

## KING JAMES SEMINAR, PART II

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This seminar is devoted to the question whether the King James only position is the right one. Two basic issues are involved: one is differences in translation. I dealt with that last year. The other reason some versions differ from others is differences in text. That is the subject now.

### Introduction

A. I have mixed emotions about this: I would much prefer to duck it entirely, as I did for years. But sources outside our denomination will not let us alone. They keep hammering away at this issue. They send free books and free tapes and stir our people. They arouse fear and mistrust on the part of good solid folk in our churches. People actually become afraid lest they use a "Bible" that will bring God's curse rather than God's blessing. Christians are being hurt; believers are dividing—over the wrong issue!

So I feel I must make whatever effort I can to stand for truth. I realize that those who defend the "King James only" (KJO) position, especially those in our denomination, do so out of a sincere love for God and for the Bible as the Word of God. Many have been aroused by others to believe that the devil is behind all the other versions.

Disagreements with fellow believers over this issue are disagreements among brothers in Christ, not the same as disagreements with liberals or cults, for example. Still, I am convinced that being wrong never serves the cause of truth, regardless how well intentioned one is. Furthermore, I have listened to the tapes of the outsiders who stir up trouble among us, and read from their books, and I am horrified. The defense of the KJO position on their part is too often characterized by serious misrepresentation and by reprehensible oversimplification, one-sidedness, exaggeration, misquoting and downright abuse of what others say. Especially are these presentations deceptively selective: that is, they tell you about what serves their purpose, but they never tell you the whole truth. The end does not justify the means, neither for liberals nor for us fundamentalists.

B. Let me rehearse some things you already know, even though time is precious. It is of utmost importance that you put everything else I say in the context of this introduction. Everything in this presentation—about the King James as a version, or about other versions, or about all the manuscript differences involved—must be understood in this light. Nothing I will say later will conflict with what I say here.

1. I am a fundamentalist.

2. I believe the Bible is the inspired Word of God. I believe in the plenary verbal view of inspiration: God breathed every word that the Bible writers put down and which have been preserved in the canon of Scripture.

3. I believe in the inerrancy of the Scriptures. There is not one single thing that the Bible intends to communicate that will convey error—not in teaching about the way of salvation and knowing God, not in history, not in science—no error in anything.

4. I believe that God Almighty, in His providence, has preserved His Word so well that we can point to this or that rendering of it into various languages and say: This is that inerrant Word of God.

5. I believe that the King James is the Word of God. I have absolutely no desire to influence anyone to use any other version or to think there is anything wrong with the King James. Nothing I will say needs to undermine confidence in the King James as the Word of God.

6. I have no desire to defend or recommend to you any other of the more recent versions. Some of them I like, and some I don't. Even my explaining why they do what they do doesn't mean I always approve of what they do. Christians need to be discerning. The issues involved are important and deserve our attention. Some of the versions should be rejected because they do not honor God's Word.

7. I love the Bible. I believe God has spoken there in human language so that we can know Him. There are some liberals who accuse us of bibliolatry, of worshipping the Bible rather than Christ. I plead not guilty. I do not worship the Bible, I worship the triune God revealed in Jesus Christ. But the only Christ I know is clothed in the garments of the Scripture. If I construct some other picture of Him, different from the Biblical one, I am just a religious idolater.

8. I believe not only in the inspiration of the Bible but also in its authority. As God's own Word, the Bible has the authority to govern the church and believers, not the other way around.

Some say that the authority to govern the Christian life lies in the church; that was the issue at stake in the Protestant Reformation. No wonder Luther rebuked Erasmus, then, when he said, "What is that you say, Erasmus? Do you subject your mind to the decisions of the church? What can the church decide that has not previously been decided in the Scriptures?" That's why Baptists, especially, have always stood firm that the only rule of faith and practice is the Bible. I fear that we Protestants have lost our protest.

Others say that the authority to govern the Christian life lies in the enlightened conscience and reason of the believer. C. H. Dodd, for example, says words to this effect: "We must be governed by the authority of Jesus Christ; His words are our rule and law. But if you mean by this that the words quoted as His in the New Testament have that authority, then that is not the case. We recognize that some of the things attributed to Him there are simply not true or are unacceptable to the enlightened conscience of the believer." You see, Dodd doesn't believe in the authority of the Bible or of Jesus Christ; he believes in the authority of C. H. Dodd.

I repeat, now: nothing else I say, from here on out, will contradict that. It may seem to you to contradict it. You may say to yourself, or to someone else, that you can't possibly see how I can put this and everything else I'll say together. I'll try to explain, but I can't guarantee you I will succeed. I can only assure you that what I've just said is part of my unalterable creed.

C. Now, at the end of my introduction, my first point, to put this entire discussion in a certain context: the argument that the King James only is the Word of God is not a part of historic fundamentalism.

Recently, I was asked to review a tape distributed free from Pensacola Christian College. It is a defense of the KJO position by Dr. Dell Johnson on that good institution's faculty. I appreciate Pensacola in many ways, but I have to tell you that the position espoused in this tape is not the traditional, fundamentalist position on this subject. When I speak, here, of historic fundamentalism, I mean those who led the movement and who have been most vocal in opposing liberalism first and then cooperative evangelism and the new evangelicalism. By and large, fundamentalists have always accepted the need for textual criticism.

Certainly, fundamentalists rejected some of the "modern" versions—like the RSV or the TEV. They did so, however, not on the basis of textual theory but simply because of faults in those particular versions. Only recently has the KJO position been espoused by numbers of folks within the fundamentalist movement. We should discuss these matters, therefore, with an understanding of this context. To insist on the King James only position is to require that this become a new "fundamental," to add yet one more thing we must divide over.

## **I. What's Involved in the Matter of Textual Differences**

### **A. The Variety of Manuscripts**

Perhaps the best place to start is to explain what is involved in the textual differences that show up in the Bible, especially in the NT. (In a somewhat lesser way, some of these same issues arise in connection with the OT, but I'll speak of NT matters.)

The original documents—"autographs"—have not survived, so far as we know. Probably they wore out with use. Besides, there could only be one autograph, and every church (not to mention individuals) would want its own copy.

So copies were made and distributed, as any church wanted a copy of any part, or parts, of the NT. Those too would have been worn out or destroyed. But before they were, copies of those copies were made and distribution grew broader and broader wherever the gospel was spread and churches planted.

Copies were copied again and new copies were made from those copies, and copies of copies of copies of copies spread all over the Christian community, all made by hand ("manuscripts") until the 15th century when movable type was invented and modern printing became possible.

As the centuries rolled by, the copies used were further and further separated from the original autographs both by time and by the generations of copies between. Let's suppose a copy was made in the year 1000 (as many were): there would have been any number of generations of copies between it and the autographs.

You've heard that we have thousands of Greek manuscripts. Yes, and praise God: the Bible has been the most

copied book in the world, far more well-attested than any other ancient writing. Even today, there are some 5,000 or more Greek NT manuscripts, twice that many Latin Bible manuscripts, and well over 1,000 in other languages!

By the way, don't misunderstand the implications of this. We do not have anything like 5,000 Greek manuscripts of the New Testament! Many of these contain only parts of the New Testament, not even whole books. Some are but a few pages, say, and some are just fragments of a page. A number of them contain, say, the gospels, or the gospels and Acts, or just Paul's epistles, or some other portion.

And here's the problem: these various manuscripts simply do not agree with each other, word for word. Which shouldn't surprise us. Human beings cannot, or at least do not, copy long works without making errors—for various reasons. Even printers make typographical errors.

That's true, by the way, for every piece of ancient literature that was produced before the invention of printing and has been preserved in manuscript form. Wherever there are ancient writings that have survived in more than one manuscript there are differences between those manuscripts, and the textual scholars have to compare them wherever they differ and try to determine what the original said.

On that Pensacola tape I mentioned, you can't help noticing the simplistic way the whole message is woven around the idea of "criticizing the Word of God" as opposed to believing it. Dr. Johnson stresses that Jesus and Paul weren't critics of the Bible but believers of it. Then without even so much as a turn signal he lays in on the "textual critics" as critics of the Word. What he doesn't tell you is, first, that the fundamentalist Bible scholars have always made a distinction between "higher criticism" and "lower criticism." The higher critics evaluate what the Bible says: Did Paul write Ephesians? Was the Pentateuch produced by one author or four plus redactors? And so forth. Fundamentalists have generally rejected the assumptions and results of higher criticism.

But "lower criticism," which is the same as "textual criticism," has historically been accepted by fundamentalist Bible scholars. In this usage "criticism" does not mean criticizing the Bible at all! Textual criticism simply means the analytical study of the different manuscripts to compare them where they differ in order to reach a conclusion as to which of the different readings (when there are different readings) was original. By the way, that's exactly what Erasmus did when he took the few Greek manuscripts he had access to and decided between them and produced the Textus Receptus that many King James only people put their confidence in. In other words, depending on the work of textual criticism cannot be avoided by anyone. Many of those in the field of textual criticism are committed believers that the Bible is the Word of God.

## **B. The Practice of Textual Criticism**

I repeat: the manuscripts of the NT writings, in part or in the whole, that still exist, do not agree with each other in every word. Lest this seem to you to be a bigger problem than it is, I assure you that even though there are thousands of places where the various NT manuscripts read somewhat differently from one another, they all read the same! That is, the basic message and teaching conveyed by them, regardless which one you read, is the same as that conveyed by any other manuscript. Keep that in mind as we go along.

But since they don't agree in every single word (even though they agree in teaching) the textual scholars set about to compare them to attempt to determine, in the places where they differ, which of the different readings matches the original. This is textual criticism. The textual scholars do not have any personal agenda in this, they simply want to know, word for word as much as possible, exactly what the original words were.

### **1. Dating manuscripts**

The first task of the textual critics is to date each manuscript. A number of things help them do this with a fair amount of accuracy. By and large the KJO defenders do not dispute the dates which the textual scholars assign to the various manuscripts.

- a. The writing material itself, whether papyrus, vellum, paper.
- b. Whether the document is a scroll or in book (Latin "codex") form.
- c. The spelling of various words (which changes over time) or other kinds of writing conventions like abbreviations or short forms of the name of God, etc.
- d. The "style" of the writing itself. Where the older manuscripts are in "uncials" (small, mostly separated capitals, like printing by hand), the later ones are in "minuscule" writing (a connected, script handwriting).

e. Some of the later ones are actually dated, the first one in A.D. 835.

Why is dating important? The older a copy is, the closer in time it was to the autograph. And (watch it, now) that also means that there were (probably!) less generations of copies between it and the original. A copy made 1000 years after Paul died will probably have many, many generations of copies between it and the original, whereas a copy made in the second century, say 100 years after Paul died, will probably have only a few generations of copies between it and the original. And although this is not an absolute, at least you want to know whether a given copy was made in the second, fifth, tenth, or fifteenth century, for example.

That helps but does not guarantee that you can evaluate the probable accuracy of a given manuscript, since it is at least theoretically possible that a copy made in the year 150 might have been made from another copy that was very carelessly made and contained many mistakes, while one made in the year 1000 could have been made from one with 25 generations of very accurate copies between it and the original!

We have manuscripts of the New Testament ranging from a few in the second century to many in the 15th century. That makes perfect sense: the farther back in time, the less the number that have been preserved, and the more limited the area where they have been preserved. (Which is also true of other ancient writings that have been preserved.)

## 2. Grouping manuscripts into families

Since the age of a manuscript doesn't absolutely settle questions of its accuracy, the next step is to attempt to group all the manuscripts into "families." In a large number of manuscripts that have differences, certain ones of them agree more closely with each other than they agree with others. Although no two manuscripts will agree with each other 100% letter for letter, certain numbers of manuscripts share certain traits in common.

This also makes sense. Let's say that somewhere along the line of copies of copies was a copy that contained a certain group of scribal mistakes in copying. Any subsequent copies made from that copy (even several generations of copies later) will probably have that same group of mistakes. And another copy somewhere else with an entirely different set of mistakes will perpetuate those mistakes (unless someone edits and corrects) in the generations of copies that descend from it.

Consequently—although this can be dreadfully oversimplified—the textual scholars think (with some logical justification) that they can trace a given group of manuscripts back to a certain common ancestor copy that they all descended from, because they have certain traits in common. The common ancestor of any group of manuscripts, even if it doesn't still exist, is called an "archetype."

Over the years the textual scholars have tended to arrive at a general agreement, in theory, that there are four main families or groups of manuscripts. In other words, that all these thousands of manuscripts probably descended from four fairly early "archetypes"—most of them (perhaps all of them) probably date to a time in the second century or earlier. These four are as follows.

(1) The Alexandrian type of text, represented by the two most famous manuscripts, Aleph and B, as well as (in various parts of the NT) by at least 10 different papyrus manuscripts, 15 other uncial manuscripts, and a dozen minuscule manuscripts; also supported by at least one (sometimes two) of the old Coptic versions and in the quotations of some of the early Fathers, especially Athanasius and Cyril of Alexandria.

(2) The Caesarean type of text, represented by two papyrus and a dozen or so uncial manuscripts; supported by the old Armenian, Georgian, and the Palestinian Syriac versions and in the quotations of the church Fathers Eusebius and Cyril of Jerusalem, sometimes by Origen. (This text type appears primarily in the gospels. Some scholars aren't sure this really was a distinct text type.)

(3) The Western type of text, represented by a still smaller number of papyrus copies and uncials (primarily D, but by some other uncials and minuscules in the epistles of Paul and Hebrews); also supported by several of the old Latin versions (prior to the Vulgate) and two Syriac versions, as well as in quotations found in several of the early Fathers (including Irenaeus, Tertullian, Cyprian, and Augustine).

(4) The Byzantine type of text (often called the Majority Text), found only here and there in any papyrus manuscripts, in 15 or so uncial manuscripts, and in the great majority of the later minuscules, also supported in the Gothic and later Latin versions (like the Vulgate) and a number of the later church Fathers.

All this is oversimplification. Any given manuscript may represent more than one of these families to some

degree, any given family may contain sub-families that differ in lesser ways, and any given family may contain various points of contact with those in other families.

One of the needs for such classification is to avoid a mistake in judgment that is easy to make. This way, the "weight" of any given manuscript is traced back to the weight of its archetype rather than to the number of manuscripts that represent it. This makes sense: If a dozen monks in a monastery make a dozen copies of the NT while someone reads one manuscript aloud, the relative value of those is one, not twelve; it is the value of the ancestor of a manuscript that is most important, not how many copies have been made from that ancestor. The fact that a given type of text is in the majority doesn't necessarily mean that it is more like the original; it may be, or it may not. That must be determined on other grounds.

You can also tell, from this, that the law of aging and wearing out simply means that the majority of the manuscripts can't help being the younger ones. It is a fact that the Byzantine text type is found in the majority of the manuscripts. It is also a fact that the great percentage of these are the more recent copies, not the older ones. By far the greater number of the Byzantine text type manuscripts are at least 1000 years removed from Paul and John. This also, in and of itself, proves nothing.

### **3. Using other sources**

One is not limited to the Greek manuscripts. There are versions in other languages, many of them very old: more than one in Syriac, more than one in Coptic (Egyptian), old Latin versions as well as the Latin Vulgate. There are NT manuscripts of these that are older than most of the Greek manuscripts. These also exist in numerous manuscripts, and they don't all agree with each other either, so textual criticism has to be applied to the versions in other languages, too.

Furthermore, there are the church Fathers. They often quoted Scripture. Sometimes you can tell whether a certain one of the variant readings was in the copy of the Scripture they were quoting; sometimes you can't.

There are also "lectionaries"—copies of Scriptures made up for reading in churches that followed a common schedule of readings on certain Sundays. This serves to increase the number of sources even more!

### **4. Comparing readings**

All these sources, even when dated and grouped, don't always settle the question of which reading, when there are two or more that differ in a given passage, was the original. So the next thing the textual scholars do, then, is apply what is called "internal evidence" to the various differences. Here (again somewhat oversimplified) are the highlights of this step.

a. Some of the differences can quickly be explained by certain common errors that copyists often make. Many can be detected as obvious just by comparing one manuscript with another. One common error, for example, occurs when the copyist looks away from what he's copying (his "exemplar"), writes down what he read, and then looks back to the exemplar but accidentally gets at another place that looks the same and leaves out some words. (This was even easier for them since the manuscripts were generally written as fairly narrow columns with all capitals and without any spaces or punctuation between words.)

Or sometimes a copyist "remembers" and puts down something in one place that really belongs in another. This could easily happen in the gospels, especially, since the four gospel accounts don't always tell each incident in exactly the same way. Sometimes, then, a copyist without even intending to might put down something in one gospel even though it was actually in the same story in another of the gospels. He might even intentionally add something from another gospel in the one he was copying, perhaps thinking it had accidentally been omitted in the place he was copying. (Or he might even want to make them both read the same: after all, he wouldn't be changing truth, as he saw it!)

b. When it isn't obvious which of two different manuscripts is in error, the textual scholar applies a set of "rules" that have been formalized (often called the "canons" of textual criticism), based on what copyists are "more likely" to do in certain situations. They are not absolutes, and one of them may yield a result that is different from another. They simply provide some "help," in the eyes of the textual scholars, as a basis for making certain kinds of difficult decisions.

(1) The shorter reading is often preferable. The textual scholars are convinced that a copyist making a change is more likely to add than to omit, either consciously or accidentally. Consequently, if everything else is equal, the manuscript with the shorter reading is probably the correct one in that particular place.

(2) The more difficult reading is often preferable. It seems that a copyist would be more likely to adjust something hard into something easier and smoother than the other way around. Thus when two manuscripts differ and the reading of one is harder or rougher than the other one, without some other kind of obvious copyist's mistake, then the probability is that the more difficult reading was the original and the easier/smooth reading resulted from a copyist's change. (Even if this were true for deliberate changes, it is not so logical for accidental ones.)

(3) If there are two or more different readings in two or more manuscripts, and if one of them will better explain the others as deriving from it, that one is probably the original reading.

(4) If there are different readings and one of them fits better the style or tendencies of the original writer, then that reading is probably the original one.

Keep in mind that these are helping principles, not absolute rules. They are, at best, somewhat subjective. Based on the law of averages (probability) they must be used carefully, and their value is somewhat limited. (What they really represent, in my opinion, is that if you aren't really sure which of two readings is original, by any other means, these rules help you make a decision which one to print in your text since you have to print something!) They only allow one to say that "this reading is more probably original than that one." But "probably" doesn't really prove anything for certain, and the other reading (even if longer, or even if easier, or even if less like what that author writes elsewhere) is still possibly correct.

Even with all these complexities, however, those who spend their scholarly careers doing textual criticism are fond of saying that there they have no doubts about 99 and 44/100's of the text. Only in less than one percent do they remain unsure.

Whether you agree with their theory and practice of textual criticism or not, there are good grounds for confidence. Do not think, from what I've said, that the NT has all sorts of errors in it. No matter which form of the Greek text you choose—Alexandrian, Western, or Byzantine—they agree with each other on more than 98% of what is in the whole NT. A historian, Philip Schaff, once surveyed the differences and concluded that out of about 10,000 places where there are differences in readings among the various manuscripts, there are only about 400 where the wording would even be different in an English translation, and only 50 of these where the difference would make a difference in the meaning. The textual critics are laboring over a problem, yes, but by comparison it is a very small problem. Indeed, if you accepted every single one of the readings that differ from the King James you would still have every single doctrine and practice of Christianity unchanged!

## **II. What Are the Options?**

Isn't there some other way? Actually, there is, and that's what this whole KJO controversy is about. The question is, how can we settle on a Greek text as the true text? Here are the options, beginning with the most radical view.

### **A. The English King James**

Some say that the correct Greek text is to be determined by reading the 1611 King James and adopting whatever Greek text it takes to translate that into English. The reason for putting it this way is that there is no single edition of the Greek text, regularly published (not even the Textus Receptus), that exactly matches the King James. (Indeed, there is even more than one King James, although the differences are slight.)

This position is that of Dr. Peter Ruckman, probably the one best known defender of the KJO position. Ruckman believes that the "A.V. 1611" was itself inspired. True, in a few places this version represents something found in no Greek manuscript whatever. Worry not, says Dr. Ruckman: wherever the A.V. 1611 differs from any existing Greek, it is new revelation from God. Greek manuscripts must be corrected by the English King James, not the other way around. Nobody even needs to study the Greek language, much less practice textual criticism. Even if you go to a foreign land to translate the Scriptures, all you need is your King James.

As you can see, this "solves" all the textual differences. God so inspired the work of the King James translators, in 1611, that both in what they translated (text) and in how they translated it (translation) they gave us the Bible all over again to restore what it was in the original.

It seems reasonably clear that Gail Riplinger also believes this, although sometimes she seems to prefer option C (below); she winds up saying, "It appears the case for the inspiration of the KJV is mounting." Not all defenders of the KJO position are quite this radical.

## **B. The Textus Receptus**

Other defenders of the KJO position say, the form of the Greek text which the King James translators used is the correct form and matches the original autographs word for word—at least almost so. This form of the text is called the Textus Receptus, a latin phrase which simply means "received text." This phrase first appeared in an edition of the Greek NT which was edited and published by the Elzivir brothers in 1633, using essentially the text produced by Erasmus. I will henceforth refer to it, for short, as the TR, which actually is used for two slightly different forms of the text: in England and U.S., it is used for the edition published by Stephanus in 1550; in Europe it is used for the 1633 Elzivir edition just mentioned. Although there are several small differences, both are essentially the text produced by Erasmus, the TR.

Erasmus produced this hurriedly in order to be the first to get a Greek NT on the new printing presses. He himself said it was "precipitated rather than edited" and "hurried out headlong." He had less than a dozen Greek manuscripts available to him to use for comparison, and all of them were very late ones. And they weren't manuscripts of the complete NT, for the most part. Only one of them, for example (borrowed from Johannes Reuchlin), had the book of Revelation. Some had only the gospels. Much of his work was in selecting which manuscript had the best copy of each particular book. In any given part of the NT, the TR may very well reflect just one manuscript which Erasmus had access to or used primarily; some parts reflect some editing that he did by comparing two or more of the manuscripts he used. (Even in deciding among manuscripts, Erasmus was already practicing textual criticism.)

In light of all the manuscripts that have been discovered and studied since Erasmus, why would anyone believe that his Greek NT represents the original text best? There are only two possible ways of justifying this, that I can see. One is to say that Erasmus was somehow divinely superintended in his work; the other is to attribute this to God's providentially arranging for Erasmus to have exactly the right few texts in hand to make exactly the right decisions. Indeed, these wind up at the same place. In other words, in one way or another God did something special and unique through Erasmus that cannot be matched by the scholarship of others.

I believe that all those who defend the TR as the true Greek text at least subconsciously believe that something supernatural like this happened in the work of Erasmus, even if they don't like to say so. This is the reason, I think, that Dr. Edward F. Hills (a KJO defender) shows the very ambivalence I am describing. In one passage he says that God's preservation of the NT text was "not miraculous but providential." In another he acknowledges that the texts of the several editions of the TR "were God-guided" and "set up under the leading of God's special providence." As he sees it, the fact that these several editions of the TR do not lead to absolutely perfect agreement, word for word, means that God's work was "special providence" rather than "miraculous." Frankly, I can't see any justification for such a fine distinction. Either way, Erasmus was the recipient of a special, providential work on God's part that no one else can (or should even try to) duplicate.

Personally, I'm far more inclined to think that Erasmus, like all the other people since the apostles, was a human being who did the best he could with what he had, and that everyone else should continue to do that very thing, thus refining his work when it seems to need refining. Erasmus himself said as much.

At any rate, regardless how they explain it, the KJO defenders emphasize that the TR, against all other possibilities, was the (providentially arranged) basis of the King James, which has effectively served us these 300-plus years, as the traditional and authoritative Word of God in English (as well as in some of the other older, European versions). This is their evidence that God has put his stamp of approval on this as the correct form of the Greek text.

## **C. The Majority/Byzantine Text Type**

There are others who say that the so-called "Majority Text" is the form of the Greek text of the NT that reproduces the original autographs. Some of these are KJO defenders, and some are not. The reason for this is that, on the one hand, the manuscripts on which the TR was based were essentially manuscripts of this text type; on the other hand, they don't altogether agree with the TR.

1. The "Majority Text" is essentially another way of saying the "Byzantine" text type, as the textual scholars refer to it. This is the form of the Greek text of the NT that was preserved and copied, over and over again, in the Greek-speaking Eastern Catholic or Orthodox Church (Greek Orthodox, Russian Orthodox, etc.) both before and after the split between it and Rome from, say, the fourth century on. The majority of the manuscripts fit this type, in general, as I've

indicated above.

In the fourth century Constantine moved his capital from Rome to Byzantium, renaming it Constantinople (which ultimately led to the split between Constantinople and Rome in the Catholic tradition). He ordered 50 new copies of the Greek Bible made, and it seems very likely that a lineage of manuscripts flowing from this effort, on through the 15th century, is what makes up that great stream of Byzantine manuscripts, mostly the later minuscules, that date on up to A.D. 1500 or so.

2. One can certainly defend this particular text type against the other three types that I have listed earlier. After Westcott and Hort's new text was published in 1881-82, which relied more heavily on other forms of the text (especially the Alexandrian type manuscripts), a few scholars came to the defence of the Byzantine text, Dean John Burgon the best known. More recently, Wilbur N. Pickering has written in defense of the Byzantine text as the superior text, and Harry Sturz (though not a KJO defender) has made a case that it is worth more consideration than modern textual scholars tend to give it.

I cannot help but respect these efforts. Pickering or Sturz, in doing this, are basing their defense on the practice of textual criticism, which is not the same as saying that only the King James is the Word of God or that the Byzantine text is best because it is closest to the King James. That's a backwards kind of argument. If the Byzantine text type is identical to the original, then the King James is good because it (generally, not absolutely) is close to the Byzantine text, not the other way around. That's what must be determined.

3. The Byzantine text type is also not to be justified simply because it appears in the majority of the manuscripts. As we've already seen, majority is not the issue here. To illustrate: if two copies of Paul's original letter to Rome were made, and weren't identical, the question of how many copies had been made from each one wouldn't have a thing to do with which one was more like the original.

4. Two facts are important, here. First, the Byzantine text type manuscripts do not all agree with each other. The so-called Majority Text is itself often divided at many, many places, and the Byzantine family itself is sub-divided into several sub-families. Second, the Byzantine form of the Greek text of the NT is not by any means identical with the TR.

Yes, by comparison the Byzantine manuscripts are much more likely to agree with the TR than are the manuscripts of the Alexandrian or Caesarean or Western types, at any points where there are differences. But in the book of Revelation alone, there are more than 100 places where the Majority Text, the Byzantine tradition in other words, differs enough from the TR that the translation of it into English would be in some way different from the King James.

Yes, Revelation is the worst book, in this regard, but to a lesser degree this variation is true throughout the whole NT. Wilbur Pickering, a defender of the Byzantine text type, has observed that the TR will require correction in about 1,000 places if we use the Majority/Byzantine text instead of the TR.

#### **D. The Critical Text**

The fourth and final choice, as far as I can tell, is the "critical" text, produced by the methods of textual criticism that I described above. All the known manuscripts are compared, and wherever they differ, one place at a time, a judgment is made as to which reading is more likely to be original.

Those who first published a critical text were B. F. Westcott and F. J. A. Hort, in England. They compared all the manuscripts that were available to them, grouped them in families (somewhat, but not entirely as has been outlined above), and developed a theory to explain the origins and comparative worth of the families of manuscripts. While the theory has changed somewhat from the days of Westcott and Hort, the practice works in essentially the same way and with the same issues. (What I have outlined above is a more current form of the theory.)

Certainly not all of today's textual scholars will agree which is original on a full 100% of the words in the text. There have been different editions of a critical text published from time to time by different groups of scholars. Even today, there is the Nestle (or Nestle-Aland) text published by the American Bible Society. Or there is the UBS (United Bible Societies) text edited by Aland, Black, Metzger, Wikgren and others. Both of these undergo new editions from time to time, often with small changes from the time before.

We need not magnify the differences: even between the Nestle text and the UBS text there is close to unanimous



agreement. But still that isn't the same as 100% certainty if that's what one requires. The defenders of the critical text, however, do not require this. They differ from the KJO defenders in this way. Consider the following statements and ponder their importance for this debate:

1. Not a single Greek manuscript anywhere in the world, whether from the second century or the fifteenth, is exactly identical to the TR or to the Greek that underlies the King James.
2. Not a single Greek manuscript anywhere in the world, regardless how old or how nearly like the traditional text, is exactly identical to any published edition of the Majority (or Byzantine) text.
3. Not a single Greek manuscript anywhere in the world, regardless what family it belongs to, is exactly identical to any edition of a critical text.

For the defenders of the King James only position, this presents a real problem, as I see it. They believe (1) that we must have a text in print that we can point to and say this is identical to the original; and (2) that God has preserved His Word so that we can have that. Yet there is no manuscript anywhere that has either the TR or the Greek behind the King James or the Majority Text, as such.

For the defenders of a critical text, this is not a problem. They do not think we have to have a printed text about which we can say that it is 100% identical to the originals. They don't think we have such a thing. They readily admit that every manuscript that exists will have some copyists' mistakes in it. They readily admit, further, that we can never have absolute certainty (apart from some divine revelation we haven't received yet) that we can restore every single word exactly as it originally was. They are content to say that the critical text is closer to the original, in their opinion, than the Byzantine text alone or the TR. But they will also be quick to say—and this is extremely important—that any form of the Greek text that you choose (whether a critical text, or the Byzantine majority, or the TR specifically) will teach you exactly the same truths as any other form of the Greek text.

In other words, if those who choose the critical text are Bible believing people, and many of them are (including the historic fundamentalists), they will tell you that the miracle of God's preservation of His Word is that in all the forms of the Greek text all the truths have been preserved the same. God speaks the same truths from any of these texts. That may be the greatest evidence of God's preservation of His Word!

### **III. The Arguments of the King James Only Defenders**

I can not cover everything that would fit here. Instead, I present, and respond to, the major arguments used by defenders of the KJO position, especially those arguments that relate to text.

#### **A. Argument against the persons involved in the critical text**

KJO defenders often attack the character or activities (or something) about the people who have been involved in producing what is called the "critical text." They attack Westcott and Hort, or Tischendorf, or the "liberals" who produced the RSV, or the "neo-evangelicals" who produced the NIV, or anyone else they can find.

Just read Riplinger or Ruckman, and you'll see this on every page—and usually the kind of vitriolic attack that I have a hard time seeing as a Christian way of doing things. I mentioned earlier the Pensacola tape. Dr. Johnson does some of this, too, but with a better attitude. In one quick sentence, for example, he claims that Westcott and Hort dabbled in philosophy, mysticism, and cultic spiritualism; but he gives no explanation or evidence, neither of the accusation nor that this influenced their work. More important, he does this indirectly with a broad, sweeping indictment that all who take the other view about the text are liberals who don't believe in either original inspiration or continual preservation.

I've even heard the work of Westcott and Hort impugned because, the person said, they were "baby baptizers" in the Church of England. What that person apparently didn't realize was that the translators of the King James were also baby baptizers in the Church of England!

This kind of argument is called ad hominem argument and "poisoning the well." In my view, the attempt of the KJO defenders to attack Westcott and Hort (or anyone else) is not helpful, first, for this reason: it simply has nothing to do with the issue. The issue is whether Westcott and Hort were right in their conclusions about the text, and that can't be decided on the basis of who Westcott and Hort were. (In fact, one can say at least as many good things about them as questionable things—and I'm not even confident about the basis for the questionable things, if that matters. They certainly were not "liberal" critics of the Bible.)

What am I saying? Exactly the opposite of what Dr. Johnson said: the issue is not source but translation (or text). In other words, we must judge by the results, by how people did their work, not by their character or questionable activities that don't relate directly to the issues involved. We simply don't know enough about all the people who have been involved in the whole line of transmission of text and translation to judge, on both sides of this debate.

Indeed, the main reason this is true is that there are as many "problems" of this kind on one side of the debate as on the other. They talk about Westcott and Hort, or Tischendorf, or liberals, or neo-evangelicals, or others; they don't talk about Erasmus or the Greek Orthodox Church or the Roman Catholics.

(1) Take Erasmus, since he's the one who produced the TR. Erasmus was a Roman Catholic priest, who spent a number of years in a monastery and remained a priest until his death. He was a contemporary of Martin Luther but never joined in the cause of the Reformation. Indeed, by the time of Luther's death, after extensive communication between them, they were bitter critics of each other. As I've already indicated, on one occasion Luther wrote: "What is that you say, Erasmus? Do you subject your mind to the decisions of the church? What can the church decide that has not previously been decided in the Scriptures?" At various times he called Erasmus a papist, skeptic, Epicurean, atheist, hypocrite, and a sophist.

True, there are some who insist that Erasmus was not a true Roman Catholic in spirit. Instead, they say, he was a humanist. I don't know whether you find that more appealing or not. His own sympathetic biographer wrote, "He remained faithful to the Popes of the Renaissance while criticizing them. He supported the Mass and the sacraments, while advocating a return to their original purity. . . . He loved the Church, which was both his mother and his cross." He upheld the tradition of the perpetual virginity of Mary and the appropriateness of prayers addressed to her. Even in producing the TR, the fact that he did not think highly of the book of Revelation (not being sure that John wrote it) may help explain how he allowed an assistant to copy out the one defective manuscript of Revelation that was available to him, and to copy it poorly; he translated from Latin into Greek in places where the manuscript was missing the Greek.

Am I saying that all this negates his work on the TR? Absolutely not. We judge the TR by its accuracy, not by Erasmus' character. The point is that there is at least as much negative about the character of Erasmus as there is about Westcott and Hort, who published the next great edition of the Greek NT. In neither case should who they were cause us to reject their work for that reason.

(2) Let's use another example. If one rejects the modern versions because he thinks they've been produced by liberals (which is quite far from the whole truth, by the way), then what about the role of the Orthodox Church?

The Byzantine text type, which is represented in the majority of the Greek manuscripts and (to a large extent) in the TR, owes its preservation and distribution to the Eastern Orthodox Church in the Byzantine Empire. This church (also called the Eastern Catholic Church) and the Roman (Western) Catholic Church are two branches of the same historic church tradition. As I see it, one is about as apostate as the other.

The split between the Western and Eastern branches of the Catholic church developed over a lengthy period of time, probably starting in A.D. 330 when Constantine changed the name of Byzantium to Constantinople and made it the capital, instead of Rome, of his Empire, subsequently to be known as the Byzantine Empire. Over time, it became the center of Greek-speaking Christianity while Rome remained the center of Latin-speaking Christianity. While there are some points of difference, there are many common teachings and practices that demonstrate the basic Catholic commonality between the Eastern and Roman Churches. They share the semi-Pelagian idea that salvation comes about by cooperation between God's grace and man's free exercise of faith and works; prayers for the dead; prayers to the saints and especially to Mary; a heavy use of icons not only in the churches but in private homes where prayers before images are accompanied with the burning of incense; the perpetual virginity and sinlessness of Mary, as well as her bodily assumption into heaven; the seven sacraments; the transubstantiation of the bread and wine, in the Eucharist, into the actual body and blood of Christ and its sacrificial nature (like the Roman Mass); the practice of confession before a priest; and so on.

Since the Eastern Orthodox (Greek Catholic) church produced and preserved the great body of Greek manuscripts that make up the large portion of the "traditional text," should we therefore throw them out because their doctrine is heretical? Certainly not.

But you can see the point: it isn't any worse to use the work of Westcott and Hort than it is to use the work of Erasmus or the Roman Catholics who preserved many of the manuscripts or the Greek Catholics who were primarily responsible for preserving the Byzantine textual tradition represented by the Textus Receptus.

Again, then, ad hominem or "poisoning the well" arguments don't impress me at all. They will work as effectively on one side as the other, and they avoid the issue anyway. The issue is whether the results of any work by anyone involved is right or wrong, and that has to be dealt with on the basis of the issues themselves, not the character and motives of the people who did the work.

## **B. Argument from tradition and the preservation of the Byzantine text or the English King James**

This is probably the single most important argument of those who defend the KJO position, although the exact way this is put may vary. For example, they may say that the preservation of the Byzantine text type in the great majority of the manuscripts and as the text type of the NT that has been used by the majority of Christians for the majority of the time is evidence that God providentially preserved it as the true text. Or they may emphasize the long influence of the King James among English-speaking Christians and ask: How can so many Christians for so long be wrong about the Word of God? Or they may observe that if God has not preserved His Word in such a way that we can point to the text and know that it is exactly the same as the original was, then it does no good even to argue that the originals were inspired. As Dr. Johnson, on the Pensacola tape keeps saying over and over, "We believe in both the original inspiration and the continual preservation of the Bible as the Word of God."

What shall we say about this?

1. They need a bigger perspective of the history and scope of the Christian churches and the forms of the Bible that exist in the church. When one thinks of three or four hundred years for the influence of the King James, for example, that's pretty small compared to the influence, four times that long, of the Latin Vulgate, for example. If length of time and number of professing Christians is the test, then the Vulgate has it all over the King James!

(Interestingly, there were many voices, in the days of Erasmus, who steadfastly resisted his publication of a Greek NT. They said exactly what the KJO people say these days: the Vulgate has been the mother of the church for over a thousand years. We don't need a Greek NT.)

Or consider some churches in Egypt or Syria, which still exist and use one or more of the ancient Coptic or Syriac translations that have been around almost as long as the NT itself! (There is a considerable difference in the text types of some of these, as compared to the Byzantine or TR type.)

We have to realize that the English-speaking church from 1611 to 1965 represents just one small part of church history in one small part of the world. English is just one of the thousands of languages that the Bible has been translated into; and there are both translation and textual differences between many of the versions in many of the languages. Let's get a big picture of the whole church. My view is that God has preserved His Word, without any error in any truth meant to be communicated, in every language the Bible has been translated into in every time and place.

2. So much gets made of providential preservation, but the KJO defenders are much too "selective" in their treatment. Shall we believe that Erasmus providentially found just the few manuscripts he needed? Yes. Shall we not also believe that Tischendorf was providentially guided when he visited the monastery in the Sinai at just the right time to rescue the great Codex Sinaiticus (Aleph)? If the preservation of the Byzantine text type during the 1,000 years of the Byzantine empire was providential, and the work of Erasmus and of the King James translators, how about the work of all those who have painstakingly located and collated the thousands of manuscripts now known to us and diligently compared them to try to determine the original? Or shall we delight in the providential preservation of the Byzantine type manuscripts and not delight in the providential preservation of a considerable number of manuscripts that are much older than those of the Byzantine type? Does everything shut down in 1611?

3. One of Dr. Johnson's key arguments on the Pensacola tape, used to back up his claim about divine preservation of the Byzantine text type and developed at considerable length, can be summarized thus: on the one hand, the great majority of the copies that represent what he calls the traditional text (the Byzantine text type as he elsewhere points out) agree with each other, and this evidences God's preservation of His Word; on the other hand, he argues, even Aleph (Sinaiticus) and B (Vaticanus), which the textual critics esteem highly, do not agree with each other, and that doesn't speak well for them.

This point is very dramatically oversimplified by Dr. Johnson. While the differences involved in the Alexandrian text are greatly exaggerated, the differences within the Byzantine manuscripts are not even mentioned.

Dr. Johnson emphasizes that Aleph and B disagree with each other 600 times. He doesn't take time to point out that the huge majority of these are minor points of difference that make no difference. Nor does he point out that in two

manuscripts the size of Aleph and B (both OT and NT) this number of differences isn't really very great after all.

Then he leaves you thinking that the manuscripts in the tradition of the Textus Receptus agree with each other. But they don't. There are thousands of differences. No two of all those manuscripts agree with each other in every single detail, although of course most of them agree on the majority of the material. But, in fact, the manuscripts in the Alexandrian text type (including Aleph and B) agree with each other (and with the Textus Receptus, for that matter) on the majority of the material.

It would not be fair to underplay this. Yes, the great majority of the manuscripts of the Byzantine text type agree with each other (and with the Textus Receptus) more closely than the manuscripts in the Alexandrian text type agree with each other or with the Textus Receptus. But again, that's the whole reason for the study of textual criticism in the first place. And the point here is that these others have been preserved, too. I find no reason to think that one group was "providentially" preserved and the other group "Satanically" preserved.

Of course, Dr. Johnson understands that he must "explain away" the preservation of manuscripts like Aleph (Codex Sinaiticus) and B (Codex Vaticanus) in order to make his claim for the preservation of the Byzantine majority seem important by comparison. So he simply invents (I'm aware that others invented this for him) the explanation that Aleph was preserved because it was put aside in a monastery as a manuscript that had so many errors it wasn't used and therefore didn't wear out. I hope you noticed that interesting twist, turning around the whole argument about older manuscripts. Only the more recent manuscripts are trustworthy, he says, because that means that the older ones before them were heavily used and got worn out. Any old manuscripts are automatically bad, because that means they weren't used enough to be worn out—which in turn means that the church recognized them as faulty! The farther away from the originals, the better, says Dr. Johnson!

This is raw speculation. The idea that it lasted because it was too faulty to be used is imagination paraded as a reason. I can just as well—even better—suggest that the reason it was put aside (both the one in the Roman Catholic monastery in the Sinai and the one in the Vatican) is to be found in the fact that the Roman Catholic church made Latin the official church language and used Jerome's Latin Vulgate instead of the Greek NT! Fact is, since we know that to be the case, it makes a lot better sense than Dr. Johnson's groundless speculation.

The truth is, we have no idea in the world why Aleph lasted as long as it did. And the point is that one has no more objective grounds, short of wild speculation, for highly regarding the preservation of one manuscript or group of manuscripts than the preservation of others.

Note that this also relates directly to his idea that the Byzantine text type got preserved in so many documents because the "early church" knew it to be the correct type of text and copied it often. Again, the existence of a great number of Greek manuscripts of the Byzantine text type, as compared to those of the Alexandrian text type or other text types, is easier to explain than that: the Eastern Orthodox (Catholic) Church in the Byzantine empire used Greek and the Western Roman Catholic Church used Latin. So the Greek Orthodox needed and made thousands of copies of the Greek NT that have been preserved among those churches, while the Roman Catholics in the West needed and made thousands of copies of the Latin NT—and twice as many of them have been preserved as of the Greek!

The monks in the monasteries in the Eastern Orthodox church developed "assembly line" procedures for producing relatively large numbers of copies of the Greek NT (just as those in the West did in Latin). One would read aloud and several others would be at desks writing down the words. That method would produce a fairly consistent product, which helps explain the relatively higher level of agreement, of course.

And the truth is that the great majority of these Byzantine manuscripts were made several centuries after Christ after the monasteries in the Byzantine/Eastern Orthodox empire developed these methods of "mass production," not by the early church. Hundreds and hundreds of these date well after a millennium—right up to the invention of printing presses.

I must also add that Dr. Johnson, in making this whole argument, grossly overstates the truth when he observes that the overwhelming majority of the quotations of Scripture of the early church fathers support the Byzantine tradition. That simply isn't so. The fact is that almost no quotations from the early fathers that support the Byzantine text where it differs from the other families can be found until the time of Chrysostom in the fourth century! And Chrysostom and the other later fathers whose quotations do support the Byzantine text were active in the Eastern branch of the church where the Byzantine text type certainly prevailed by the fourth century.

### **C. Argument that the changes, especially the omissions, result from an intentional effort to water down the heart truths of the Christian faith.**

This is another of the key arguments of the KJO defenders. Throughout the Pensacola tape, for example, Dr. Johnson over and over lumps all other English versions together as being from Satan, the critic of the Word of God.

#### **1. In general**

This concern especially addresses the "omissions," things found in the King James that are not in some of the modern versions.

First, one mistake made by the KJO defenders is that they lump all the newer versions together and accuse them of the same grievous errors, including these omissions. The one who introduces the Pensacola tape, for example, says that there are over 110 English translations and that "all of these" have the deletions and additions that result from the textual differences. This is simply not true. In other words, the KJO defenders wrongly paint all translations with the same brush. What they don't tell you is that there have been, and are, a number of versions that translate exactly the same Greek text as the King James and therefore have not a single one of the additions and deletions that result from the different textual variations.

Furthermore, they make no distinction between those versions that are produced by Bible-believing folks and those that aren't, even though their criticism implies that no one else believes in the original inspiration and continued preservation of the Bible. That's both erroneous and unfair.

Second, they make it sound as though in one corner are those who faithfully translating the whole Word of God, while in the other corner are some who deliberately and cunningly decide to leave out part of it. Please understand that this is not the way it is. The so-called omissions in versions like the NASB or NIV do not result from the translators' decisions to "omit" certain things. They are simply translating what appears in the form of the Greek text they are using—the critical text, in other words. It is also true that the King James doesn't include some of the things that are in some of the Greek texts. One is no more "omitting" things than the other.

Dr. Johnson, on the Pensacola tape, understands very well that it isn't a matter of some things the modern translators themselves decided to omit. He realizes that the so-called omissions go back to ancient manuscripts that don't have those words. So he understands that you must attack the problem at a much more basic level. That's why he says, almost so fast you miss it, that the Alexandrian text type came from a liberal Christian school in Alexandria which was famous for its philosophy and was not a reputable place. This is how he attempts to "poison the well" (as I've described this tactic above) so that people will not have confidence in the Alexandrian text type which the critical text often relies on.

The trouble is, he cites no evidence for his expression of suspicion. In a number of ways this is unjustified. We don't know that the so-called Alexandrian text type originated at Alexandria. We don't know, even if it did, what the theology of those who made any manuscripts was. We don't know that Alexandria was "liberal"; about the worst that can be safely said is that the school of thought centered there, at one point in Alexandria's Christian history, was more given to allegory than the school of thought linked to Antioch. There is no reason at all to say that it was not a reputable place. Alexandria, after all, produced one of the best of the early church fathers, Clement of Alexandria, as well as two of the stalwarts of the faith, Athanasius who fought the Arian heresy, and Augustine the famous theologian.

As if any of that matters, one way or another. The chief difference, in general, between the Alexandrian manuscripts and the Byzantine ones is that the Alexandrian manuscripts tend to be more pointed and brief, with less repetition and use of conjunctions, etc., perhaps more in the style of classical, cultured Attic Greek than in the style of the more common Koine. If there was a deliberate revision at Alexandria along these lines (and saying that is far more than we know), it was in no way an attempt to revise the theology of the NT. The theology of the Alexandrian manuscripts is the same as the theology of the Byzantine ones.

#### **2. Some particulars**

On the Pensacola tape we find four of the most common examples of the arguments that KJO defenders use against all other English versions.

- a. They say the new versions leave out the name of Satan. Dr. Johnson means, by this, the newer English

versions, among which he includes the NIV. (I may add that it seems to me that the NIV is often a special target of the King James only defenders. A number of Bible believing Christians who otherwise accept the necessity of textual criticism also reject the NIV because of its translation philosophy, but that is a different issue entirely.)

I decided to check out this criticism for myself. In the King James, the name of Satan occurs 55 times, in the following verses:

1 Chron. 21:1	Job 1:6-12; 2:1-7
Ps. 109:6	Zech. 3:1-2
Matt. 4:10; 12:26; 16:23	Mark 1:13; 3:23,26; 4:15; 8:33
Luke 4:8; 10:18; 11:18; 13:16; 22:3,31	
John 13:27	Acts 5:3; 26:18
Rom. 16:20	1 Cor. 5:5; 7:5
2 Cor. 2:11; 11:14; 12:7	1 Th. 2:18
2 Th. 2:9	1 Tim. 1:20; 5:15
Rev. 2:9,13,24; 3:9; 12:9; 20:2,7	

In all of these places except two (53 out of 55), the NIV has the name Satan! That doesn't seem like a very serious attempt on the part of the NIV to downplay, much less leave out the name of Satan.

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

The other time is Luke 4:8. Here there is a manuscript difference. Some manuscripts don't have the words, "Get thee behind me, Satan!" (These include the manuscripts known as Aleph, B, D, L, W, 1, 33, 579, 700, and 788.) This is therefore illustrative of the very kind of thing that the manuscript differences present to us. Perhaps the words should be there, perhaps they shouldn't; but one thing is clear: they do not manifest any tendency to play down the name of Satan. (The words which mean essentially the same thing are in the temptation account in Matt. 4:10.)

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

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

I'm not saying there is anything wrong with "Lucifer," of course, but even fundamentalist Bible scholars aren't confident this is meant as the devil's personal name. (Using "Lucifer" as his personal name, here, has exactly the same basis as using "Dives," the Greek word for "rich man," as a personal name in Jesus' story about Lazarus.) In my view, fundamentalist scholars agree that this passage, first and directly, refers to the king of Babylon; that any reference to Satan is indirectly to him as the power behind the king of Babylon. The idea that the NIV is trying to weaken our concept of Satan is completely unjustified: just see all the other places where the devil is very prominent, very personal, and very powerful in the NIV—as in the list above! (And keep in mind that I'm not commending the NIV.)

c. They say the new versions change "Hell" to "grave." (This also deals with translation philosophy, not with textual differences.) It is correct that the NIV does this, for example, in the OT. As to the appropriateness of this, I

have mixed feelings. It may well be one of the "faults" of the NIV—or it may not. Regardless, the issue is not, if we do this will we stop believing in hell?—which is a purely pragmatic argument. The issue is, is this the correct translation? Our doctrine is subject to what the Word says, not the other way around.

There is a great deal of difference of opinion, even among Bible-believing scholars, about the proper translation of the Hebrew *sheol*. To start with, the word apparently means, at root, "the abode of the dead"—not "grave" literally, and not "hell" literally, although it might have either of those meanings indirectly. While not all conservative scholars agree on this point, my perception is that the great majority would agree that "sheol" is often used in the OT in such a way that it is the abode of both righteous and wicked dead.

This Hebrew word occurs in the OT some 64 times: the King James translators render it by "hell" 31 times, by "grave" 30 times, and by "pit" 3 times. At this point, then, we might note that if it is correct to translate it "grave" approximately half the time, then it might be correct to translate it that way all the time—or might not. At any rate, one must judge from the context whether to translate it one way or the other, and so it becomes a judgment call. Regardless, it is left up finally to the interpreter, more than the translator, to decide whether the Biblical writer is speaking, on any given occasion, of "sheol" as the physical resting place of all the dead in the grave, or the after-this-life abode of the dead, conscious, in hell; the Greek *had\_s* (rendered "hades" in the same way that *sheol* is rendered "sheol"), apparently, is essentially the equivalent—also including both the righteous and the wicked dead.

This is the reason, no doubt, that the New King James translators decided for "Sheol" in a number of places, even though it is true that this word is a technical term that doesn't "communicate" clearly without some explanation. That way, the reader (instead of the translator) becomes the interpreter. (One of the reasons I'm not fond of the NIV is the fact that they interpret more often than necessary—even though the interpretations are always realistically possible ones, including this one.)

I can tell, from observation, at least one of the reasons the NIV translators often chose "grave" in given OT passages, rather than "hell." If one runs the references on these passages, he will note that in a great number of them the word occurs where the Hebrew is using "parallelism," two phrases that say the same thing in different words. And in these places the word *sheol* in one phrase or clause stands parallel to "death/dead" in another.

Again, I'm not defending this particular choice of the NIV translators. The question, however, is: Did they do this, deliberately, to play down the idea of Hell? Frankly, I'm confident that they did not. (I may not know that for sure, but I know that many of these men, in response to a contemporary challenge to the doctrine of hell, are defending the Biblical idea of hell very strongly.) If they had desired to water down the doctrine of Hell, surely this would appear in the NT as well. There we find two Greek words that are at times translated "hell." (There is a third one, used once, in 2 Pet. 2:4, which both KJV and NIV translate "hell.") The first and most common one is *geenna* ("Gehenna"), and every time the KJV translates it hell so does the NIV. The second is *had\_s*, which it usually translates "Hades"; the only time it uses "grave" is in Ac. 2:27,31 where this is consistent with the translation of the OT passage being quoted. (An interesting passage, by the way, on this very debate.)

In other words, then, in the NT (which is the place where we really learn the Christian doctrine of hell), the NIV is as strong on hell as the KJV.

d. They say the new versions leave out references to the blood of Christ. Now that I've checked this out, I can say that this is one of the worst exaggerations I have ever seen. In the NT (King James) there are 32 references to the blood of Christ as the means or basis of our salvation, sanctification, redemption, etc. In 31 of those times, the NIV has the blood in exactly the same way!

Here are the references:

Matt. 26:28	Mark 14:24
Luke 22:20	John 6:53-56
Acts 20:28	Rom. 3:25; 5:9
1 Cor. 10:16; 11:25,27	Eph. 1:7; 2:13
Col. 1:14,20	Heb. 9:12,14; 10:19,29; 12:24; 13:12,20
1 Pet. 1:12,19	1 John 1:7
Rev. 1:5; 5:9; 7:14; 12:11; 19:13	

In other words, the NIV (and the Greek text which the NIV is translating) omits it once and only once. And the

interesting thing about this time, which is Col. 1:14, is that not even the majority textual tradition which Dr. Johnson brags on as the true text has the blood of Christ in that place! Some of the Byzantine manuscripts have it, but the great majority do not!

e. Although the Pensacola tape does not do this, many KJO defenders say that the newer versions, and the Greek text types that they translate, deliberately water down the name of Christ. They do this, they say, by reducing the number of times that the three-fold name of Christ occurs, "Lord Jesus Christ," or by changing some of the times when the King James has "Jesus Christ" or "Christ Jesus" to simple "Jesus."

I find it hard to believe that this is an issue. In the first place, one can certainly understand how various copyists might tend either to insert a fuller form of the name or to use a shorter form of the name from time to time, even without realizing they weren't copying word for word.

But to say that the "liberals" want to downplay the name of Christ (by the way, note that I just said "Christ" and not "Lord Jesus Christ"!) is grasping at straws. First, the liberals didn't even exist when the various manuscript differences arose. More important, if they wanted to do some damage here they certainly didn't do a good job of it. If you take the NT as a whole, the modern versions (translating the critical text) use "Lord Jesus Christ" nearly as often as the King James does.

In response to this criticism, I went through Galatians and Ephesians (two of Paul's meatiest, shorter letters) and charted all instances where the name of Jesus appears, in whatever form. Here are the results. (If I miscounted, I'm confident it wasn't enough to affect the pattern of usage.)

In the KJV, one form or another of the name appears 91 times in these two letters; in NIV, 90. The following chart shows the distribution:

FORM OF NAME	KJV	NIV
Jesus Christ	9	6
Lord Jesus Christ or Jesus Christ our Lord	11	10
Christ	52	53
Christ Jesus	16	18
Lord Jesus	2	1
Jesus	1	2

I freely confess that I can't find any sinister pattern, or hint of a theological problem in this; nor do I see how anyone else can.

f. The single greatest concern of the KJO defenders is the "omissions." They are persuaded in their hearts that there was a deliberate pattern of omission about key things that reflects a liberal theological bias. They really believe, for example, that these omissions show that the liberals behind the modern versions don't believe in the deity of Christ. That simply is not the case, and a number of things help us see this.

(1) The manuscripts behind the modern versions were produced long before "liberals" were invented.

(2) In general, the liberals do not mind, at all, the idea that the NT writers believed in the deity of Christ. Indeed, they are glad to find evidence that the early church deified Christ and that the NT writings demonstrate this. The liberals simply believe that the early church, including the NT writers, were wrong in this belief.

(3) The standard theological arguments for the deity of Christ include such things as: the fact that divine names are used of Him, divine worship is ascribed to (and accepted by) Him, He claimed to be God, the powers of God are exercised by Him, the attributes of God are ascribed to Him, He is identified with the OT "Yahweh," etc. Be assured



that every single one of these lines of evidence for the deity of Christ will be just as thoroughly obvious in any of the manuscripts of the NT as it is in the King James (or the TR behind it).

(4) One specific thing that can be easily researched is the number of times that the NT applies the word "God" (Greek *theos*) directly to Jesus. There are nine places in the NT (in an earlier writing I said eight, accidentally overlooking one) where—depending on textual differences or interpretation—the word 'God' may be directly applied to Jesus (by the inspired author). The King James does so, unambiguously, in five of these; both the NASB and the NIV do so in seven of the nine:

- John 1:1: all three call Jesus (as "the Word") "God."
- John 1:18: NASB and NIV call Jesus "God"; KJV calls Him "the Son." (This is a manuscript difference; note that even Aleph and B called Jesus "God.")
- Acts 20:28: all three call Jesus (who purchased the church with His blood) "God."
- Rom. 9:5: all three call Jesus "God."
- 2 Thess. 1:12: neither of the three does, when in my opinion they should have translated, "our God and Lord, Jesus Christ."
- Titus 2:13: KJV sounds like two persons; both NASB and NIV make it one person and apply "God" directly to Jesus Christ.
- Heb. 1:8: all three apply "God" to Jesus Christ.
- 2 Pet. 1:1: KJV sounds like two persons; both NASB and NIV make it clearly one person, thus calling Jesus Christ "God."
- 1 Tim. 3:16: KJV applies "God" directly to Jesus Christ, NASB and NIV don't. (As above in John 1:18 this is a manuscript difference.)

So if you take the TR you lose one place where Jesus may have been referred to as "God" (John 1:18) and gain another (1 Tim. 3:16). If you take the critical text, you lose one (1 Tim. 3:16) and gain another (John 1:18). Seems like a draw to me.

By the way, I am not criticizing the KJV translators for any of this. They probably meant one person in 2 Thess. 1:12, Titus 2:13, and 2 Pet. 1:1, although one can't tell for sure. That isn't even the point, but even if they did, the NIV (and the critical text which it represents) is just as strong for calling Jesus "God" as the King James is; that is the point.

By the way, the Jehovah's Witnesses New World Translation doesn't call Jesus, directly, "God" in any one of the nine places! There's something you can sink your teeth into!

(5) My earlier booklet was criticized for using examples from John 20 as evidence for my assurance that most of the textual differences don't really affect the meaning of the text of the NT. Apparently, then, I need to show more clearly what I mean by this. Consequently, I include here a detailed charting of the manuscript differences in one particular passage of the NT: namely, John 1:1-18. (I picked it because of its importance; I did not even know how many manuscript differences I would find before I began making this list. "ms." = manuscript, "mss." its plural)

- v.1: •most mss. are same; at least one ms. has "the" with "God"
- v.2: •no differences
- v.3: •one ms. has full dia ("by") rather than short form (di)
  - most mss. have "not even one thing"; at least five have "nothing"
- v.4: •most use preposition (en) for "in"; some omit, leaving it to the case of "him"
  - one ms. spells "life" z instead of z, twice
  - one ms. omits verb "was"
  - some use "is" instead of "was"
  - one omits "the life," thus reading "[he] was"
  - one omits "of men"
- v.5: •some mss. spell "darkness" skotia, some skoteia
  - where some mss. have "it" some have "him"
- v.6: •for "from," where most have para one has apo
  - where most have "God," one has "[the] Lord"
  - several have an extra "was" before "having been sent"

- most use dative of possession for "his"; one uses genitive
- some spell "John" with one "n" instead of two (in Greek)
- v.7: •one has "testimony/witness" as masculine/neuter rather than feminine
- one has the future indicative of "believe"; most have aorist subjunctive
- v.8: •one spells out full alla ("but"); most use shortened form (all)
- v.9: •many spell "true" as al<sub>2</sub>theinon, many others al<sub>2</sub>thinon
- one has unintelligible genitive plural where most have "every" as singular
- v.10:•one has unintelligible en instead of n ("was")
- one has "him" in accusative (thus "because of him" rather than "through him")
- one has object "him" (after "know") in genitive rather than accusative
- v.11:•no differences
- v.12:•at least one omits conjunction "but"
- where most use second aorist ending on "received," some use first aorist ending
  
- v.13:•at least one omits the "who"
- at least one omits "nor of the will of flesh"
- where most use full oude ("nor"), one uses shortened form (oud)
- where most use shortened form all ("but"), two use full form (alla)
- at least one has "the" with "God"
- many spell the Greek word for "were born" with one "n"; most with two
- v.14:•one omits "and" between "grace" and "truth"
- one has "full" in accusative rather than nominative
- v.15:•some spell the Greek name "John" with one "n" rather than two, as most
- some omit the "saying"
- one omits "of whom I said"
- one uses "what" rather than "whom"
- one uses different verb for "I said" (elegon instead of eipon)
- two add extra "to you" after "I said"
- one has third singular "he said" instead of "I said"
- one has participle "saying" instead of "I said" (with "I was" understood)
- two have extra "who" before "was before me"
- v.16:•many have "because," many others "and"
- one adds "life" after "received"
- v.17:•one has two articles ("the") with "law"
- one spells "Moses" M<sub>2</sub>m<sub>2</sub>se<sub>2</sub>s, most M<sub>2</sub>use<sub>2</sub>s, and several others M<sub>2</sub>se<sub>2</sub>s
- two add extra conjunction "but" (de) to last clause
- one omits "Christ" with name "Jesus"
- one has "Christ Jesus" rather than "Jesus Christ"
- v.18:•one has words translated "has seen" and "at any time" in reverse order
- several spell the Greek word for "has seen" with a short "o"; most use long "o"
- one adds "except" before "the only-begotten . . ."
- a number don't have "the" with "only-begotten Son/God"
- most mss. have "Son"; several have "God"
- one omits "the one being"
- one has en for "in" where others have eis
- one omits "of the father"
- one omits "that one" (ekeinos, also translated "he")
- one adds "to us"

I trust this helps you get the idea; the entire NT is like that. Even more emphatically than before, then, I repeat: by

far the most of the manuscript differences make not one whit of difference in meaning. A few of these would affect the translation slightly, without affecting the actual meaning, but most wouldn't even do that. And even most of these that would affect the translation slightly are not judged by the textual critics to be original! About the only one that actually makes a significant difference is the use of "God" instead of "Son" in v. 18 (and who could object to that?).

(6) In carrying out this exercise I probably have not satisfied the KJO defenders about the "omissions." They may say that I have "hedged" in the previous exercise by including all the little differences when the big differences they are concerned about are the omissions. In fact, it is just as correct to say (and I say now although I haven't before) that the majority of the omissions (specifically, not just the "differences") also do not change the meaning of the NT passages in which the so-called omissions occur.

Consequently, I include here one more exercise, even though time (and space) consuming. Using the gospel of Matthew (the gospels are especially given to differences in the manuscripts, for obvious reasons), I am listing each place where a newer version, following the modern critical text, will actually "omit" something (which would show up in an English translation) that the TR (and the King James) has.

1:25: "her firstborn"	3:11: "and fire" (it is in Lk. 3:16)
5:22: "without a cause"	5:27: "to those of old" (it is in v. 21)
5:44: "bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you"	
6:13: "for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen."	
6:18: "openly" (it is in vv. 4 and 6)	9:13: "to repentance" (it is in Lk. 5:32)
9:35: "among the people"	10:3: "Lebbaeus, whose surname was"
10:8: "raise the dead"	12:8: "even"
12:22: "blind and" (when repeated the second time)	12:35: "of his heart"
13:51: "Jesus said to them"	13:51: "Lord"
14:33: "came and"	15:6: "or mother" (it is in Mk. 7:12)
15:8: "draw near to me with their mouth. And"	16:3: "Hypocrites"
16:4: "the prophet"	16:8: "brought"
17:11: "first" (it is in Lk. 9:12)	17:21: (verse, most of which is in Mk. 9:29)
18:11: (verse, which is in Lk. 9:56 and 19:10)	18:29: "at his feet"; "all"
18:35: "his trespasses"	19:16: "Good" (it is in Mark and Luke)
19:20: "from my youth" (it is in Mark and Luke)	19:29: "or wife" (it is in Lk. 18:29)
20:6: "idle" (the first time; it is there the second time)	
20:7: "and whatever is right you will receive"	
20:16: "For many are called, but few are chosen" (it is in Mt. 22:14)	
20:22 (and 23): "and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with" (it is in Mk. 10:38,39)	
21:4: "All"	21:12: "of God"
22:13: "take him away and"	22:30: "of God"
23:3: "to observe"	23:8: "the Christ"
23:14: (verse)	24:6: "all"
24:7: "pestilences" (it is in Lk. 21:11)	24:48: "his coming" (it is in Lk. 12:45)
25:6: "is coming"	
25:13: "in which the Son of Man is coming" (it is in Mt. 24:42)	
25:31: "holy"	25:44: "Him"
26:3: "the scribes" (it is in Mk. 14:2; Lk. 22:2)	26:28: "new" (it is in Lk. 22:20)
26:59: "elders" (it is in Mk. 15:53)	
26:60: "they found none" (when repeated the second time)	
26:60: "false witnesses" (it is in Mark 15:56,57)	27:2: "Pontius"
27:24: "just"	27:34: "sour"
27:35: "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They divided My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots." (it is in Jn. 19:24)	

27:42: "If"  
28:2: "from the door"  
28:19: "therefore"

27:64: "by night"  
28:9: "as they went to tell His disciples"  
28:20: "Amen"

This may seem like a long list, but there are more than 23,000 words in Matthew, and this is about 1% of them. I have gone over this very carefully: I frankly cannot find in this any deliberate pattern of liberalism or of trying to water down truth.

(1) In nearly every one of these instances, the overall meaning of the passage is not affected by the omission. Many are repetitions or are obvious from the rest of the passage anyway.

(2) In a considerable number of the instances, the parallel account in one or another of the gospels has the omitted words, as you can see. (This may illustrate a tendency of some scribes, to add from memory what is found in the parallel account in another gospel.)

Most important, there isn't a single gospel fact that would be changed: no doctrine or practice of the Christian faith. Your understanding of the story wouldn't be affected at all, not by any one of these or all of them put together. One who reads the whole Bible (and you must read all four gospels to get the whole story), will have the whole Word of God regardless which set of manuscripts is used.

### Conclusion

1. As I see it, the view that only the King James is the Word of God in English, and the views of the original text that are associated with that view, arise from a sense of need for absolute certainty about every single word in the original. That is a "need" I readily understand. We have assurance of faith that the Spirit of God so controlled the human writers that every single word they wrote is as much God's word as if He had written it himself. The KJO defenders are confident that He has preserved that Word in exactly the same manner, making it possible to point to a particular text, and version, and be able to say that it is 100%, letter for letter, exactly the same as the original in that respect.

I, too, believe that God has preserved His Word, inspired and inerrant. I disagree only as to how He has preserved it.

The view of the KJO defenders, as I've just stated it, presents a problem in that it does not match what we have. There is more than one King James: which one is it that is 100% word for word the same as the original? Is it the 1611 version or the 1769 version or one of the ones in between? (For that matter, which of the current printed King James versions is it? I know the differences aren't great, but 100% is 100%!)

If, rather than the English King James, you choose the standard Greek text behind the King James as your standard (the TR), then which edition of the TR is it that is 100% the same as the originals? There have been scores of editions, published by Erasmus, Stephanus, Beza, the Elzivir brothers (and others currently). They all differ from each other, at least enough to ruin 100%. Which one is identical to the originals, and how did you decide? And what about the places where the TR is not identical to the King James in English?

Or if you bank on the Byzantine text type, which of the Byzantine manuscripts will you say is identical to the originals?

Be assured (as you'll soon see, I believe) that I am not undermining confidence in the Bible in general or the King James in particular. I'm simply describing what the situation actually is: what God has preserved is a huge number of hand-written copies of the whole or parts of the NT, all of which disagree with each other in minor points as a result of changes or mistakes made by the human copyists. And there is no convincing reason to think He preserved just some of them.

In other words, I am personally confident that He preserved all of them and that He preserved His word by means of all of them. As I've repeatedly emphasized: regardless which manuscript you read, it will give you exactly the same Christian doctrines and guidelines about Christian behavior. It will give you the same gospel story and the same truth. That's how He preserved His word.

Now I readily acknowledge that, when I say one can read nearly any version and be reading the Word of God, I "qualify" such statements by adding, "any version that is an accurate rendition of the originals." And when I say that, I realize that some versions are such that I can more confidently say that they are accurate renditions of the original than

others. The point is that I have to say this about any version I read: it is the Word of God to the degree that it accurately reflects the original. But I can say that without flinching or without hedging because I know that the versions I use, whether they reflect the Byzantine textual tradition or the Alexandrian (it isn't quite that simple, of course), all accurately reflect the original in nearly everything they say. Indeed, I am sure that they accurately reflect it enough that I will not be led into error on any point! To me, that is all the certainty I need.

True, in this place or that place, in the NT, we may be left with two possibilities about the wording and not be able to decide with 100% certainty which of them was the original way of saying what was said. But—and this is the absolutely important thing, while the truth may be worded a little differently in one manuscript, as compared to another, they all say essentially the same thing! God has preserved His Word in such a way that even where there are differences in the manuscripts they agree. We do know what God has said, and we know it with certainty.

In other words, then, I understand the need for certainty. I just think that there is some difference of opinion about the best way to have that certainty. In light of the indisputable fact that the manuscripts differ (and God hasn't given us any revelation as to which one is exactly like the originals—not even to Gail Riplinger!) I think the proper way to achieve that certainty as to what God has said is to see, first, that they all say the same thing, even if in somewhat different ways in some places; and, second, to continue the work of textual criticism, as best as we are able, to work toward the restoring of every single word.

2. And that brings me to my other concluding point. I've only hinted, here and there, as to my own opinion about the enterprise called textual criticism, and I want to expand on that briefly.

Frankly I don't have complete confidence in the way textual criticism is currently practiced by the textual scholars. Don't misunderstand me: textual criticism is the only way to attempt to decide, among the manuscripts where they differ, what the original was. I believe, however, that there are two weaknesses. One is that the textual scholars in general have put too much confidence in the Alexandrian family of manuscripts, by comparison, and too little in some of the others, especially the Byzantine family. The other is that the so-called canons of textual criticism, which I briefly outlined earlier, are too subjective and narrowly relied on.

I would like to see a group of Bible-believing scholars, relative young, devote their careers to textual criticism. They would have available to them a computer technology that is far in advance of the tools of the past. They should be able to complete the unfinished work of detailed collation of every manuscript in existence, and of every reference to Scripture in the fathers and the lectionaries. They should reevaluate every single Greek manuscript and every single manuscript of all the ancient versions. They should retrace every step that has been taken, including a tallying of all the identifying features of every manuscripts with all its variant readings. They should then, assisted by computer analysis, thoroughly reevaluate the family groupings. They should especially rethink the canons and how to apply them—and this includes the necessity of facing up to what can't be known instead of trying to know that which can't!

I have no idea what the outcome of all this time-consuming effort would be. It might lead to confirmation that Westcott and Hort were right all along, or to a confirmation that Wilbur Pickering is right—although I'm confident neither would be right totally.

One thing I do know, however: whatever came out of it would still be our Bible as we know it. It would still give us the same gospel story and the same truth. Not a single point of Christian doctrine or of Christian practice would change. As important as it is to work hard to restore every single word as it was in the original, even more important is the fact that we already know beyond a shadow of doubt what God has said. Nothing will change that.

I conclude now with some words by the translators of the King James version, from its preface, that seem to be helpful in setting forth the proper attitude about this whole business:

*Translation it is that openeth the window, to let in the light . . . without translation into the vulgar tongue, the unlearned are but like children at Jacob's well without a bucket or something to draw with. . . Now what can be more available thereto, than to deliver God's book unto God's people in a tongue which they understand?*

*Many men's mouths have been open a good while (and yet are not stopped) with speeches about the Translation . . . Hath the Church been deceived, say they, all this while? Hath her sweet bread been mingled with leaven, her*

*silver with dross, her wine with water, her milk with lime?*

*[Quoting St. Jerome, with approval:] "Do we condemn the ancient? In no case: but after the endeavors of them that were before us, we take the best pains we can in the house of God." As if he said, Being provoked by the example of the learned men that lived before my time, I have thought it my duty, to assay whether my talent in the knowledge of the tongues, may be profitable in any measure to God's Church, lest I should seem to have laboured in them in vain.*

*If we building upon their foundation that went before us, and being holpen by their labours, do endeavor to make that better which they left so good; no man, we are sure, hath cause to mislike us; they, we persuade ourselves, if they were alive, would thank us.*

*Truly (good Christian Reader) we never thought from the beginning . . . but to make a good [translation] better, or out of many good ones, one principal good one, not justly to be excepted against; that hath been our endeavor, that our mark.*

*[Concerning the Greek translation of the OT, the Septuagint:] The translation of the Seventy dissenteth from the Original in many places, neither doth it come near it, for perspicuity, gravity, majesty; yet which of the*

*Apostles did condemn it? Condemn it? Nay, they used it, which they would not have done . . . if it had been unworthy of the appellation and name of the word of God.*

*The very meanest translation of the Bible in English . . . containeth the word of God, nay, is the word of God. As the King's speech, which he uttereth in Parliament, being translated into French, Dutch, Italian, and Latin, is still the King's speech, though it be not interpreted by every Translator with the like grace, nor peradventure so fitly for phrase, nor so expressly for sense, everywhere.*

*[Concerning their practice of putting variant readings in the margins:] Some peradventure would have no variety of senses to be set in the margin, lest the authority of Scriptures for deciding of controversies by that show of uncertainty, should somewhat be unshaken. But we hold their judgment not to be sound in this point. . . . For as it is a fault of incredulity, to doubt of those things that are evident: so to determine of such things as the Spirit of God hath left (even in the judgment of the judicious) questionable, can be no less than presumption. Therefore as S. Augustine saith, that variety of Translations is profitable for the finding out of the sense of the Scriptures: so diversity of signification and sense in the margin, where the text is not so clear, must needs do good, yea, is necessary, as we are persuaded.*

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Here are some resources for those who want to go further with this.

1. For a recent and rabid KJO defense, read Gail Riplinger's [New Age Bible Versions](#) (A.V. Publications, 1993). I should warn you that Ms. Riplinger says that her decision to represent herself as G. A. Riplinger (no problem with that) signifies "God and Riplinger — God as author and Riplinger as secretary."
2. For a much saner defense, read Edward F. Hills, [The King James Version Defended](#) (The Christian Research Press, 1984).
3. For a scholarly (and, although not entirely convincing, reasonably well respected) defense of the Byzantine text type as the authentic NT text, read Wilbur N. Pickering's [The Identity of the New Testament Text](#) (Thomas Nelson, 1977).
4. For a helpful defense of the idea that the Byzantine text type, although not necessarily the final word in every place, should be given more consideration in text-critical decisions, read Harry A. Sturz, [The Byzantine Text-Type & New Testament Textual Criticism](#) (Thomas Nelson, 1984).

5. For an especially good (and not just because its writer's spirit closely matches my own at many points!) treatment of the whole issue, read James R. White, The King James Only Controversy (Bethany House, 1995). (It contains many responses to the arguments of KJO defenders like Ruckman and Riplinger, including an exposure of Riplinger's reprehensible dishonesty in the way she twists the "quotations" of others.)
6. For a relatively brief "introduction" to textual criticism, read J. Harold Greenlee, Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism (Wm B. Eerdmans, 1964).
7. Editions of the critical Greek text can be purchased from the American Bible Society or the United Bible Society; of the "Majority Text" from Thomas Nelson, and of the Textus Receptus from the Trinitarian Bible Society.