts (Sinaiticus and Vaticanus); and in places where they disagree, it is

based on one (Vaticanus). Burgon, through several pages of evidence, proved this very point. He wrote:

“And thus, by an unscrupulous use of the process of Reiteration, accompanied by a boundless exercise of the Imaginative faculty, we have reached the goal to which all that went before has been steadily tending: viz. the absolute supremacy of codices B and  $\aleph$  above all other codices, — and, when they differ, then on codex B. (*The Revision Revised*, p. 304)

“The issue,” Gaumer says, “has to be decided by the evidence available, and sound (but not dogmatic) reasoning about that evidence.” We concur. Earlier he states, “Some are aggressive, manifesting a divisive spirit, and arguing dogmatically for the superiority of the Majority Text.” To argue dogmatically means to assert without proof an opinion in an arrogant manner. We prefer that no one have a divisive spirit or argue dogmatically either pro or con regarding the Majority Text. Why is it that those who argue for the superiority of the Majority Text are considered dogmatic; yet, those who argue just as strongly for the superiority of the Westcott and Hort text are considered balanced? How unbiased is one who speaks disparagingly of the KJV’s being based upon a Greek text represented by only a half a dozen manuscripts of relatively late origin but at the same time accepts without hesitation the Westcott and Hort text which is based on three, sometimes two, and in some places only one manuscript?



## Chapter 2

### “THE MAJORITY TEXT (2)” REVIEWED

A series of articles entitled “The Majority Text” appeared in the fall of 1984 in *The Restorer* by Tom Gaumer. It must be reiterated that this writer has no personal grudge nor animosity toward either the author of the above-mentioned articles or the editor of *The Restorer*. It does, however, seem that another view of textual criticism needs to be presented than that which appeared in *The Restorer*.

“The Majority Text (2)” article which appeared in the October, 1984, issue of *The Restorer* purposed to present “a brief, simple explanation of textual criticism as it applies to the New Testament.” A great deal of time and energy was expended in fulfilling the said purpose. However, in the main, the article presented in a nutshell the Westcott and Hort theory of textual criticism. It is impossible in a short review to deal with every minute point in which a disagreement arises; however, this writer shall attempt to pull down the main pillars upon which this theory rests. It would be good to go back and reread the article under review.

Having defined textual criticism, of which this writer has no disagreement, the author, under the subheading “The Materials of the Textual Critic,” states:

“Not all manuscripts are of equal value. A fragment is obviously of less help than a more complete manuscript. Generally, copies written in Greek uncial letters (large, square capitals) are older and considered the most valuable. Especially prized are the papyrus manuscripts in the uncial hand dating from the second through the eighth centuries, all coming from Egypt. Unfortunately, all the papyri together make up only 40% of the text of the New Testament.”

This statement is simply the old hackneyed line that the older the manuscript the better. But just a few paragraphs before, Gaumer gives reason for doubting the above statement. He writes, "Most of the errors in the copies crept in early during the second century A. D." Thus, the greater value of some of the earlier manuscripts is nullified by this point in history.

Let it be also understood that the quality of the manuscript must be considered and not simply its age. Gaumer has stated that "quality is more important than quantity." And so is quality more important than age. Each manuscript needs to be judged upon its own merits. It is widely believed that P<sup>66</sup> (a papyrus of the second century) is the earliest extensive manuscript extant. Hear what Colwell says concerning it and other early manuscripts.

"On these last and most important matters, our three scribes are widely divided. P<sup>75</sup> and P<sup>45</sup> [papyri of the third or fourth centuries—BFV] seriously intended to produce a good copy, but it is hard to believe that this was the intention of P<sup>66</sup>. The nearly 200 nonsense readings and 400 itacistic spellings in P<sup>66</sup> are evidence of something less than disciplined attention to the basic task. To this evidence of carelessness must be added those singular readings whose origin baffles speculation, readings that can be given no more exact label than carelessness leading to assorted variant reading. A hurried count shows P<sup>45</sup> with 20, P<sup>75</sup> with 57, and P<sup>66</sup> with 216 purely careless readings. As we have seen, P<sup>66</sup> has, in addition, more than twice as many 'leaps' from the same to the same as either of the others.<sup>6m</sup> (Pickering, *The Identity of the New Testament Text*, p. 123.)

From the same source:

"Aland says concerning P<sup>47</sup>: 'We need not mention the fact that the oldest manuscript does not necessarily have the best text. P<sup>47</sup> is, for example, by far the oldest of the manuscripts containing the full or almost full text of the Apocalypse, but it is certainly not the best.'<sup>19m</sup> (Op. cit., pp. 125-126.)

It is even admitted by Hort that the scribe of B (Codex Vaticanus) "reached by no means a high standard of accuracy." (Op. cit., pp. 127-128.)

But if one is still convinced that the oldest is the best, then hear F. J. A. Hort's own admission about what is now known as the Majority or Byzantine text. He stated, "The fundamental

Text of *late extant Greek MSS.* generally is *beyond all question identical* with the dominant Antiochian or Graeco-Syrian Text of the *second half of the fourth century.*" (Burgon, *The Revision Revised*, p. 257.)

Under the subheading "The Different Text-types Described," the author simply gives Westcott and Hort's classification of the manuscripts. They are: Syrian, Western, Alexandrian and Neutral. Gaumer then writes, "The Neutral text (which included the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus mss.), was regarded by Westcott and Hort as representing the purest witness to the original text of the New Testament."

If the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus are a part of the Neutral category, which is, according to Gaumer and others, the purest witness to the original, then, will someone be so kind as to enlighten me on a point or two. It has been proven that the two disagree in well over 3,000 places in the gospel accounts alone. Their places of agreement are fewer. Why, then, should they be lumped together in the same Neutral text? Textual critics should not only consider "the shared peculiarities between the two mss.," but also "the extent of disagreement is equally germane to any effort at classification." (Pickering, *op. cit.*, p. 57.)

Westcott and Hort called the manuscripts which were mainly derived from Egypt (B, Aleph, P<sup>45, 46, 47</sup> and P<sup>66, 75</sup>) as Neutral because they thought them to be largely untouched by editorial revision. However, Tischendorf, who discovered the Sinaiticus manuscripts (Aleph), knew "that at least ten different revisers from the Vth century downwards had labored to remedy the scandalously corrupt condition of a text which, 'as it proceeded from the first scribe,' even Tregelles describes as 'very rough.'<sup>29</sup>" (Burgon, *The Revision Revised*, p. 244.)

Also, on this same point, Burgon states concerning the Sinaiticus, Vaticanus, and the Bezae manuscripts that they "are *three of the most scandalously corrupt copies extant*: — exhibit *the most shamefully mutilated* texts which are anywhere to be met with: — have become, by whatever process (for their history is wholly unknown), the depositories of the largest amount of *fabricated reading*, ancient *blunders*, and *intentional perversions of Truth*, — which are discoverable in any known copies of the Word of God." (Burgon, *The Revision Revised*, p. 16.)

Gaumer informs us that "the text-type which lies behind the King James Version of the New Testament" is "still considered

the least reliable of the text traditions." But by whom is it considered the least reliable? and upon what basis is it considered such? "It is often suggested that the intrinsic character of the Majority Text is inferior to the Egyptian. This too was one of Westcott and Hort's arguments. But this approach usually partakes of an unduly large element of subjectivity. The fact is that excellent reasons almost always can be given for the superiority of the majority readings over their rivals. In sum, therefore, the Westcott-Hort tradition in textual criticism has failed to advance convincing objections to the authenticity of the Majority Text." (Hodges and Farstad, *The Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text*, Introduction, p. xi.)

In dealing with "Basic Principles of Textual Criticism," Gaumer simply echoes the philosophy and tenets of Westcott and Hort. I suggest that anyone interested in reading a good review of the three principles listed by Gaumer should read Pickering's *The Identity of the New Testament Text*.

Under the subheading "Basic Principles of Textual Criticism," brother Gaumer writes: "It is not simply a matter of counting witnesses in favor of a certain reading, for quality is more important than quantity. A single manuscript may be worth more than a thousand, if the thousand are for the most part all alike and belong to a text-type that is late and contains evidence of greater corruption."

The preceding argument is usually an attack upon the Majority or Byzantine text as opposed to the Westcott and Hort, United Bible Society, or the Nestle's text. (These last three basically are the same.) If one simply were to count the witnesses, the Majority text would win hands down. In a later statement ["The Majority Text (3)"] brother Gaumer writes, "No single text-type should be followed slavishly or excessively, not even the Alexandrian. Each reading should be judged on its own merits in the final analysis." Note again that last statement: "Each reading should be judged on its own merits in the final analysis." If that be the case, upon what basis does he lump the thousand together? Which should we believe: His statement in "The Majority Text (2)" article? or the statement in "The Majority Text (3)" article?

Pickering writes:

"Rather than lining up in 'clear streams' or 'text-types' (as objectively defined entities) the earliest manuscripts are dotted helter-skelter over a wide spectrum of variation. Although

varying degrees of affinity exist between and among them, they should be treated as individuals in the practice of textual criticism. Until such time as the relationships among the later manuscripts are empirically plotted, they also should be treated as individuals. To dump them into a 'Byzantine' basket is untenable." (Pickering, op. cit., p. 57.)

In closing, please consider the following: In the previous article reviewed and the present one being considered there has been, in passing, an appeal to the people (argumentum ad populum) in saying "the consensus among scholars today" and "it is generally agreed" that the earlier manuscripts (upon which the Westcott and Hort text is based) are the best. Why is it that brethren are willing to accept the majority of scholars who favor the Westcott and Hort text and, yet, reject without careful consideration the great majority of manuscripts which make up the Majority Text? Is it not just as reasonable for us to accept the viewpoint of the few scholars who favor the majority of witnesses as it is for others to accept the majority of scholars who favor the few witnesses? If not, why not?

## Chapter 3

### **“THE MAJORITY TEXT (3)” REVIEWED**

In this third in a series of articles reviewing “The Majority Text” articles which have appeared in *The Restorer*, we want to take up the four major reasons given by brother Gaumer as to the inferiority of the Byzantine or Majority Text over the Alexandrian. It was claimed (in “The Majority Text (4)” article, *The Restorer*, Jan., 1985) that four major reasons were given for rejecting the Majority Text. But in actuality, the four can be boiled down to three.

The subheadings used by brother Gaumer will be used by this writer in reviewing his arguments. We encourage you to turn to his article and reread “The Majority Text (3)” in the November-December, 1984, issue of *The Restorer*.

#### **“The Majority Text Is Not the Earliest” And/Or “The Alexandrian Text Is the Earliest”**

The above words in quotations are two subheadings given by brother Gaumer which I am including as one.

The fact that the majority of extant manuscripts are not as old as the Alexandrian Text does not necessarily make the many inferior in quality to the few. Certainly, the age of a manuscript should be considered when attempting to determine its value in textual criticism. But that alone should not be the deciding factor. Most of the errors in the copies came in early during the second century A. D. Scrivener (one of the translators of the English Revised Version of 1881) states “that the worst corruptions, to

which the New Testament has ever been subjected, originated within a hundred years after it was composed: that Irenaeus [A.D. 150] and the African Fathers, and the whole Western, with a portion of the Syrian Church, used far inferior manuscripts to those employed by Stunica, or Erasmus, or Stephens thirteen centuries later, when moulding the *Textus Receptus*” (Burgon, *The Revision Revised*, p. 30.) Hodges and Farstad write (Introduction, *The Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text*, pp. ix, x):

“. . . It is true that the documents that contain it [Majority text—BFV, Jr.] are on the whole substantially later than the earliest Egyptian witness. But this is hardly surprising. Egypt, almost alone, offers climatic conditions highly favorable to the preservation of very ancient manuscripts. On the other hand, the witnesses to the Majority Text come from all over the ancient world. Their very number suggests that they represent a long and widespread chain of manuscript tradition. It is necessary, therefore, to postulate that the surviving documents are descended from non-extant ancestral documents of the highest antiquity. These must have been in their own time as old or older than the surviving witnesses from Egypt.”

### “The Majority Text Is a Contrived Text”

To say that the Majority Text is a contrived text, even though made from sincere motives, is a questionable statement. The word *contrive* means “1. to devise; to plan; to scheme. 2. to invent; to design; to fabricate; . . .” Who devised such a text? Who was involved in the scheme, and what were the circumstances surrounding it? Please relate the historical evidence and not simply assumptions to prove it is a contrived text.

To prove the Majority text is a contrived text, Gaumer mentions “harmonization and conflate readings” found in the text. He gives two examples of each.

The first example of harmonization which is given is Luke 23:38, where the Majority Text adds the words “in letters of Greek, and Latin and Hebrew.” Brother Gaumer tells us that these words are not found in the earliest copies of Luke, where evidently some scribe was attempting to harmonize the passage in Luke with the words that are found in John 19:20. But these words which are found in the King James Version in Luke 23:38

are found in the majority of the manuscripts in existence today. The same words are found in the Sinaiticus, except for the conjunctions, and also in the Alexandrian manuscript. Both of these manuscripts are from the fourth and fifth century respectively. These words are omitted from the Vaticanus and C, a fifth century manuscript. Therefore, from the most ancient manuscripts the vote is two against two. Upon what basis does Gaumer assume that some scribe added these words in Luke 23? We prefer to stand with the Sinaiticus and Alexandrian and the majority of manuscripts which favor the words being in Luke 23:38.

Another example of harmonization, according to Gaumer, is Acts 9:5, where, supposedly, some scribe took the words "it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks" from Paul's account in Acts 26:14. Though the majority of manuscripts, including the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, omit these words in Acts 9:5, the Textus Receptus, which has been recognized for years, does record these words.

Brother Gaumer states, "The reason these are so obviously harmonizations is the fact that it is virtually impossible to explain how or why the questionable words in Luke 23:38 and Acts 9:5 dropped out so early if they originally belonged in those passages." However, it should be remembered that many errors crept into the copies early during the second century. Also, this type of reasoning by Gaumer is fallacious. It is arguing from ignorance. The fact that it may be impossible to explain how or why the questionable words are not in some manuscripts (as in the Alexandrian Text) does not mean they were not in the autographs. The reason these words are not found in the Alexandrian text-type may be due to the fact that it is more corrupt than the Byzantine or Majority text. Gaumer knows that this type of reasoning is false, because earlier he stated, "If someone reasons that it cannot be proven that there was not a definite Byzantine text before the fourth century, he is arguing from a lack of evidence." Brother Gaumer's earlier statement in the paragraph argues from a lack of evidence.

Conflated readings are composite readings. The word *conflate* literally means "to blow together." Thus, two readings or more are brought together into one. It is not very difficult to answer the supposed conflate readings given by Gaumer when he simply echoes two of the eight examples given by Hort many years ago. All one needs to do is to study Burgon's *The Revision*



*Revised.* Gaumer and others would serve their purposes well if they would study the works of Burgon.

A couple of years ago, when I wrote to Jack P. Lewis regarding his statement that "Other scholars replied to Burgon, and it is doubtful that his censures had any great effect on the impact on the revision," he could not or would not tell me who had replied to Burgon. Again, I ask: Who has answered Burgon?

The first so-called conflate reading given by Gaumer is Mark 9:49. It reads, "For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt." It is strange that a passage from Mark would be used to prove a conflate reading. This conflation is based on one reading taken from the Alexandrian translation and another from the Western, according to Gaumer. We are told, "In Mark 9:49, the original reading, supported by the Alexandrian tradition, is probably 'for everyone shall be salted with fire.'" Then, is one's faith in the text to be based on probability?

In the above passage cited, the first clause is omitted by codex Bezae (which, according to Burgon, is one of the most depraved texts) and a few copies of the old Latin; the second clause is omitted by the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus. These two latter manuscripts, especially on the gospel according to Mark, exhibit more unfaithfulness than any other codices that can be named. Upon the very basis that one is willing to accept Mark 16:9-20, one should also accept Mark 9:49 as per the King James Version. The ASV footnote is significant on Mark 9:49. It reads, "Many ancient authorities add *and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt.*" That ought to cinch it since so many are interested in ancient authorities. What are they? The concurrence of all the Majority Text, including the Alexandrian and the Ephraemi Rescriptus (a fifth century manuscript) plus at least "12 other uncials [manuscripts in large letters] and the whole body of the cursives: the Ital. and Vulgate; both Syriac; the Coptic, Gothic, Armenian, and Aethiopic Versions; besides the only Father who quotes the place, — Victor of Antioch" all support the verse as in the KJV.

Another example of conflate reading, according to Gaumer, is:

"Luke 24:53, where the correct reading is 'blessing God,' which is supported by the Alexandrian witnesses. The Western text here has 'praising God.' The Byzantine has conflated the two into 'praising and blessing God.' It would require a great deal of credulity to sincerely believe that this is what Luke actually wrote."

Why should it take a great deal of credulity to believe as the King James Version renders it "praising and blessing God" when 13 uncial readings headed by the Alexandrinus and every known cursive, a few copies of the old Latin, the Vulgate, Syriac, Philox, Ethiopic, and Armenian versions include it?

### **"The Byzantine Text-type Has Variation"**

Brother Gaumer writes, "It is a fact that of the thousands of copies representing the Byzantine text-type, not any two are exactly alike in every respect." But the same argument can be made toward the Alexandrian text-type which has even fewer manuscripts. The Vaticanus and Sinaiticus are at odds in numerous places, such as in the preceding so-called conflation (Luke 24:53). Gaumer asks regarding the thousands of manuscripts in the Byzantine texts, "Which of all the thousands of the copies is the safest one?" We ask regarding the Alexandrian text-type: Which of the two, the Vaticanus or the Sinaiticus, is the safer to follow?

According to the article under review, we are told, "Perhaps it is worth mentioning, in addition, that if the Textus Receptus is taken as the definitive Greek text, it should be understood that it lacks the last six verses of Revelation." But let it also be remembered that the Vaticanus, upon which the Westcott and Hort text is primarily based, omits the following: Genesis 1:1-46:28; II Kings 2:5-7, 10-13; Psalm 106:27-138:6; Mark 16:9-20; John 7:53-8:11; Heb. 9:14 to the end of the New Testament, including First and Second Timothy and Titus, Philemon and Revelation. The Sinaiticus, which was also relied upon heavily for the Westcott and Hort text, omits about half of the Old Testament; Mark 16:9-20; and John 8:11.

### **Conclusion**

If "no single text-type is to be followed slavishly or exclusively, not even the Alexandrian," why does the writer under review cling tenaciously to the Alexandrian in spite of the preponderance of evidence from the majority of manuscripts, the ancient versions, the lectionaries, and the ancient so-called

church fathers to the contrary notwithstanding? Is it simply because the Alexandrian text-type is more ancient than the Byzantine?

Certainly, the Alexandrian text which includes the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus is worthy of consideration in helping to determine the truth of Scripture; but to blindly cleave to it in spite of the evidence to the contrary is truly an unbalanced approach and bordering on dogmatism.

## Chapter 4

### “THE MAJORITY TEXT (4)” REVIEWED

In “The Majority Text (3) Reviewed” we considered the reasons given by brother Tom Gaumer for rejecting the claim that the Majority or Byzantine text was superior to the other four text-types. Boiled down, his arguments were three in number. Gaumer favoritism is shown for the Alexandrian text by the following statement: “The Alexandrian text almost invariably preserves not only the oldest readings of the New Testament text but also the purest, that is, those most free from scribal errors and emendations.” [“The Majority Text (4),” *The Restorer*, Jan., 1985, p. 4.] His view is that, if any text-type should be ranked with infallible status, it should be the Alexandrian. To such sentiments we demur.

This writer and other faithful gospel preachers favor the Byzantine or Majority text over all others. This does not mean that I prefer its exclusive use. Good can come from studying the other texts as well. The brilliant Burgon (1813-1888), Dean of Chichester, of whom no man among us in textual criticism can hold a candle, held to the same view. He stated: “Let no one suppose that we deny their [manuscripts from which the Westcott-Hort text and eventually the Alexandrian text came – BFV, Jr.] extraordinary value, – their unrivalled critical interest, – nay, their actual *use* in helping to settle the truth of Scripture.” (*The Revision Revised*, p. 15.)

We now take up Gaumer’s “evidence” for the superiority of the Alexandrian text over the Majority. The subheadings in the article being reviewed are the arguments, in a nutshell, favoring the Byzantine or Majority text; and under each are his responses. For uniformity, we shall use the same subheadings and give in brief his response and our answers under each.

## “Byzantine Copies Are The Majority”

Gaumer, along with many others, does not believe the majority of manuscripts proves the superiority of the Byzantine text.

We are told that “witnesses are to be weighed, not counted.” It is believed by those of Gaumer’s persuasion that the Sinaiticus, Vaticanus and other manuscripts of the Alexandrian text, though fewer in number, carry more weight due to the age factor. These are more ancient than those which make up the Majority text-type.

However, it is to be kept in mind that most of the so-called errors crept into the copies at an early date. (See “*The Majority Text (3)*’ Reviewed.”) Thus the age factor alone is not enough. The very statement that manuscripts are to be “weighed, not counted” implies that the two processes are mutually exclusive. Each manuscript must first be weighed, then counted.

In weighing the manuscripts, who is qualified to do the weighing? Upon what criteria will each be weighed? We are told that the basis is the “internal evidences,” which means (1) “choose the reading which fits the context” and (2) “choose the reading which explains the origin of the reading.” Colwell, on this point, stated, “As a matter of fact these two standard criteria for the appraisal of the internal evidence of readings can easily cancel each other out and leave the scholar free to choose in terms of his own prejudgments.” (Pickering, *The Identity of the New Testament Text*, p. 134.) In other words, such a method is too subjective.

If we apply this test of weighing the manuscripts to the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus of the Alexandrian text, we find they are weighed in the balances and found wanting. It has been demonstrated that the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus have over 3,000 mistakes between them, just in the gospel accounts. The Sinaiticus is clearly worse than the Vaticanus. Burgon stated that these two, along with Bezae, “are *three* of the most scandalously corrupt copies extant: exhibit *the* most shamefully mutilated texts which are anywhere to be met with: – have become, by whatever process (for their history is wholly unknown), the depositories of the largest amount of fabricated readings, ancient blunders, and intentional perversions of truth, – which are discoverable in any

known copies of the word of God.” (*The Revision Revised*, p. 16.) Of course, keep in mind that Burgon was writing back in 1883; and since that time, there may have been discovered some manuscripts which might equal or be worse than the three cited.

On weighing witnesses rather than counting, Gaumer continues: “For example, if fifty manuscripts (copies in Greek) are found to agree on the wording of a particular verse, this evidence actually amounts to only a single witness if the evidence indicates that all fifty were copied from a single exemplar (a copy used as a model). In principle, this is often the case with the Byzantine text-type.” To this we reply: Where is the evidence (assumption and speculation will not do) which indicates that all fifty were copied from a single exemplar? Show us from history where this was the case with the Byzantine text.

We are informed that by weighing the witnesses of the texts and “applying sound canons of textual criticism” the Sinaiticus, Vaticanus and most of the papyri have emerged to the top of the manuscripts and are “deemed of greater intrinsic value than others.” To this, Hodges and Farstad, scholars in the field of textual criticism today, answer:

“It is often suggested that the intrinsic character of the Majority Text is inferior to the Egyptian. This too was one of Westcott and Hort’s arguments. But this approach usually partakes of an unduly large element of subjectivity. The fact is that excellent reasons almost always can be given for the superiority of the majority readings over their rivals. In sum, therefore, the Westcott-Hort tradition in textual criticism has failed to advance convincing objections to the authenticity of the Majority Text.” (*The Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text*, p. xi)

Also, it might be added that the *Nestle’s* and *United Bible Society* texts, which are basically repeats of the Westcott and Hort text, attest to the importance of counting witnesses, because their footnotes are filled with witnesses which support the variant readings in the text. And, too, Gaumer believes in counting witnesses, because he said that the “consensus of modern textual critics” consider the Alexandrian text-type superior to all others. Why not weigh each of these critics and see how reliable each is. If some brethren can count the consensus of scholars, cannot others count the consensus of manuscripts?

## “God Providentially Preserved the Byzantine Text-Type”

That the word of God has been providentially preserved down through the ages has been our claim all along. “The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O Lord, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.” (Psa. 12:6-7.) Peter by inspiration stated, “. . . the word of the Lord endureth for ever.” (1 Pet. 1:25.) Our blessed Lord stated, “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.” (Matt. 24:35.)

In his last paragraph under this subheading, Gaumer alludes briefly to some “clear historical antecedents” that explain the Byzantine’s rise in influence in the Eastern church. Mention is made of Constantine’s move of his capital from Rome to Constantinople and his work with Chrysostom in promoting the Byzantine text.

However, many years ago Burgon dealt with this figment of imagination in answering Bishop Ellicott. He wrote:

“You speak of ‘representing *verbatim et liberatim* THE Text which was current at Antioch in the days of Chrysostom.’ So you then really suppose that there existed at Antioch, at any period between A. D. 354 and A. D. 407, *some one definite Text of the N. T. CAPABLE of being so represented?* – If you do, pray will you indulge us with the grounds for such an extraordinary supposition? Your ‘acquaintance’ (Dr. Tregelles) will tell you that such a fancy has long since been swept away ‘at once and for ever.’” (*The Revision Revised*, p. 385.)

Instead of viewing the Majority text as a revision of earlier texts, as held by Westcott and Hort, the view is presented that it is the result of a long-continued scribal process. Farstad and Hodges state that this view is usually “presented in vague and general terms.” Further, they say, “This is not surprising, because it is virtually impossible to conceive of any kind of unguided process which could have resulted in the Majority Text.” (*The Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text*, Introduction, p. xi.)

## **“Other Text-Types Omit Certain Passages in the New Testament”**

The writer under review says this is a classic example of what is known as “begging the question!” We are then informed that there are certain passages in the King James Version that are not included in any other English translation. Then, one passage is cited as the best-known example. It is 1 John 5:7. We are told from the consensus of scholars that these words are not an authentic part of John’s epistle.

Inasfar as external evidence is concerned for the words being in the text, the following includes them:

1. Some of the most ancient and most correct Vatican Greek copies;
2. A Greek copy called by Erasmus Codex Britannicus;
3. All Stephen’s manuscripts – seven in number – have this verse;
4. The Vulgate version, in most of the manuscript copies and printed editions in which it is found.
5. The testimony of Tertullian alludes to this verse;
6. The testimony of many Greek and Latin fathers in subsequent ages have acknowledged its authenticity;
7. The Complutensian edition, 1515, had this seventh verse exactly as it is in the present printed copies with one minor difference in the last clause;
8. Mill gave it as his decided opinion that in whatever manner this verse disappeared, it was undoubtedly in John’s autograph and in some of the copies which were transcribed from it. (*MacKnight on the Epistles*, Vols. V-VI.)

Insofar as internal evidence is concerned, MacKnight observed:

“... 1. That this verse properly interpreted, instead of disturbing the sense of the verse with which it is joined, rather renders it more connected and complete; as shall be shewn in the course of the notes. – 2. That in ver. 9, *the witness of God* is supposed to have been before appealed to; *If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater.* And yet, if ver. 7. is excluded, the witness of God is no where mentioned by the apostle . . . .” (*MacKnight on the Epistles*, Vols. V-VI, pp. 108-109.)



If one is going to lean heavily upon internal evidence in textual criticism, the preceding argument is worthy of consideration.

Already Gaumer has weakened on Mark 16:9-20, saying that "no doctrine, not even baptism, is changed if these verses are dropped." By this casual admission (though he believes these words are authentic), he has given ground to the denominations. Neither the late Foy E. Wallace, Jr., nor the living Garland Elkins were willing to give ground on Mark 16:9-20 with Norris and Ross, respectively. The late W. L. Totty, a great debater in his own right, pressed unflinchingly 1 John 5:7 as truth *and* a part of the Bible in a forceful way with Gordon Magee, a oneness Pentecostal, back in 1960. He stated:

"For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one." [Hand clapping.] I don't need such as that to help me. I've got the Bible. There it is. Mr. Magee, did Rome write that verse? Did Rome write it, I am asking you? You said Rome introduced it. You don't know what you are talking about. Rome didn't write that. John wrote that, First John 5:7. 'There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.' I don't need a lot of hand clapping to prove that. That's in the Bible. And you know, all he could do about that was to say, 'Well, the scholar that Mr. Totty is, he must know that that's doubtful.' No, I don't know any such thing; and you don't either. You tried to say that was put into the Bible in the tenth century, and that's not so. And why do you make such reflections upon God's word as that for? That's in some of the oldest manuscripts in the world. And we've got them back to the beginning of the fourth century. And there are 1,500 manuscripts in the world. And what he's trying to tell you is that the footnote says that *some* of the oldest ones don't have it; but it didn't say all of them didn't have it. Now, that's the best he can do, is to reflect upon God's word by saying, 'Doesn't Mr. Totty know that's doubtful?' No, I don't; and you don't either. You just wish it was doubtful. You just wish it wasn't in there."

It seems that preaching brethren would serve the cause of Christ better by writing for the purpose of building up the faith than by discrediting the Bible and giving up precious ground fought for by faithful gospel preachers of the past. The same type of reasoning on Mark 16:9-20 and 1 John 5:7 by Gaumer and others would, if applied, destroy the entire Bible.

## **“Distinguishing Different Text-Types Is Erroneous”**

Gaumer denies the above argument; and according to him, some who make such are “undermining modern textual criticism entirely.” That accusation could go both ways. Pickering states:

“Rather than lining up in ‘clear streams’ or ‘text-types’ (as objectively defined entities) the earliest manuscripts are dotted helter-skelter over a wide spectrum of variation. Although varying degrees of affinity exist between and among them, they should be treated as individuals in the practice of textual criticism. Until such time as the relationships among the later manuscripts are empirically plotted, they also should be treated as individuals. To dump them into a ‘Byzantine’ basket is untenable.” (*The Identity of the New Testament Text*, p. 57.)

### **Conclusion**

From the outset Gaumer let it be known that his article would not be concerned with the King James Version but with the text which underlies it. It was stated that from the standpoint of its inherent excellence and its length of service the King James Version is the best translation ever produced. If that be the case, then why write four articles attempting to destroy the text which underlies it? If one destroys the foundation of the house, he has, in essence, destroyed the house. The cause does not justify the means.

It is the writer’s convictions that the King James Version and the traditional text (*Textus Receptus*) is the best available. However, we do not oppose those who prefer the American Standard of 1901. It may not be balanced teaching to advocate the King James Version exclusively, but neither is it balanced teaching in opposing such to discredit the King James Version nor to reason in such a way as to advocate the use of all modern perversions.

## Chapter 5

### WHAT ABOUT THE ECLECTIC METHOD?

The New Testament was originally written by inspiration in Greek. These writings known as the autographs are no longer in existence, but copies of the autographs have passed down through the centuries to man. Through inspiration, God's word came; through providential preservation, God's word remains. "The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O Lord, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever." (Psa. 12:6-7.)

Since none of the autographs remained very long, it became necessary for men translating the Bible from the thousands of copies available to determine the correct readings. The process of reconstructing the original is known as textual criticism.

One of the most recent methods of textual criticism is called the eclectic method. The word *eclectic* comes from the Greek word "*eklegein*, to select, to pick out; *ek*, out, and *legein*, to choose, pick." According to *Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary*, two definitions are given for its correct use: "1. choosing; selecting from various systems, doctrines, or sources; adhering to the principles of eclecticism. 2. composed of material gathered from various sources, systems, etc." (p. 574.)

According to those who adhere to this new method, it is described in this fashion:

"Eclecticism is a rather recent approach to textual criticism in which no one text-type is followed exclusively in seeking to determine the correct reading of a passage from among the variants in manuscripts. The procedure tends to play down text-type and to rely more on internal considerations such as

the style of the author of the text in question and the determination of probabilities when it comes to deciding whether or not a scribe has altered the text." (*The Restorer*, January, 1985.)

But following the above words, Tom Gaumer honestly admitted, "The approach has evident weaknesses, not the least of which is that in some cases a rather strong subjective element enters the picture." To this, we strongly concur. There is no room in textual criticism for the "subjective element." The subjective element means that, based upon the translator's feelings, one believes the author said this or that. This type of reasoning is one factor which caused some critics to reject Mark 16:9-20 as genuine. It would also, if followed to its logical end, destroy the Bible.

We are not afraid to be the first to accept the new nor the last to reject the old, but why is a new approach to textual criticism even needed? Are the old methods, as used by the King James Version and American Standard translators, inadequate? Both of these are reliable and faithful translations. Why is it that supposedly better methods of textual criticism have not produced reliable Bibles?

Jesus said, "Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them." (Matt. 7:17-20.) Since a tree is known by its fruit, let's consider the "fruits" of the eclectic method. This ought to help us determine if the tree (the eclectic method) is good.

The New English Bible is a product of "the eclectic method." Dare anyone say that it is a faithful version with its many corruptions? The NEB, on Acts 20:7, reads, "On the Saturday night, in our assembly for the breaking of bread, Paul, who was to leave the next day, addressed them." That rendering from the eclectic method is a far cry from, "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight." Many other instances might be cited, but one contaminated and rotten spot in the apple is enough!

Another product of this new method of textual criticism is the New International Version (NIV). In its preface we are told, "The Greek text used in translating the New Testament was an

eclectic one. . . . Where existing manuscripts differ, the translators made their choice of readings according to accepted principles of New Testament textual criticism. . . ." Those who are aware know that in the NIV Mark 16:9-20 is set apart from the text as if it were not of the text. It unfaithfully translates *monogenes* (only begotten) as "one and only Son" in John 3:16, 18 and other places. It teaches inherited sin with the expression "sinful nature" throughout Romans 7 and 8. It teaches salvation at the point of faith or faith only in Romans 1:17; 10:10. Other mistranslations could be cited, but these are sufficient to warrant this fruit rotten as well.

Someone might argue, "Well, the eclectic method is a good one. It just has not been applied properly in these cases." However, in most cases, those who claim to follow the eclectic method, in essence, return to the Westcott and Hort text as their standard and continue to omit the same passages as Westcott and Hort (i.e., Mk. 16:9-20; Acts 8:37; Jno. 7:53- 8:11, etc.) The "accepted principles of New Testament textual criticism" means, according to NIV translators, to disregard the vast majority of extant manuscripts.

We should think that one who continues to partake of contaminated and rotten fruit or clings to the tree from which it came would need to have his taste buds examined. So also those who continue to feed on the perversions of God's word or cling to the eclectic method which produced the same should make closer inspection of their tasters. We find neither the fruit (perversions as NEB and NIV) nor its tree (the eclectic method) palatable.

## Chapter 6

### IN DEFENSE OF THE WORD OF GOD

An article entitled "One Translation Sect" by Ray Hawk, in the May issue of *The World Evangelist*, 1982, deserves some attention. Brother Hawk rebukes those who advocate one translation (the King James Version), and some are even questioning the American Standard Version. In defence of other versions, it is stated, "... we do not have any English translations that are perfect." And, also, "Each version has some shortcomings." So, since none is perfect, it is recommended that we study all the versions with a comparative method. Some examples of comparison are given. A comparison on 1 John 3:6,9 and 5:18 is shown to note the richness of the Greek tense in the NIV over KJV; and a comparison of "begotten of God" as rendered in the ASV which gives us a "better insight into the Greek expression" over the phrase, "born of God" as found in the KJV and NIV. We are told we can overlook the fact that "the translators 'slipped-up' and go on and use the translations for our edification and salvation."

It is such writing as this that will destroy the faith of many and shake the confidence and trust in the reliable versions of the Bible. The implications are that we do not have the word of God today, that we must know the original language in order to understand God's will for us, and that the dependable versions are lowered to the level with the undependable perversions. The comparative study method is a smoke screen to get away from the Authorized Version. The results of such a method will bring utter chaos and confusion into the Lord's church. (1 Cor. 14:33,40.)

The Psalmist wrote, "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul. . ." (Psa. 19:7.) The so-called imperfections of the King James Version can in no way be compared with damnable

errors of the modern versions. I would be afraid to stand before any opponent in debate for the truth of the gospel with a modern perversion in my hand. These versions are filled with error, both in the text and margins. It is much easier to explain "the antiquated (outdated) words" in the King James than to "explain" the heresy found within the NASV, NIV, TEV, NEB, NWT, etc. These modern versions do teach damnable doctrine which, if accepted and taught to others will cost one his soul.

But what about comparative readings of other versions with the King James Version? The question that comes to my mind is: How does the average man know which rendition of a passage is correct? He cannot know by reading the New International Version, because "they [the translators] have striven for more than a word-for-word translation." (See preface, NIV.) The only way to have the proper understanding of the tense in a passage is by studying the original language. Must we all know the original in order to understand God's word? Certainly not. We are not against the comparative study method as long as the two reliable versions (KJV and ASV) are used and one is aware of the dangers of the others. But how many are even aware of their dangers? The best course to follow is to stay with the two reliable translations.

The Authorized Version has had the favor of good and great men since it came from the press. It was Thomas Carlyle who wrote, "When our Shakespeare was packing up for Stratford there came out another priceless thing - a correct translation of the Bible, of importance unspeakable." The inclusion of the Hawk article by the editor, Basil Overton, would have been a disappointment, I'm sure, to the preacher from Mars Hill, the late and lamented T. B. Larimore, for it was he who said:

"Now, if in twenty years, Europe and America have given us four or five distinctly different Bibles - and that's what they call them - what and where and when shall the end be? They are advertised all over the land as 'Revised Bibles,' 'Revised Testaments,' etc. This license to revise 'the Word' may become or be an appalling calamity. Denominations may finally have their own denominational Bibles, each to propagate and disseminate its own distinctive doctrine. Then shall infidelity serenely smile and Satan be well satisfied. Now we can say, 'That's what the Bible says,' with telling, tremendous effect. Not so then, for then they can ask, "Which Bible?"

His prediction and prophecy has been fulfilled in our day. As for me, my sentiments are the words of Wallace:

“Let the pen drop from my right hand, my right arm fall limp to my side, my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, and the earth receive my mortal frame, rather than relent in one instance or retreat by one step in the exposure of the spurious versions and in the defense of the Bible as the inerrant Word of God. Let the mantle of courage and of vigilance descend upon us all as we echo the Biblical warnings: ‘Watchman, what of the night?’ (*Gospel Advocate*, July 1, 1976, p. 423.)

Our need is not more Bibles to confuse, but a greater love and respect for the word of God. It is not essential to have easier-to-read Bibles, but a deeper study into the two reliable ones is essential. It is not a comparative study of all versions that is needed, but a comparison of our hearts and lives with the time-tested grand old version which we do have.

“We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, . . .” (2 Peter 1:19.)



## Chapter 7

### CONSIDERING SOME CRITICISMS OF THE KING JAMES VERSION

Over the years many attacks on the King James Version have been made. But in spite of its assailants, it remains steadfast and sure. These assaults have been made from various angles and to different degrees. In recent years some unjust criticisms have been made of this old reliable version, one source even stating there was damnable error in it.

We are told that “firmament” in Genesis 1:6 is rendered inaccurately and that it was an attempt to harmonize the Bible with ancient science. The critic informs us that the Hebrew word did not mean “firm,” but the Septuagint translated it with a word which means “firm” or “solid.” He states this was “*probably* due to certain Alexandrian theories of a ‘stone vault’ heaven.” (Emphasis mine—BFV.) Then, we are told this idea was reflected in the Latin *Vulgate* by the word *firmamentum* which was eventually incorporated in the KJV as *firmament*.

Though the concept by the Greeks of a “stone vault” heaven is not literally true, the firmament does separate the water above it from the water below: “And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven.” (Gen. 1:6-8.)

The firmament, or atmosphere, is a belt of air surrounding this terrestrial ball in thickness of about 60 to 100 miles or more. Though invisible, the atmosphere is material substance. It can be felt. It weighs 14½ pounds per square inch at the sea level. The firmament is estimated to drop a total of 24,000 cubic miles of rainfall per year. It is firm and solid, metaphorically speaking;

otherwise, it would give way to the law of gravity and flood the entire world as in Noah's day. (See Rehwinkel's *The Wonders of Creation*, pp. 73-90.)

Even if these facts were not known, a simple reading of the context will explain the meaning of firmament. "And God called the firmament Heaven." (Gen. 1:8.) The marginal note on verse 6 in some Bibles reads "expanse." Though a better word might be used to render the original, "firmament" is not inaccurate. It might also be of some interest to know that he who has criticized the word *firmament* in the King James Version uses the American Standard Version of 1901 which renders the word in question the same as the King James Version; yet, he has made no objection to the American Standard along this line.

We are next alerted to the King James Version's mention of the "unicorn" (Num. 23:22) and "satyr" (Isa. 13:21) and told that these are endorsements of mythology. It is strange that men of learning do not have good standard English dictionaries to deal with these complex words. Those who believe the Bible do not believe it endorses mythological characters. Therefore, there must be other definitions which are in harmony with the Bible. According to *Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary*, the definition for a unicorn is "in the Bible, a two-horned ox-like animal called *reem* in Hebrew. Deut. 33:17." (P. 1998.) In fact, some Bibles in their margins explain by saying "wild ox." The "satyr" mentioned in Isaiah 13:21 can be discounted as a mythological creature, because it is listed with other creatures of the animal kingdom. The margin says "he-goats." But if these are the only pitiful charges one can trump up against the King James Version, then, let me explain them, rather than accept the poison of false doctrine within the modern versions. The American Standard Version of 1901 renders the two animals "wild ox" and "wild goats."

Another objection was made on Matthew 28:1, which I have been told is "proof of sabbath keeping" unless I give an explanation. The question was asked, "Was Jesus raised at the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, or was he raised on the first day of the week?" What do the Scriptures say? How readest thou? "In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, Jesus was raised." Right? Wrong! Read it again: "In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary

Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.” It was a time of transition from the sabbath to the first day of the week that the women *came to the tomb*. Mark’s account is a good commentary on Matthew 28:1. By the time the women reached the tomb, it was “very early in the morning the first day of the week.” They reached “the sepulchre at the rising of the sun.” It might be noted that Mark 16:9 plainly states, “Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week. . . .” Of course, this verse as found in the version which contains “damnable heresy” must be cast aside, according to some, for the modern versions do not consider it a part of the text.

Again, another “weakness” of the KJV that is brought to our attention is the hackneyed charge of Calvinism in Acts 2:47. We are told it is “a rendition which accommodates Calvinism,” and then a quotation from E. H. Plumptre (who is he?) is given to support the charge. We are also reminded of the meaning of the original words being in the present tense; thus, it should be rendered “the being saved ones.”

But those who make such a charge either do not know what Calvinism is or have failed to consider the context of the verse. The context denies Calvinism. Notice Acts 2:37 in which the multitude asks the question, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” Calvinism denies the fact that men must do something in order to be saved. If Calvinism be taught in this passage, why did Peter tell them to “repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, . . .” ? (Acts 2:38.) Why did Peter continue to exhort, “Save yourselves. . .” ? Calvinism teaches that salvation is unconditional. I debated a Calvinist a few years ago on unconditional election, and he never referred to this passage. If he had thought it accommodated Calvinism, he would have surely used it, because he was grasping for straws. (By the way, it is a good thing some of our brethren did not try to meet him with the New International Version, which is full of Calvinism.)

Acts 2:47 needs to be placed with 2:41. Verse 41 states that the baptized were added. Verse 47 says the added were “such as should be saved.” Thus, all those baptized were of the saved. That sounds like Mark 16:16, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; . . .” *Shall* is an auxiliary verb (a verb which assists other verbs) and always expresses futurity. *Should* is simply the past tense of *shall*.

We have been informed that the KJV rendering (of τους σωζομενους) "such as should be saved" "accommodates Calvinism." Wayne Jackson tells us, "The thought is not that God, according to His secret counsels, had determined who 'should be saved,' hence, added them to the church." (*The Bible Translation Controversy*, pp. 8-9.) But before the foundation of the world God did determine who should be saved; i.e., all those who obeyed the gospel should be saved! (Eph: 1:3-6; 2 Thess 2:13,14.) Who can successfully deny that the Bible teaches predestination? We certainly would refute any false concept of it and have done so, but we refuse to reject the truth on the subject.

Jackson attempted in vain to answer the argument that *should* is simply the past tense of *shall*. He states, "Such as should *be*," however, is not a 'past tense' form." But according to one reference, *should* is defined as "1. Past tense of *shall*. 2. An auxiliary used to express (a) obligation, duty, propriety, necessity: e.g., children *should* get hot lunches; (b) expectation or perpetuity: e.g., since they left Saturday they *should* be here by Monday: equivalent to *ought to* and not replaceable by *would*; . . . ." Another dictionary gives the following: "*Should* is everywhere used in the same connection and the same sense as *shall*, as its imperfect. It also expresses duty or moral obligation; as he *should* do it whether he will or not. In the early English, and hence in our English Bible, *shall* is the auxiliary mainly used, in all the persons, to express simple futurity." (*An American Dictionary of the English Language*, Noah Webster, LL.D., 1885.) If *should* is always used in the same connection as *shall*, as its imperfect, and in our English Bible (i.e., the KJV), *shall* is the auxiliary mainly used, then in Acts 2:47 "such as should be saved" is equivalent to Mark 16:16 "shall be saved," except in tense. Perhaps the American Standard rendering is better on Acts 2:47 ("those that were saved" or as the margin says, "were being saved"); but the King James Version is not inaccurately translated on this verse and certainly by no means teaches Calvinism.

Brother Foy E. Wallace, Jr., stated, "It is asserted that the 'King James Version' is geared to Calvinism. This assertion is flatly contradicted by the fact that the Authorized Version was the weapon that defeated Calvinistic doctrine in all of the great debates of Campbell, Franklin, Wilkes, Lipscomb, Harding, Freed, Hardeman, Warlick, Nichol - and the galaxy of defenders of the faith down to our time - all with the

Authorized King James Version! A Calvinistic version, pshaw!"

It is also claimed that the King James Version teaches Calvinism in Acts 13:48 wherein Luke records by inspiration that "as many as were ordained to eternal life believed." Methinks the accuser either needs to study more on what Calvinism is or the context in which the statement is found. The whole city came to hear the word of God (v. 44). The Jews put the word of God from themselves (v. 46). The Gentiles, on the other hand, heard, were glad and glorified the word of the Lord (v. 48). Because the Jews rejected the word, they judged themselves "unworthy of everlasting life." Because the Gentiles accepted the word, they "were ordained to eternal life." McGarvey says, "If 'as many as were foreordained to eternal life' believed on that day, then all the rest were reprobates, doomed to everlasting punishment, and Paul's further preaching to them was useless." Strange Calvinism, wouldn't you say?

One of the criticisms also given was that Acts 12:4 (where "Easter" is put for "Passover") teaches damnable error. There is no doubt that the word should have been translated "Passover," but is this a damnable error? It was the Jews who kept the Passover, not the early Christians. Peter and the other Christians were not observing either the Passover or Easter. The law was changed, having ended at the cross; and the New Testament was in force (Heb. 7:12; Col. 2:14; Heb. 10:9.) If I mistakenly believe that the Jews observed Easter instead of the Passover, it will not affect my soul's salvation, because Christians are not commanded to observe either.

It distresses me to have to stoop so low as to have to deal with what brethren are calling translation errors or claiming that there are damnable errors in our reliable Bibles (KJV and ASV). Preaching brethren ought to be exerting their energies in building up the faith of others rather than destroying it. All men simply need to put their complete trust in the word of God rather than in the words of men.

## Chapter 8

### CAN THE MODERN VERSIONS BE PLACED ON A PAR WITH THE SEPTUAGINT OF CHRIST'S DAY?

Several months ago brother Wayne Jackson made a plea for "a more balanced, sensible, and scriptural view" of the modern translations. For much of the writing he has done on a variety of subjects we give praise to him, but for some of his reasoning regarding the modern versions we praise him not. What various brethren use in the privacy of their home is their business, but when the modern versions, filled with error, are brought into our pulpits and classrooms, it becomes everybody's business. He has stated:

"Here is a point that some of our brethren who would 'mark' a man simply because he used some version other than the KJV — need to remember. Christ, along with his inspired men, frequently made use of the Septuagint in their teaching and writing, even though they had the Hebrew text available at their disposal. Yet, as every serious student of the Bible knows, the LXX is grossly erroneous at numerous points. It even contains the Apocryphal books which sanction such errors as suicide, the doctrine of the pre-existence of the soul, prayers for the dead, etc. Christ, referring to the LXX, said that those who read it were reading that which was spoken by God (cf. Mt. 22:32). Was our Lord mistaken in this matter?

"The way some are now reasoning, they could not 'recommend' the Savior because of his use of a 'modern version.' Are we recommending a wholesale use of the many modern versions of the Scriptures? *We are not!* What we are saying is this. There needs to be a more balanced, sensible, and scriptural view of this than some are taking."

Boiling Jackson's words into syllogistic form, it reads as follows:

Major Premise:

"The Old Testament scriptures were available to the first century Jews in two languages"; (i.e., the Hebrew scriptures and the Septuagint).

Minor Premise:

Christ and the first century writers used an inferior Bible, the Septuagint, as opposed to the Hebrew scriptures in teaching others.

Conclusion:

Therefore, since the scriptures are available to us in various versions, we, as Christ did, can use the inferior modern versions in teaching others.

From this reasoning, one can see that an effort has been made to place the Septuagint of Christ's day on a par with the modern perversions which are filled with error. His futile attempt contradicts the words of Christ, does not give a true picture of history according to reliable sources, puts him in company with infidel Jews (who have also charged the Septuagint of being full of error), and, though he denies it, opens the door for the wholesale public use of any of the modern versions. Consequently, the time will come when men will be unable to discern between truth and error. He also, in his writings, meets himself coming when he is going, or going when he is coming when it comes to inspiration and translations.

It is agreed that Christ and the New Testament writers, when quoting from the Old Testament, used the Septuagint version. This is the Greek translation of the Hebrew scriptures produced about 180 B. C. by about 72 scholars. According to Jackson and others, this was an "inferior text" and had "considerable deviations from the original text." Several examples were cited by Jackson in the March, 1985, issue of *The Restorer*. But in John 10, having quoted Psalm 82:6 from the Septuagint, Jesus, in his argument, adds parenthetically, "The scripture cannot be broken." (John 10:35.) If the Septuagint were "grossly erroneous at numerous points" in Jesus' day, as Jackson has stated, how could Jesus have made such a statement? We prefer to trust in the words of Jesus, rather than the writings of men, and desire that

our "mistakes" of trust be in favor of the Incarnate Word than in the unreliable words of men.

It cannot be proven that the Septuagint of Christ's day included the Apocrypha. (The word *apocrypha* means hidden or concealed. They were never recognized by the early church; they are destitute of proper testimony; their origin is obscure; their authors unknown; and their character is suspect and heretical.) Scholars have taken divergent views as to whether or not the Apocrypha was included with the Septuagint in Christ's day. H. S. Miller, in his *General Biblical Introduction*, states:

"The Septuagint (Alexandrian) version was made in 280-180 B. C., or, as some say, 250-150 B. C. But the earliest extant manuscript of this version is dated around 350 A. D., a distance of 500 years from the latest date for the end, or 600 years from the beginning of the translation. The Apocryphal books may easily have crept in during this period, through copyists, etc. The fact that these books are in present existing manuscripts of this version does not prove that they were in the original translation." (p. 122.)

R. C. Foster, once professor of Greek and New Testament at the Cincinnati Bible Seminary, quoted Sir Frederic Kenyon, from his standard work *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscript*, who, having stated the value of the Septuagint to early Christians, said, "The result of this appropriation of the Septuagint by the Christian Church was that the Jews cast it off. When the Christians in controversy pressed them with quotations from the prophets, of which the fulfillment had been found in Jesus Christ, the Jews took refuge in a denial of the accuracy of the Septuagint translation. In the second century of our era this repudiation took form in the production of rival versions." (Foy E. Wallace, Jr., *A Review of the New Versions*, "Addenda: The Battle of the Versions")

We have been told: "... The Septuagint is grossly erroneous at numerous points. It even contains the Apocryphal books which sanction such errors as suicide, the doctrine of the pre-existence of the soul, prayer for the dead, etc." ("An Evaluation of Several Bible Translations," *The Restorer*, Vol. 5, No. 2.) Such statements do nothing but cause doubt and misgivings in the hearts of people. Why is it that our brethren will make such statements and some conservative denominational men will write as Miller?



“Notwithstanding the differences in minor details between the Septuagint and our present Hebrew Bible, there is a substantial agreement, and the former offers valuable confirmation of the genuineness and integrity of the text of the latter. Says Smyth: ‘Let me, therefore, again call special attention to the fact that the Pentateuch of the Samaritans proves the substantial agreement of our Pentateuch with that of 500 years before Christ, and that the Septuagint does the same thing for the whole Old Testament a couple of hundred years later.’” (Miller, H. S., *General Biblical Introduction*, pp. 225-226.)

The testimony of Josephus is also worthy of note. He was a Jewish historian contemporary with many of the writers of the New Testament. No amount of recently discovered “evidence” can remove his testimony! He was there! Of our 39 books of the Old Testament (which in his day were counted as 22, since several books were combined) he said, “. . . no one has been so bold as either to add any thing to them, to take any thing from them, or to make any change in them; . . .” (Horne’s *Introduction to the Scriptures*, Vol. I, p. 458.)

Brother Jackson’s statement that “the Old Testament scriptures were available to the first century Jews in two languages” gives a fuzzy picture of the language in the time of Christ and the apostles. Though the scriptures were available in two languages to the people at that time, the Hebrew language had been lost, for the most part, to the common man.

“During the seventy years’ captivity, though it does not appear that the Hebrews *entirely* lost their native tongue, yet it underwent so considerable a change from their adoption of the vernacular languages of the countries where they had resided, that afterwards, on their return from exile, they spoke a dialect of Chaldee mixed with Hebrew words. . . . Some time after the return from the great captivity, Hebrew ceased to be spoken altogether. . . . At the time of the Maccabees, then, Hebrew was probably understood, at least, as the language of books: perhaps, in some measure, also, among the better informed, as the language of conversation. But soon after this, the dominion of the Seleucidae, in Syria, over the Jewish nation, uniting with the former influence of the Babylonish captivity, in promoting the Aramaean dialect, appears to have destroyed the remains of proper Hebrew, as a living language, and to have universally substituted, in its stead, the Hebraeo-Aramaean, as it was spoken, in the time of our Saviour.” (Horne, Thomas Hartwell, *Introduction to the Scriptures*, Vol. II, Part I, pp. 6-7.)

"The fragments of the popular language which we find in the New Testament are all Aramaean, and ever since the Hebrew has been preserved and cultivated as the language of the learned and of the books, and not of common life." (McClinton & Strong, Vol IV, p. 136.)

"The language spoken by the Jews was no longer Hebrew, but Aramaean, both in Palestine and Babylonia; in the former the Western, in the latter the Eastern dialect. In fact, the common people were ignorant of pure Hebrew, which henceforth became the language of students and of the Synagogue." (Edersheim, Alfred, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, Book I, p. 10.)

"About a century before the beginning of the Christian Era, the Hebrew ceased to be a living language..." (Milligan, Robert, *Reason and Revelation*, p. 386.)

The quotation from Kenyon earlier shows that the Jews took refuge in a denial of the accuracy of the Septuagint in Christ and the apostles' day. Jackson has placed himself in their company.

Even if I were to concede the contention of the inferiority of the Septuagint version as compared to the Hebrew scriptures in Christ's day, it is "ungetoverable," "ungetaroundable," and "ungetthroughable" that the Hebrew language was unfamiliar to the common man in the first century! Jesus and the New Testament writers used the Septuagint because it was the best available to the common man at that time. We need to be encouraging brethren to use the best available versions today, rather than to commiserate with those who endorse the unreliable versions.

Brother Jackson, in his booklet, *The "Bible Translation" Controversy*, asks, "If the LXX was an inspired translation, then inspiration in the Old Testament era did not cease with Malachi; rather, it continued well into the inter-biblical period. Shall we accept that conclusion?" (p. 18.) Is Jackson saying inspiration ceased with the autographs? Remember that only the apographs (copies) were extant by the Maccabean period. By this time all the original writings of the Old Testament prophets had disappeared.

Inspiration continued and still does today when the word of God is faithfully translated. Inspiration between the testaments continued – not in men, but in the book. We recognize the translators were not inspired, but what they faithfully translated

was inspired! Paul 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. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:15-17.) The "holy scriptures" is a reference to the Old Testament which at that time was available to the common man in the Septuagint version. The Holy Spirit, through Paul, said the scriptures were inspired, but we are told that inspiration (in reference to Old Testament scriptures) ceased with Malachi. Paul said in his day they were inspired.

It is difficult to discern what Jackson believes on this point, because in the very next paragraph following the above quotation (loc. cit.) he tells us, "The translation process *per se* does not destroy inspiration." In the preceding quotation, Jackson implies that inspiration *did cease* with Malachi, but now he tells us the translation process *per se* does not destroy inspiration. Which Jackson shall we accept: the one who says that inspiration ceased with Malachi and, thus, deny the words of Paul? or the Jackson who says the translation process does not necessarily destroy inspiration and, thus, we must reject the earlier words by Jackson? We prefer to accept the latter, the one coming (to the truth) rather than the one going (from the truth).

In Jackson's *The "Bible Translation" Controversy*, which in the main is a reprint of articles he has had printed in *The Restorer* and his own bulletin, *The Christian Courier*, an illustration is given of his attempting to teach a Jehovah's Witness. In the course of their study, he borrows the Jehovah's Witness Bible, the New World Translation, and reads Acts 2:38. He then asks his readers these questions:

- "(a) Have I read the word of God, even though some portions of this translation are notoriously incorrect? Certainly I have.
- (b) Does the fact that I used the N.W.T. in that instance imply that I *endorse* its errors in other places? Of course not. I simply began with that person where he was, and from that point I will attempt to teach him the way of the Lord more accurately, including the responsible selection of a good translation of the Bible." (*The "Bible Translation" Controversy*, pp. 19-20.)

Brother Jackson has missed the point regarding our objections to the modern perversions. We object to the unreliable

versions (e.g., RSV, NIV, NASB, NEB, etc.) being used publicly in the pulpit and classrooms exclusively. It might be that in teaching a Jehovah's Witness one could show him their error by using their own "ammunition" against them. Paul did this on Mars Hill when he quoted the poets and when he said to Titus, "One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, The Cretians are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies. This witness is true." (Tit. 1:12-13.) But he did not quote from these sources every Lord's day as some of our preachers do with the modern versions.

Observe that our brother Jackson stated he would teach the Jehovah's Witness "the way of the Lord more accurately, including the responsible selection of a good translation of the Bible." However, in another place ("An Evaluation of Several Bible Translations," *The Restorer*, February, 1985), he stated, "My personal choice is still the American Standard Version (1901), but I will certainly not castigate those who choose a different translation. Liberty must be allowed here." If, then, liberty is allowed, why will he attempt to bind his personal feelings regarding a "responsible selection of a good translation of the Bible"? If the choice of translations is a matter of liberty, why is brother Jackson going to teach the Jehovah's Witness "the way of the Lord more accurately, including the responsible selection of a good translation of the Bible?" "Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?" (Rom. 2:21.)

The "argument" that those of us who are opposing the public use of the unreliable Bibles are making it a test of fellowship is simply subterfuge. Truth is the test of fellowship. The real test is when one departs from the truth, either in word or deed. He may leave "town" by any number of different avenues or alleys, such as mechanical instruments of music, premillennialism, the view that the miraculous age continues, error on marriage - divorce - remarriage, grace only, or unreliable versions which teach the preceding doctrines. Which road he takes, in a sense, is of little consequence. The point is this: He left town!

If the modern translations can be placed on a par with the Septuagint version (plus the Apocrypha), then, let us learn from history.

"The general use of the Septuagint (enlarged by apocryphal additions) produced effects which are plainly visible in the history of the Old Testament Canon among the early Christian writers. In proportion as the fathers were more or less absolutely dependent on that version for their knowledge of the Old

Testament Scriptures, *they* gradually lost in practice the sense of the difference between the books of the Hebrew Canon and the Apocrypha." (McClintock & Strong, Vol. II, p. 78.)

My defense of the King James Version is not that of some "radical reactionary" which sticks out like some "sore thumb" when compared with good men of the past. W. L. Totty, who preached in the city of Indianapolis 43 years, was a staunch supporter of the King James Version and would at times give the American Standard Version of 1901 rendering. He believed the King James was the better, though he had the American Standard Version in his library. Brother Gus Nichols said, "I advise that the church use and endorse the King James Version of the Bible, made by 47 great Hebrew, Greek and English scholars, and the American Standard Version, made by 101 modern scholars – making a total of 148 great scholars who produced the two translations, the first in 1611; and the last one in 1901 – when I was nine years old." (*The Church Today: Current Issues, Problems, and Challenges, FHC 1975 Lectures*, p. 36.)

Foy E. Wallace, Jr., that grand old soldier of the cross, battle-scarred from many confrontations through the years, made one final attack upon the modern versions. He staunchly defended upon the front line the King James Version. His volleys went forth by tongue and pen against the modernism and denominationalism in the new translations. He scattered the ranks of truth's enemies which appeared in the garb of the RSV, NEB, TEV, Living Bible Paraphrase, NIV, etc. Of his *A Review of the New Versions*, Guy N. Woods placed his stamp of approval by saying it was "the most monumental work, as well as the most scholarly, to come from the pen of any man among us in recent years." (*Questions and Answers Open Forum*, p. 317.)

If brethren continue to encourage in different ways the use of the modern versions for the common man, there will come a time when people will be unable to discern between truth and error.

Since our brother Jackson does not think we would have recommended the Savior because of his use of a "modern version," i.e., the Septuagint, does he recommend "faithful" brethren who preach almost exclusively from the modern versions to faithful congregations? If not, why not? If so, who? Would he oppose such a brother's filling the pulpit where he preaches when he is gone? If so, why?

## Chapter 9

### BINDING THE KJV OR ASV TO THE PULPIT AND CLASSROOM

In the December, 1982, *Harding Graduate School of Religion Bulletin*, Brother Jack P. Lewis reviewed the ruling by a number of elderships in the respective congregations that only the King James and American Standard Versions be used in the pulpits and classrooms. He opposes this ruling and gives three or four main objections. Let us examine his reasons under the light of God's word. "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." (Isa. 8:20.)

Brother Lewis states, "The first thing to be said about the above regulation is that it is a rule of man and not a rule of God. The Lord never said one word about which translation of his word was to be read by his people." But, friends, elders have been assigned the task of overseeing and guarding the flock. Paul warned the elders of Ephesus, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears" (Acts 20:28-32.) In another place, the Holy Spirit tells us, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, . . ." (Heb. 13:17.) Elders are charged with the duty of guarding the flock against error.

Is it a rule of God to keep the doctrines of original sin, faith only, once saved always saved, premillennialism, etc., out of the

pulpit? Most certainly! Then, it is a rule of God that the pulpit and classrooms be kept free from the modern versions which uphold false doctrine. If it is wrong to bring a Baptist preacher in to preach in our pulpits (some brethren would not even object to this), then it is wrong to bring a book which subscribes to the same beliefs. What is the difference? John wrote, "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." What is the difference between the bringing in of another doctrine in written form and bringing another in orally?

Lewis goes on to say, "In the second place, one discovers that in many cases those most ready to rule on what the best translation is could not translate two consecutive verses if their life depended upon it." One does not have to be a Greek or Hebrew scholar to know which translations are reliable. It does not take a knowledge of the Greek, Hebrew, or Aramaic to know that we are not born in sin, or that premillennialism is false. Of course, according to Lewis and others, one cannot really know the word of God until he learns Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic. If such were true, that would mean we common folk have no revelation from God, and the so-called intellectuals who barely know the difference between a chicken's print and a Greek *theta* have only a small portion. Given the fact(?) that some may know the original languages, one would still have to wrestle with which text is the best to use. The scholars are divided on that subject. Jesus said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." (Matt. 24:35.)

Again, it is stated, "In the third place, such a ruling as the one we are discussing is a ruling for the perpetuation of the demonstrated errors in the KJV or ASV." But according to Lewis' own book (*The English Bible from KJV to NIV*), he points out errors in all the versions. Therefore, the removal of such a ruling would not alleviate his argument. It is true that some of the pioneer preachers pointed out the need for revision, but it is a misrepresentation of them to imply they would approve of the modern versions of today. It was Alexander Campbell who wrote, "... the English, or German, or French New Testament, is as much the word of the Spirit as the Greek original, *if that original is faithfully translated* [emphasis mine – BFV.]; but in any other view of inspiration, we have not the word of God, nor the

teachings of the Spirit, only in the Hebrew and Greek originals of the two covenants” (*Christian Baptism: with Its Antecedents and Consequents*, 1871, p. 53.) Some of the objections Lewis has to the KJV were considered “mint, anise, and cummin” by Alexander Campbell, who said, “I have long regretted that most of our approved versions, as they are called, should have needlessly changed the style and verbiage of the Anglo-Saxon of King James. *My views are that no change should be made but what faithfulness to the original requires.*” [Emphasis mine – BFV.] (*Millennial Harbinger*, October, 1850, p. 580.)

It, therefore, is not out of order for the elders of a congregation to rule that only the King James and American Standard Versions be used in their classrooms and pulpits. It is wise to do so because of their reliability and faithfulness to the original and in order to prevent confusion in the minds of the hearers. (Rev. 22:18-19.)



# Chapter 10

## IS THERE AN INSPIRED BIBLE ON THE MARKET TODAY? – NO. 1

*W. L. Totty*

Some preachers in the church of Christ today – a few in high places – are contending that there is not a “translation on the market today that’s verbally inspired.” Some few even go so far as to say that the original manuscripts were not inspired, except the subjects on which the writers were to write. A few preachers, whom I know, are denying the inspiration of the Bible and are contending that some passages are not even the truth.

Several years ago no preacher in the church of Christ would have made such statements. Brother N. B. Hardeman said, in 1923, when preaching against the modernism of the Christian Church, that one might comb the church of Christ with a fine-tooth comb, and one would not find a modernist in it. But, today we can find in the church of Christ those who believe and teach just about anything that is believed and taught in the modernist wing of the Christian Church. This fact shows how possible it is for the church of Christ to drift so far away from the truth in just a few short years.

If our Bible is not inspired of God, and if it contains fallacious passages, how are we going to know what is true and what is not? If it is not inspired, it is not the word of God, for inspiration simply means “God-breathed.” Just recently I read an attempt of one of “our” preachers to discredit Mark 16:9-20. I heard Ben M. Bogard, the famous Baptist preacher, try to discredit Mark 16:9-20 in a debate with A. G. Freed, in Nashville, Tennessee, about 40 years ago; but, until recently, I had never heard such a wild statement from a member of the church of Christ.

But some contend that the King James and American Standard versions of the Bible cannot be inspired because they were translated by uninspired men. Their premise is that for a translation to be inspired it would have had to have been translated by men inspired of God. But the Septuagint version, from which the apostles and Christ quoted and read, was translated into Greek from the Hebrew language 270 years before Christ was born by a committee of 70 scholars who were not inspired. Yet, Paul, no doubt, speaking of that version, said to Timothy: "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. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (II Tim. 3:15-17.) In that statement Paul says that the inspired scripture would thoroughly furnish the man of God unto every good work. If we do not have the inspired scripture today, we are not thoroughly furnished unto every good work, and we will not be made perfect, for following an imperfect record will not make one perfect.

But someone else will say that the American Standard version says, "Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching," etc., and that it does not say that every scripture is inspired of God; therefore, Paul was only speaking of some that were inspired. But that contention condemns fatally the one who supports it, for according to that, only the inspired scripture, as Paul said, would thoroughly furnish unto every good work; and, thus, the one who makes the contention admits, whether intentionally or not, that we are not thoroughly furnished unto every good work. But the translators of the American Standard version wrote a footnote to that verse which says, "Every scripture *is* inspired of God," thus, supporting the translators of the King James Version.

The scribes copied the Old Testament for several centuries before Christ was born; and as far as we have any record, there was not a line of anything that Moses wrote in the original when Christ was upon earth; yet, Christ said of the scribes and Pharisees: "The scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not." (Matt. 23:2-3.) Moses' seat was a figurative term expressing Moses' authority;

therefore, Jesus gave his approval of the manuscripts copied by the scribes. The trouble with them was their failure to obey it, not that it was uninspired.

It is said also that if the original were translated by any person who was not a child of God, it would not be inspired. In other words, inspiration could not pass through any person who had not "experienced the new birth." But, when Balaam was on his way to curse the children of Israel and mistreated his donkey, the Bible says that the Lord opened the mouth of the ass and she said, "What have I done unto thee, that thou hast smitten me these three times?" (Num. 22:28.) There is no question about the Lord's speaking through the mouth of the donkey, for donkeys have never been known to speak in any language, except that one time; and the Bible definitely tells that that was God's work. I am sure that none of these "intellectuals" who criticize our Bible would say that Balaam's donkey had "experienced the new birth." Probably they would say that is only "tradition" and should not be in the Bible.

It is also said that we should not say that "we speak where the Bible speaks and are silent where the Bible is silent," for that would be saying that we are infallible. But Peter said, "If any many speak, let him speak as the oracles [words] of God." (I Pet. 4:11.) And Paul said, "That in us ye might learn not to go beyond the things which are written." (I Cor. 4:6 ASV.) Peter and Paul, to paraphrase it, are both saying: Speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where it is silent.

It makes one shudder to think what those critics would do with our Bible if they were unopposed.

# Chapter 11

## IS THERE AN INSPIRED BIBLE ON THE MARKET TODAY? – NO. 2

*W. L. Totty*

In the *First Century Christian* of October, 1967, there appeared an article from my pen, under the heading "Is There An Inspired Bible on The Market Today?" A brother took issue with my article and criticized severely the position which I had taken relative to the inspiration of the Bible. The editor has requested me to write an article, or articles, on the subject.

To further elucidate my meaning it is necessary for me to give the background which prompted my writing on that subject. In our church bulletin I reviewed an outline of a speech which brother Jimmy Allen made before an audience gathered at Harding College, in which he said, "I do not believe the people with whom I worship have the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth." In commenting about what I had written, brother Allen made the statement (which is recorded), "I don't believe there is a translation on the market today that's verbally inspired." He contended that inspiration ended with the apostles and that the Bible we have could not be inspired of God unless it was translated by inspired translators.

We heartily agree that the translators were not inspired men. It was never my intention to leave that impression. But I do not believe that inspiration ended with the death of the apostles. I believe that the power for any man to speak or write by inspiration ended then; but what inspired men had already written continued to be inspired, even though the writers were dead. The "germ" of inspiration was in the word which the apostles wrote; and, if translated correctly into another language, that germ remained alive, just as the germ of life remains in the grain of

wheat long after the stalk which bore it is gone. Inspiration remains in the world, even though the writers have long since died.

I do not mean to convey the idea that every word in the Bible in English was written by the inspired writers. We understand that sometimes it takes a plurality of words in English to translate one Greek word; e.g., Jesus speaking about building his church, used the word *oikodomaso*, which translated into English is *I will build* – three English words. But the message is inspired just the same as it was with the one Greek word.

If we do not have the inspired message in our English translations, we do not have the word of God. If we take the position that part is inspired and part is tradition or folklore, who is going to determine just which is inspired and which is not? That would necessitate our having an inspired interpreter.

Our critic questions Mark 16:9-20. That passage of scripture was questioned more than 40 years ago by Baptist debaters, and the people of the church of Christ were struck with awe to hear those denominational preachers deny part of our Bible. We never thought then that the church of Christ would ever reach the plateau that its preachers would take the same position that Baptist preachers took 40 and 50 years ago.

We are also questioned about the word *Easter*, which appears in Acts 12:4. The word *Easter* has taken on a different meaning to what it meant in 1611. The translators of that age spoke of Easter as a feast. We admit that *passover* would have been a more complete translation of the word *paska*, but the context tells which feast the translators meant. The third verse says, "Then were the days of unleavened bread." That clearly shows that the translators had in mind the passover.

Our critic also compared the King James and American Standard versions of Hebrews 6:6. The King James version says, "If they shall fall away," while the American Standard says, "and then fell away." The difference in the tense of the verbs is easily harmonized by examining the context. The latter part of the sixth verse, in telling why they cannot be restored to repentance, says, "seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame." The words *seeing*, *crucify*, and *put him to an open shame* are in the present tense. So, there really isn't any discrepancy at all between the two versions. Nobody in the church of Christ of whom I ever heard or read claimed any discrepancy until recently, notwithstanding the fact

that we knew that was there many, many years ago.

It is agreed, I believe, by most people who have studied the subject that the apostles used the Septuagint version. There are two outstanding points related to the issue. Though they used the Septuagint version, which was a translation by uninspired men, it was inspired, because Paul said so in II Timothy 3:16. Peter also said, "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (II Peter 1:20,21.) Note, please, that the apostle said, "*no* prophecy of the scripture *is* of any private interpretation." The verb *is* is present tense. That meant that, at the time Peter spoke, it was not of any private interpretation. How much of it was not of any private interpretation? None! And he said that is the first thing to learn, "knowing this first." Peter said that, notwithstanding the fact that it had been copied for 1500 years. Why did the apostle say it is of no private interpretation? Because "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Where were the alleged mistakes made by the copyists when Peter wrote that? Why didn't inspiration eliminate those alleged errors? Why didn't the inspired apostles point out those discrepancies to the people? If they had been as anxious to find fault with God's word as some of our preachers are today, they surely would not have passed over that opportunity.

I will admit there are things hard to be understood in the Bible. The Bible itself says that. (II Pet. 3:16.) But whether I understand it or not, I believe it is true.

Jesus Christ, in his argument with the Jews, said, "Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?" (John 10:34-36.) Those Jews certainly knew the Old Testament. And if the scripture could have been broken, why didn't the Jews point it out to Christ? And why would Christ have made such a statement?

If some of our present-day theologians had been there and if the law could have been broken, they would have had a field day showing the mistakes of Christ.

It is a dangerous thing to charge the Bible with untrue statements just because we can't understand some of it.



