

Modern Bible Versions

Rev. David Engelsma

There is, at the present time, a proliferation of new translations, revisions, and paraphrases of the Bible. One after another, new versions of the Bible pour off the presses, so that it becomes difficult to keep up with them.

It has not always been so. In 1611, the King James Version appeared - a translation of the Bible into English by theologians and ministers in England which is known as the "Authorized Version." For over 250 years, it was, for all practical purposes, the only Bible in the English language.

During the years 1881-1885, the King James Version was revised in England, and this revision, after some changes were made for American readers, became the American Standard Version, published in 1901.

In 1937, the National Council of Churches authorized a thorough revision of the 1901 version, and they published the Revised Standard Version in 1951. This proved to be a popular Bible.

In the last few years, many English versions have come on the market: The Jerusalem Bible (1966); The New English Bible (1970); The Living Bible (1971); and, very recently, The New International Version - to name only a few.

The justification for all these new versions is the alleged weaknesses of the King James Bible. The King James Version is criticized as containing many, serious errors; as not based on the best manuscripts of Scripture, especially as regards the New Testament; and as being unclear in its language. Due to the development of the English language, it is charged, modern readers can no longer understand the K.J.V.: it fails to communicate the Word to modern readers. The "Preface" of the Revised Standard Version is representative of this criticism. It states: "the King James Version has grave defects... (which) call for revision of the English translation." One of these defects is that "The King James Version of the New Testament was based upon a Greek text that was marred by mistakes, containing the accumulated errors of fourteen centuries of manuscript copying . . . We now possess many more ancient manuscripts of the New Testament, and are far better equipped to seek to recover the original wording of the Greek text."

In addition:

"A major reason for revision of the King James Version, which is valid for both the Old Testament and the New Testament, is the change since 1611 in English usage. Many forms of expression have become archaic.

Other words are obsolete and no longer understood by the common reader. The greatest problem, however, is presented by the English words which are still in constant use but now convey a different meaning from that which they had in 1611 and in the King James Version."

The modern versions make the claim that they will give the Word in a clear, up-to-date manner.

If the King James Version were the Bible originally inspired by God - the so-called "autographa" - there would be no problem with the modern versions. In this case, we would simply condemn them as deviations and demand that men stick with the version inspired by God. But this is not what the King James Version is. It is a translation by men in the early 1600's of certain documents called manuscripts that have come down to us in the original languages of Scripture: Hebrew and Greek.

The King James Version is not a perfect translation. It is to be regretted that the translators did not consistently render the outstanding name of God in the Old Testament as Jehovah, but instead gave it as LORD. There is archaic language in the King James Version, e.g., "wottest" for "know"; "let" for "restrain" ([II Thess. 2](#)); "conversation" for "conduct"; "take no thought" for "be not anxious" ([Matt. 6](#)); etc. It is conceivable that, in time, the English language changes to such an extent that 17th century English becomes unintelligible, and a new translation is not only permissible, but even demanded. God's people must have a Bible in their own language. This was a vital concern of the Reformation. Luther translated the Bible into German. Tyndale translated it into English. The Synod of Dort saw to it that the Bible was translated into Dutch. If we were stuck with a translation in the English of Chaucer, a new translation would be required.

We are not simply against *change*, *all* change. This would be a blind, hide-bound traditionalism, neither defensible nor healthy. Think of the necessity, some years back, of changing from Dutch to English in the worship services. Some fiercely opposed this change, but we wisely made it. No, we do not simply oppose change, but we do ask: Is the change good? This is the question regarding the modern Bible versions.

ARE THEY A BLESSING? OR A CURSE?

To be a good, usable version, a Bible must have three qualities. First, it must be a translation that is thoroughly faithful to the Word of God. It must be faithful to all the words that God inspired as they have come down in the Hebrew and Greek manuscripts, i.e., it must be the very Word of God, from beginning to end. Since all scripture is inspired of God, an inspiration that extends to the very words (verbal inspiration - [II Timothy 3:15-17](#)), the translation must be faithful with a faithfulness that extends to the very words. This does not demand a word-for-word translation, but it does mean that where the Spirit has "seed," as of one, the translation must not have "seeds," as of many, and that where the Spirit has "the Word became flesh," the translation must not put "Christ became flesh." This characteristic is fundamental. Whatever lacks faithfulness is worthless, in fact, a threat, for a book purporting to be the Bible, the Word of God, is not the Word, but a word of man.

Secondly, a good version must be clear. It must be clear to "the common man." Every believer, though he be a youth behind a plough, must be able to read and understand the particular version of Scripture. The great translator, Tyndale, put it this way: "If God spare my life, ere many years, I will cause a boy that driveth a plough shall know more of the Scriptures than thou doest." Clarity is an inherent quality of God's Scripture. The New Testament, as is well known, was written in the Greek of the common people - not the Greek of the universities. This is also a basic requirement of a Bible version, hardly inferior to the requirement of faithfulness.

Thirdly, a version should have a good style, a pleasing, smooth-flowing, readable style. The style should also be dignified. There must be a dignity about the version, It is God's Word after all, the Word of the majestic, holy, glorious God. This condemns the slangy, vulgar hip-talk and jive of some modern versions, which, although promoted as "the language of the people, is not the language of the people, but the language of a certain, limited, obnoxious segment of the people. It is certainly not the language of GOD, and this is what the Bible is.

In the light of these requirements, the modern Bible versions are seen to be a curse, not a blessing for the Church. They are doing incalculable harm and threaten to do still more harm in the future. I hasten to add that this does not mean that we may not have them and use them along with the King James Version, always checking them against the original or a reliable English translation such as the King James Version. I have many versions and use them, even the one that angers me the most and that I can use only to point out its errors - *The Living Bible*. But I have reference to the modern versions as replacements for the King James Version and as Bibles that are used regularly in home, school, and church.

They fail the test of the first fundamental requirement: faithfulness to the inspired Word. Failing in this, they also fail the second test: clarity - they do not clearly give the reader the very Word of God. They either corrupt or hide important doctrines of Holy Scripture: creation; the Trinity; the Deity of Jesus; total depravity; predestination; and others. I will show this a little later.

There is a reason for this. The explanation is the apostasy of the Protestant Churches since the days of the King James Version. All of the modern versions have appeared after the 1800's, the age of unbelief regarding the doctrine of the infallible inspiration of Scripture. Originating in Germany, this unbelief - known as "higher criticism" - spread throughout the world. Since it was unbelief regarding the fundamental doctrine of the inspiration of Holy Scripture - really, the denial that Scripture is the Word of God - it extended to ALL the doctrines of the Christian religion. Creation was doubted; the Virgin Birth was questioned; total depravity through the transgression of a real first parent was denied. NOTHING taught in the Bible was believed any longer. The theologians and ministers who translate the Bible are no longer strong in the Lord and faithful. Their unbelief becomes evident in their translation. It must. Whether the erroneous translations are deliberate or not - and I am convinced that much is deliberate corruption of the Word - the spiritual weakness of the modern Protestant Church is necessarily reflected in their versions of the Bible. Men have helped translate Holy Scripture who personally deny the doctrine of inspiration, the doctrine of creation, the doctrine of the fall, the doctrine of the Trinity, and the like.

It takes a strong church and believing men to translate the Bible, and our age does not abound with such. It is not enough to have expert knowledge of Hebrew and Greek - this is not even the main qualification of a translator. But one must have a child-like faith that the Bible is the Word of God, an utter dependence upon Scripture as the foundation of the Church, and such a reverence for it that one trembles at its Word. Such men were Tyndale, Luther, the King James men, and the Reformed theologians and preachers of Dordt. Where are they today?

The presence of bad translations in the Church and their use by the people is a serious matter. People do not take the threat of bad versions seriously enough. Parents let them come into their homes and schools, and consistories allow them in the pews. The seriousness is simply this, that the Bible is the basis of

everything for Protestantism. "Scripture alone" is our confession. It is different for Rome. Their authority is the Church itself, expressing itself through the Pope. Whether there are Bibles or not, is not vital for Rome. But for the true Church of Jesus Christ, for the Reformed Church, Scripture is the sole basis of doctrine and life, the foundation of the Church herself. Since Scripture has this position, the Bible that is in use in a Church will affect and mold every aspect of the faith and life of the Church and every aspect of the faith and life of the members of the Church. If the Bible version is a bad one, it will gradually overhaul everything for the worse. There is no more effective, no more certain, no more thorough method for a Church to commit spiritual suicide than to bring in a bad Bible and let it have its way in the congregation.

Significant doctrines of the Christian faith have been established on the basis of exact readings of certain texts. If these texts are changed in the version used by the people, the doctrines are jeopardized in the mind of the people and will eventually be lost. When the doctrine crumbles, the edifice of a godly life, built on this foundation of doctrine, will also topple, e.g., the Christian Church has laid down the doctrine of total depravity, over against the Pelagian heresy of the innate goodness of man, on the basis of such passages as [Ephesians 2:1](#), which says that the natural man is "dead in trespasses and sins," and [Romans 8:7](#), which teaches that the carnal mind "is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." This cardinal doctrine is the ground of the humility of the Christian life - it is the death-blow to all human pride. When *The Living Bible* translates the former passage so as to omit the word, "dead" and the latter so as to omit the word, "can" thus leaving out the truth that man lacks the ABILITY to obey the law, it undermines the doctrine of total depravity, opens the door to Pelagius, and produces proud people.

Think once of the essential importance of the bible of the so-called Jehovah's Witnesses for that synagogue of Satan and its miserable heresy. Everyone is aware, I suppose, that the Bible with which they come to our door is not our Bible, but their own special creation. It is no more the Bible of the Christian faith than is The Book of Mormon or the Koran. The bible of the so-called Jehovah's Witnesses is a deliberate perversion of the Bible, (masquerading as a version) to get rid of the Bible's teaching of the Deity of Jesus and the Trinity. In their bible, they have made [John 1:1](#), where the apostle states that the Word Who became flesh in Jesus Christ "was God," read: "and the Word was a god." This bible has results - it results in another body than the true Church of Christ, a sect, and it results in the everlasting damnation of all those whom it leads astray. They call their bible, by the way *The New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*. It is not without its grim humor that the Watchtower group pushes its bible by means of the same come-on used by the modern versions: "Read the Word of God in modern-day English."

Think also of the importance to Rome in its controversy with the Reformed faith of its own peculiar version of Scripture. Rome's version in English has long been the *Douay Bible*. Recently, a new Roman Catholic version in English has appeared: *The Jerusalem Bible*. These versions include the apocryphal books of the Old Testament from which Rome can prove its doctrines of purgatory, prayers for the dead, and meritorious good works, and translate key passages in a way favorable to Rome. e.g., *The Jerusalem Bible* renders [Matthew 1:25](#) thus: "and, though he had not had intercourse with her, she gave birth to a son," etc. - in this way protecting Rome's doctrine of Mary's perpetual virginity and undergirding the whole of Rome's Mariolatry. Again, it gives [Romans 8:28](#) as: "We know that by turning everything to their good God co-operates with all those who love him....," thus promoting Rome's fundamental teaching of synergism.

So, it should be evident to all that what version the Church uses is an important matter. In opposing corrupt versions, we are fighting essentially the same battle that our spiritual ancestors fought in the Reformation: the battle for the presence and authority of the Word of God. The only difference is that then the Bible was withheld from the Church, whereas now it is buried and distorted by multitudes of bad versions.

WHAT ABOUT CERTAIN, SPECIFIC MODERN VERSIONS?

We should demonstrate and prove our charges against the modern versions.

We cannot refer to all of them - time and space forbid it. Let us pick several that are popular, widely regarded as the best, and representative of the others.

First there is the *Revised Standard Version*. It is the Bible of the "liberal," i.e., heretical, National Council of Churches and reflects the unbelief of the heretical leaders of this group. It weakens the Biblical teachings regarding the Virgin Birth, the Deity of Jesus, and the Trinity. In [Isaiah 7:14](#), it has: "a young woman shall conceive," for: "a virgin shall conceive." In [Micah 5:2](#), where the prophet says that the coming Christ has been "from everlasting," the RSV has: "from ancient days." In [John 1:14,18](#) and [John 3:16](#), where the original Greek calls Jesus the "only begotten Son," thus teaching that Jesus is the eternal and natural Son of God, the RSV indefensibly translates: "the only Son." In [I Timothy 3:16](#), where the King James Version reads: "God was manifest in the flesh," thus clearly teaching that Jesus is God in the flesh, the RSV merely has: "He was manifested in the flesh."

The *New English Bible* (NEB) appeared in 1970. It was produced by the major Protestant churches in Britain. Louise Cassels, then religion editor for Associated Press, called it, "The best of all modern translations." It is an attractive book with a pleasing style. I can remember that when I first saw it I thought: "Perhaps, this will be the version that faithfully translates Scripture into good, modern English." I can also remember my disappointment as I began reading in the first chapter of Genesis. Already in the second verse of the Bible, the unfaithfulness of this version is evident. where the King James Version reads: "And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters," the NEB has: "and a mighty wind that swept over the surface of the waters." The Holy Spirit is removed from [Genesis 1](#) and from the work of creation. In [Isaiah 7:14](#), the NEB has "young woman," for "virgin." It horribly corrupts [Isaiah 9:6](#), a brilliant revelation of Jesus' Deity in the Old Testament. The NEB reads: "For a boy has been born for us . . . and he shall be called in purpose wonderful, in battle God-like, Father for all time, Prince of peace." Shades of old Arius - the Jesus concerning whom the text really says that He is "the mighty God, the everlasting Father" now becomes "God-like." [John 1:1](#) is corrupted. The NEB reads, in this crucial passage: "and what God was, the Word was." But the original states flatly: "and God was the Word," or as our King James Version puts it: "and the Word was God." The NEB errs noticeably also in passages that teach the sovereignty of God in salvation and in damnation. [Romans 8:28](#) is made to read: "he co-operates for good with those who love God." [Acts 13:48](#) reads: "and those who were marked out for eternal life became believers" (the King James Version correctly has: "and as many as were ORDAINED to eternal life believed."). [Romans 9:15](#) is translated: "Where I show mercy, I will show mercy," when in fact the apostle wrote: "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy," referring to particular persons.

WHAT ABOUT THE LIVING BIBLE?

The Bible that is all the rage today is *The Living Bible*. It is available in many different forms and editions, e.g., *Reach Out*, *The Greatest is Love*, *The Way*, *Living Letters*, etc. But they are all the same Bible. *The Living Bible* is Kenneth Taylor's paraphrase of Scripture, published by Tyndale House, distributed widely by the World Home Bible League, and on sale everywhere. It is at once the worst and the most popular of all the modern versions of the Bible.

The Living Bible is, inherently, an attack upon, indeed it makes a mockery of, the doctrine of Scripture's infallible, verbal inspiration by the Holy Spirit. It purports to be the Bible, in fact, arrogantly, it claims to be a LIVING Bible in distinction from the other versions which presumably are then DEAD ones, and it is being received and used as the Bible. However, it is a paraphrase, i.e., it gives what the author conceives to be the sense of a passage, and it gives the sense of the passage in the author's words quite in disregard of the words which the Spirit inspired. It is not faithful to God's Word; it replaces God's Word with the words of man. If such a "Bible" is acceptable, infallible, verbal inspiration is a farce.

The Living Bible is filled with false doctrine. [Genesis 6:2](#) solemnly tells us that "beings from the spirit world looked upon the beautiful earth women and took any they desired to be their wives," and verse 4 says that "evil beings from the spirit world were sexually involved with human women," introducing the nonsense of Greek mythology into Scripture a teaching as foolish as it is erroneous. We will bypass other, similar errors, for the main evil of *The Living Bible* is that it is an all-out attack on the Reformed faith - it is the Bible of Arminianism, the gospel of man's free will. *Anyone interested in a more detailed analysis of The Living Bible than that given in this pamphlet can write the distributors of this pamphlet for the brochure, "An Examination of Reach Out and The Greatest is Love."* [Acts 13:48](#) reads: "and as many as wanted eternal life, believed." [Romans 8:28](#) reads: "And we know that all that happens to us is working for our good if we love God and are fitting into His plans" - a rendering which, if correct, would have been enough to have routed the entire Synod of Dort. [Romans 9](#) cannot be recognized: "This proves that God was doing what He had decided from the beginning; it was not because of what the children did but because of what God wanted and chose" (vs. 11); "I chose to bless Jacob, but not Esau" (vs. 13); "God's blessings are not given just because someone decides to have them . . ." (vs. 16); "God told him (Pharaoh) He had given him the kingdom of Egypt for the very purpose of displaying the awesome power of God against him" (vs. 17); "fit only for destruction" (vs. 22); etc. One only needs to compare these verses with the correct translation in the King James Version to see that *The Living Bible* has gone through the Scriptures replacing the testimony of the sovereignty of grace with the message of the dependency of salvation upon the will of man. This is every bit as serious as the denial of the Deity of Christ.

In addition, *The Living Bible* represents and promotes the religious movement that downgrades doctrine, preaching, and the instituted Church of Christ and substitutes feeling, experience, and individualism. As such, it serves as a powerful instrument of the ecumenical movement. Most significant is the introduction - by a Roman Catholic priest - to *The Way*, the Roman Catholic edition of *The Living Bible*. Concerning *The Living Bible*, which he heartily recommends, the priest states: "This present volume departs radically from (the) history of Scriptural translations . . . Perhaps more than other translations, this translation cannot be used as a basis for Doctrinal or traditional disputes. More

than other English versions of the Bible, this one freely departs from a literal translation from the original languages . . . Most readers of the Bible who choose this translation will not be interested in such technical, theological considerations. They will be looking for spirit and life from the Word of God. We rejoice in our chance to encourage and help those who approach the Scriptures for this reason. We caution those who wish to engage in theological disputes not to use this volume." A genuine Protestant, much less a Reformed man, needs to hear no more.

To this "Bible," we are totally and unalterably opposed. If it should prevail among us, the Reformed faith would be destroyed. It may not be the Bible that we use at home, in school, in our personal study, or in any aspect of the life of the Church. Our young people must be aware that it is another arm of the power of the lie that we fight as Reformed saints. It is a wicked effort to destroy God's Word, as wicked as Jehoiakim's burning of the Scriptures that he disliked, or Thomas Jefferson's whittling down the Bible to the sermon on the mount. That Reformed people and Reformed institutions can smile on it only shows how little knowledge of and love for the Reformed faith there is today.

CAN WE STILL USE THE KING JAMES VERSION?

If the modern versions are unsatisfactory, what then? We can and should continue to use the King James Version. It is faithful, completely faithful to the infallibly inspired, sacred Scriptures. No one has ever accused it of unfaithfulness. Even those passages that are not found in the better manuscripts, e.g., [1 John 5:7](#), are not contrary to sound doctrine, but are in harmony with the teaching of Scripture in other, uncontested passages. The King James Version IS the Word of God; when you have it before you, you have the uncorrupted Word. You can trust it, rely on it, and safely let it continue to work its work on the Church, on your home and family, on your Christian school, and on your personal Christian life. It is faithful, and this is the main criterion of a Bible version.

The King James Version is also clear. There are odd words now and then, words unfamiliar to 20th century Americans, but on the whole it is clear. It is clear in [Genesis 1](#) regarding creation; it is clear in [Genesis 3](#) regarding the fall; it is clear in the gospels regarding salvation in Jesus; it is clear in the historical books; it is clear everywhere. I deny the common charge that the King James Version is impenetrably murky, especially for children. I did not find it so for myself as a child and a youth; I do not find it so for my own family of small children; I do not find it so for the many children and young people in the congregation. Rather, I find that a child can understand the King James Version.

Concerning the excellent style of the King James Version, any praise from me would be superfluous. Its beauty is well-known. It has molded our thinking, our writing, and our speaking. It has the dignity and solemnity that befits the Word of God.

Besides, it uses the words of the Church of the past, the language of the creeds, so that the person who learns the King James Version also becomes familiar with the terms of Church history and Church doctrine: justification, sanctification, regeneration, predestination, and the like. The new versions are dropping these words, and we may expect that we will shortly hear that the old creeds must be scrapped or revised, because "no one understands their terminology anymore."

We need feel no compulsion to change Bibles just because change is the order of the day. We are the CHURCH, the only solid reality in all the changing, fickle world, and we are solid because we are builded on the imperishable, unchanging Word of God. In the world, there is a craze for new things; everything old is despised - every few years a new car with a radically different design; new stereo equipment regularly; a new style of clothing whether the old is worn out or not; even a new wife or husband periodically. This creeps into the Church too: every other year a new gospel, now Barthianism, then the death of God message, and who knows what after that; pop-top, throw-away creeds to reflect every passing religious fad; and, now, throwaway Bibles - today *The Living Bible* and perhaps another version next year. This confuses the people of God. One evidence of this confusion is the weakness of the present generation of young people as concerns memorization of the Bible. With all their different versions, they memorize none of them.

We should stick to the King James Version, but we must USE it, really and diligently use it. The problem today, whether for young or old, is not that the King James Version is dark and hard to understand, but that we are not faithful to read and study it and that parents and churches are *unfaithful* in teaching it. The appalling ignorance of the Word in our age is not an intellectual problem, but a spiritual one. There is a demand that everything come easily; people want an easy-chair, push-button life - also as regards the knowledge of the Word and things spiritual. The children in catechism, used to the lazy, sit-back-and-relax "instruction" of television, have the attitude, "Now entertain us, and get through to us if you can." Grown-ups desire instant, painless attainment of Christian maturity, and even perfection, by turning the switch of "the baptism of the Spirit" in Pentecostalism. The same thing holds true with regard to the knowledge of Scripture - it must be made easy. So, we get "Bibles" with racy covers, striking pictures and comments on all kinds of current events scattered throughout, and a watered-down content. But growth in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ is not easy. Scripture is clear, but it is not easy. God gives us knowledge of the Word through hard study, memorization, work! This is true for pastors, adults, and children.

Let the churches preach and teach the Word; let the parents read and explain it to their children at home; let the Christian school teachers teach it at school; and let every child of God study it daily on his own. Then, there will be knowledge of the Scriptures among us as there was in former times.

APPENDIX: THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF HOLY SCRIPTURE

David J. Engelsma

Introduction

The subject of the English translation of the Bible becomes complicated, especially in the unavoidable area of textual criticism. There are some 5,000 manuscripts (MSS) of the Greek New Testament, each

with its name, date, and contribution to the New Testament text. This field of study has its jargon ("genealogy"; "text-type"; "conflation"; etc.). The subject plunges us at once into controversy: the King James Version (KJV) versus the modern versions; the majority of MSS versus Vaticanus (B) and Sinaiticus (Aleph) MSS; Burgon versus Westcott and Hort (W-H). Besides, the material is voluminous. Books, pamphlets, and English Bibles multiply. Not only the layman, but also the pastor is inclined to throw up his hands in despair of ever coming to know the subject.

But the subject is obviously of great importance. It concerns the Bible that we use in the church and in our personal life -- the very heart of our ecclesiastical and spiritual life.

Nor can we ignore the issue: which English Bible? Many new versions have been published and are clamoring for our acceptance. They demand acceptance on grounds that must be taken seriously: better MS basis; clearer translation; more helpful for the twentieth century church. The advocates of these versions make the sharpest criticisms of the KJV and of our continued use of the KJV. Our people, especially our young people, are affected by the modern versions and their claims. Some begin to use a modern version for private devotions; others carry a modern version to Bible study; and others ask whether it is proper for the family to use a modern version in family devotions.

A survey of the history of the English Bible shows that the KJV was the only English Bible from 1611 to the end of the nineteenth century. In 1881-1885, the Revised Version (RV) was published in England. (The American Standard Version is the American form of the RV, published in 1901.) The publication of the RV was a turning point in the history of the English Bible. It was not merely a revision of the KJV, although seemingly this was the expressed intention. But it was a version based on different MSS in the New Testament than those used by the KJ translators. These were the newly discovered MSS, B and Aleph. The men mainly responsible for the rejection of the MSS used by the KJ translators and for the adoption of B and Aleph were two English scholars, B.F. Westcott and F.J.A. Hort. They were the heroes or the villains in the story of the English Bible from about 1870 to the present time. For the many versions that followed the RV basically adopted the Greek text of the New Testament proposed by W-R. These versions include the Revised Standard Version (RSV); the New English Bible (NEB); Today's English Version (TEV, also known as Good News for Modern Man); and the New International Version (NIV).

It must be noted from the outset, that those who promote the new versions criticize the KJV, not only as an inadequate translation for twentieth century men (e.g., using archaic words), but also as based on an inferior Greek text. Hort, with something less than scholarly objectivity, contemned the Greek text behind the KJV, the *Textus Receptus* (TR), as "vile" and "villainous."

In the past, some preachers have defended the KJV as the best English translation, while conceding that the MSS behind the new versions are the best Greek MSS of the New Testament and that they give the better reading in places where they differ with the text behind the KJV. How often, e.g., have not our people been told at Christmas, concerning [Luke 2:14](#), "Now the better reading of the text is, '...and on earth peace to men of good-pleasure'"? This seems to me to be an indefensible, and, in the long run, impossible, position. I contend that the KJV is the best English version, not only because it is the best translation (i.e., as regards faithfulness to the Hebrew and Greek of Scripture; clarity; and beauty), but also because it is based on the best MSS - the MSS that faithfully transmit to us the original Scriptures, particularly the Scriptures of the New Testament. We should heed VanBruggen, Pickering, the

Trinitarian Bible Society, Burgon, and others who ask concerning the theory of **W-H**, whether the emperor has any clothes, and who defend the text of the KJV the Majority, or Byzantine, or Traditional, Text.

Criticism of Various, Modern English Versions

Many of the modern versions are to be criticized apart from the matter of the Greek text of the New Testament.

The Living Bible, among its countless faults, is a biased paraphrase of Scripture, in which no regard is shown for the verbal inspiration of the Bible. The human author of this best-selling book, which is neither the Bible nor living, has willfully and systematically corrupted the passages that teach salvation by sovereign grace (cf. [Acts 13:48](#); [Rom. 8:28ff.](#); and [Romans 9](#), throughout). It is a repository of false doctrine.

Good News for Modern Man, or TEV, weakens the Deity of Jesus, e.g., in [John 1:1](#) ("Before the world was created, the Word already existed; he was with God, and he was the same as God"), and in [Romans 9:5](#) ("they are descended from the patriarchs, and Christ, as a human being, belongs to their race. May God, who rules over all, be praised for ever! Amen."). it translates "virgin" as "girl" in [Luke 1:27](#). It omits "begotten" in [John 1:14, 18](#) and elsewhere in John. As is well known, it systematically translates "blood" as "death" e.g., in [Acts 20:28](#) ("...Be shepherds of the church of God, which he made his own through the death of his own Son" - where the Godhead of Jesus is also obscured by the translation), thus robbing the church of the precious comfort of the blood-theology of Holy Scripture. Throughout, this version omits, adds, and changes words at its pleasure.

The New English Bible is ravaged with theological modernism. In [Genesis 1:2](#) it has a "mighty wind" sweeping over the waters of the chaos. In [Isaiah 7:14](#), "virgin" is translated "young woman." [Isaiah 9:6](#) raises ancient Arius from the dead: "For a boy has been born for us... and he shall be called in purpose wonderful, in battle God-like ..." God is stripped of His sovereignty and the saints, of their comfort at [Romans 8:28](#): "and in everything... he co-operates for good with those who love God..."

The Revised Standard Version renders "virgin" as "young woman" in [Isaiah 7:14](#); "from everlasting" as "from ancient days" in [Micah 5:2](#); and "only begotten" as "only" in [John 1:14, 18](#) and elsewhere in John - thus weakening the testimony to the Godhead of Jesus.

Evident in these representative versions is a weakening of Scripture's testimony to the Godhead of Jesus and, therefore, to the Trinity, and a weakening of Scripture's teaching of God's sovereignty. Glaringly evident is the disbelief on the part of the translators of the doctrine of the infallible inspiration of Holy Scripture, extending to all its parts - the doctrine which the church has expressed as "verbal inspiration." This is the reason why the translators paraphrase Scripture; deliberately falsify the words of Scripture; change the words; and add or omit words.

It is this unbelief concerning Scripture's inspiration which also accounts for the theory of translating which gains ground today, namely, "dynamic equivalence." In the interests of putting the language of

Scripture into the language that the people of a certain age and culture will understand, this theory permits the translator to depart widely from the very words which God breathed out in the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures. The reader of a version which has been translated according to the theory of dynamic equivalence cannot be sure that he has God's Word at any point; the word may well be the word of the translator. The main proponent of this theory is Eugene A. Nida, who holds important positions in both the United Bible Societies and The American Bible Society.¹ Nida himself indicates how this theory of translation may affect the doctrinal content of the English Bible:

One of the most common interpretations of the atonement has been substitutionary, in the sense that Christ took upon Himself our sins and died in our place as a substitutive sacrifice. This interpretation, true and valuable as it may be for many, is not communicable to many persons today, for they simply do not think in such categories ... the presentation of the Atonement in terms of reconciliation is more meaningful, since in this way they can understand more readily how God could be in Christ reconciling the world to Himself.²

Our objection to this theory of translating does not imply the demand for a literal, word-for-word translation. As Luther, masterful translator of the German Bible, insisted in defense of his own work, translation of Scripture requires the freedom to express the text in the idiom of the people for whom Scripture is being translated. The Bible must be made to speak German, or English, or Chinese. At times, this means that the translator gives up the words of the original Hebrew and Greek and renders the thought of the passage in different words.

...at many places we have departed rather freely from the letter of the original... Again in [Psalm 68](#) we ran quite a risk, relinquishing the words and rendering the sense. For this many know-it-all's will criticize us, to be sure, and even some pious souls may take offense. But what is the point of needlessly adhering so scrupulously and stubbornly to words which one cannot understand anyway? Whoever would speak German must not use Hebrew style. Rather he must see to it - once he understands the Hebrew author - that he concentrates on the sense of the text, asking himself, "Pray tell, what do the Germans say in such a situation?" Once he has the German words to serve the purpose, let him drop the Hebrew words and express the meaning freely in the best German he knows.³

But this necessary freedom in translating differs essentially from the changing of the text of Scripture by "dynamic equivalence." For even the free translation of Luther was always a faithful rendering of the thought and meaning of the original. Besides, when it came to doctrines, Luther translated literally, keeping strictly to the words of the original. Here, he was willing to sacrifice the German idiom. If, at times, he made the Jews speak German, Luther also made the Germans learn Hebrew.

On the other hand we have at times also translated quite literally - even though we could have rendered the meaning more clearly another way - because everything turns on these very words ... out of respect for ... doctrine ... we should keep such words, accustom ourselves to them, and so give place to the Hebrew language where it does a better job than our German.⁴ I have been very careful to see that where everything turns on a single passage, I have kept to the original quite literally and have not lightly departed from it.⁵

Luther's concern to be faithful to the inspired Word in translating comes out in his defense of that particular translation which was most vehemently attacked: [Romans 3:28](#). As is well known, Luther's

translation "inserted" the word, "only" (German: *allein*). Admittedly, this word does not appear in the original Greek. The Roman Catholics professed outrage and accused Luther of deliberately tampering with the text, in order to buttress his beloved doctrine of justification by faith only. Luther does not admit to any "insertion" of a word into the Bible, without any warrant in the text itself. On the contrary, the word, "only," is called for by the meaning of the text itself and by good German usage. The thought of the apostle Paul in [Romans 3:28](#), justification by faith without the deeds of the law, *is* that expressed by the word, "only." In addition, good German often uses "only," when an affirmative and a negative statement are contrasted. The word, "only," is not *necessary* in a German translation of [Romans 3:28](#); but it does make Paul's statement "more complete and more intelligible" than would be the case if it were omitted.[6](#)

In contrast to Luther's faithfulness to the inspired Word, "dynamic equivalence" produces versions which change the Word of God, not only as regards words, but also as regards sense, thought, and doctrine. But a Bible is worthless, if it cannot be trusted to give faithfully and reliably the Word inspired by God.

Although a main objection to the New International Version concerns the Greek text of the New Testament used in its translation, also the NIV often fails faithfully to give in English the words of the Hebrew and Greek original. According to David Stark, in a brochure, "Prove all Things," "the whole O.T. is riddled through with textual reconstruction, independent of the *Hebrew Manuscript Authority*. This is done twenty-one times in the book of First Chronicles, alone!" VanBruggen writes: "In the N.T., the is also too free in its translation." He illustrates this charge in an "Appendix."[7](#) Other weaknesses of the NIV are its translation of "only begotten Son" as "one and only Son," or "only Son"(omitting "begotten"), in the Gospel of John and the First Epistle of John, and its footnotes which destroy the confidence of the reader in basic teachings of Scripture at crucially important passages. At [Romans 9:5](#), e.g., the NIV translates correctly, "...Christ, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen.;" but a footnote casts doubt on this clear teaching of the Deity of Christ: "Or Christ, who is over all. God be forever praised! Or Christ. God who is over all be forever praised!"

Heretical views of Holy Scripture prevail in the churches today, especially among the scholars and theologians. There is the view that the Bible is only the fallible testimony of Israel and of the church to Jehovah and to Jesus of Nazareth. But there is also the view that Scripture as given by God cannot effectively communicate to modern men, or to certain groups of modern men, e.g., the youth. It must be adapted by the church, in order to be able to speak to men today. These low views of the Word of God influence the translation of the Bible. They give the translators license to render Scripture almost as they please. This is seen today in the version being prepared by the National Council of Churches which will filter the Bible through the mind of the women's liberation movement, even though we lose our Heavenly Father and our Elder Brother in the process. I suppose that these translators are sincere and that their work on this version is consistent with their view of Scripture: it must be made to speak to twentieth century "liberated " women, if not to a unisex society. It is not at all inconceivable that future versions will be made to "communicate" with Marxists; proponents of liberation theology; homosexuals; and those who take salvation as a purely this-worldly event.

There is a spiritual issue, here - the issue raised in [Isaiah 66:2](#): "...but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word"; in [John 10:35](#): "...and the scripture cannot be broken"; and in [Revelation 22:19](#): "And if any man shall take away from the words of the

book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."

In light of this consideration of a reliable translation alone, how excellent is the KJV. It is a perfectly faithful and reliable translation into English of the Hebrew and Greek original. Men translated it who believed the Bible to be a Divine, and not a human, book, and who believed that God would be able to "communicate" with His people by the words which He inspired, faithfully rendered in English.

Such men are required for the translating of the Bible. It is not enough that they be scholars of the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek and adepts in the language into which the Bible is translated; but they must also be godly, orthodox saints who reverence Scripture as the holy Word, wholly God-breathed.

Ah, translating is not every man's skill as the mad saints imagine. It requires a right, devout, honest, sincere, God-fearing, Christian, trained, informed, and experienced heart. Therefore I hold that no false Christian or factious spirit can be a decent translator.[8](#)

The Issue of the Greek Text of the New Testament

It is impossible, however, to do justice to the subject of the English Bible without treating the issue of the authentic Greek text of the New Testament. (As concerns the Hebrew text of the Old Testament, there is no controversy; there is one Hebrew text - the "Masoretic Text.") The controversy concerns the Greek text of the New Testament; and the issue makes a significant difference in the New Testament that is put into the hands of the people of God in an English translation.

The facts in the case are these. The KJ translators used Greek MSS that represent the type of Greek text supported by an overwhelming majority of extant Greek MSS of the New Testament. There are, according to Wilbur N. Pickering, more than 5,000 Greek MSS of the New Testament.[9](#) Eighty to ninety percent of these MSS are in basic agreement among themselves. The Greek text contained in this majority of MSS is known as the Majority Text, the Byzantine Text, or the Traditional Text (TT). The text of the KJV, which belongs to this majority of MSS, but is not perfectly identical with the TT, is known as the *Textus Receptus*(TR) - the "Received Text." This text was accepted as the authentic text of the New Testament by the Protestant Church from the Reformation to the nineteenth century and by the Greek Church for more than a thousand years before the Reformation. In the nineteenth century, Westcott and Hort asserted the superiority of a type of text represented by a small minority of Greek MSS, particularly Codex Vaticanus (B) and Codex Sinaiticus (Aleph), which had recently been discovered. They made this text, which they called "Neutral" and which is now called "Alexandrian," the basis of the RV of 1881-1885. Their rejection of the TR and of the TT won the day, not without strong protest, most notably by John W. Burgon, an outstanding scholar in the field of textual criticism in the nineteenth century. All the modern versions, including the NIV, adopt the position of W-H and are based, in the New Testament, upon the text which they proposed. Basically, this is the text found in B and Aleph, especially B.

In his review of Burgon's works, B.B. Warfield remarks that there was some truth in the reproach of Hort, "that he looked upon B as an infallible voice proceeding from the Vatican and upon the combination B Aleph as a manifest deliverance from heaven itself."[10](#)

Many Reformed and Presbyterian preachers have accepted the theory of W-H.

Probably, they use a Nestle-Aland, United Bible Societies edition of the New Testament. And they are accustomed, now and again, to tell the congregation that a reading in B or Aleph is "better" than the reading of the TT.

At the same time, some stoutly maintain and vigorously defend the KJV.

This is an indefensible position. First, an integral part of the W-H theory is its sharp attack on the KJV. The "preface" of the RSV is typical:

...the KJV has grave defects ... these defects are so many and so serious as to call for revision of the English translation ... The KJV of the N.T. was based upon a Greek text that was marred by mistakes, containing the accumulated errors of fourteen centuries of manuscript copying ... We now possess many more ancient manuscripts of the N.T., and are far better equipped to seek to recover the original wording of the Greek text.

D. A. Carson makes the same charge: "the textual basis of the TR is a small number of haphazardly collected and relatively late minuscule manuscripts..."[11](#) To adopt the W-H theory is to accept this criticism of the KJV.

Second, mere tradition ("We have learned to love the KJV., etc.) cannot, in the end, hold out against other, vehement attacks being made upon the KJV from conservative and Reformed quarters. Carson writes:

The plain truth of the matter is that the version that is so cherished among senior (sic!) saints who have more or less come to terms with Elizabethan English, is obscure, confusing, and sometimes even incomprehensible to many younger or poorly educated Christians.[12](#)

He quotes Edwin H. Palmer, spokesman for the NIV, attacking the KJV almost fiercely:

Do not give them a loaf of bread, covered with an inedible, impenetrable crust, fossilized by three and a half centuries. Give them the word of God as fresh and warm and clear as the Holy Spirit gave it to the authors of the Bible ... For any preacher or theologian who loves God's Word to allow that Word to go on being misunderstood because of the veneration of an archaic, not-understood version of four centuries ago is inexcusable, and almost unconscionable.[13](#)

Third, preachers weaken the people's trust in the reliability of the Bible which they use when they so often and so casually say, "The reading of the KJV is wrong; the better reading is..." I find evidence of mistrust when, in a debate in a Bible study class, a member will say, "Maybe the Greek is different," or, somewhat cynically, "Probably, the original has something else."

At the very least, we ought to subject the W-H theory to a critical examination. Our love for the KJV and the obvious, serious weaknesses of the modern versions should motivate us to do this. It is to be feared that Reformed men, including the influential Warfield, accepted the views of W-H uncritically, without seeing the weaknesses and implications of their theory.

Perhaps Wilbur N. Pickering is too strong when, having examined the W-H critical theory, he concludes: "It is evidently erroneous at every point."¹⁴ But his careful examination clearly shows that it certainly would not be too strong to conclude that the W-H theory is *unproven* at every point. One cannot but ask, "Why was their theory so readily and widely accepted as gospel truth in the realm of textual criticism?"

The W-H theory chooses the few older MSS rather than the many later MSS. But it is not proved that the oldest are the best; it is not proved that the oldest MSS contain the authentic text. There is reason to suspect the oldest MSS. All are from one region - Egypt, where the climate allows for the preservation of MSS. The oldest MSS differ greatly from each other; "B and Aleph... disagree over 3,000 times in the space of the four Gospels."¹⁵ The very fact that these MSS exist at all may be evidence that the church did not *use* them.

The W-H theory rejects the testimony of the majority of Greek MSS because they are alleged to be a later text. It is now freely admitted by some defenders of the W-H text that the TT is an ancient text, going back at least to the time of B and Aleph. It is demonstrated that Byzantine, or Traditional, readings appear in the MSS and in the church fathers long before Nicea (A.D. 325).

The W-H theory discounts the majority because they are said to be one, related family. All of the Majority MSS are said to derive from one, common, parent MS. Therefore, the testimony of the many MSS carries little weight. But this dogma of W-H concerning genealogy is not proved. Indeed, there is solid evidence that, although there is essential agreement among the majority of MSS (which are not limited to one region, but are scattered through all parts of Christendom), the Majority MSS are not related genealogically.

The W-H theory attempts to account for the TT and for its dominance by positing a recension of the Greek text by one Lucian of Antioch (d. A.D. 311). A "recension" is a deliberate, editorial revision of the text of Scripture, by which a new text is composed from existing, earlier texts. This revised text, then, becomes the "official" text used by the church. Bruce M. Metzger notes that the assertion of W-H, that "the Byzantine text is an essentially revised text - following sometimes one, sometimes another of the earlier texts," is the crux of the W-H theory.¹⁶ For at one fell swoop, the TT is judged a later, unreliable, and unauthentic text of Scripture, while at the same time its popularity in the church is accounted for. But this assertion of a recension of the Greek text of the New Testament by Lucian is sheer speculation, devoid of proof.

Similarly ungrounded is the assertion that the dominance of the TT in the Greek Church from the fourth or fifth century on was due to the extraordinary influence of Chrysostom. As the former confidence in a supposed "Lucianic recension" fades, those who reject the TT must look elsewhere for an explanation of the use of the TT by the church. Some look to Chrysostom. This is how Gordon D. Fee attempts to explain the dominance of the TT:

One can scarcely underestimate the influence of Chrysostom in the history of the Greek Church... It is almost inevitable that the text form Chrysostom used first at Antioch and then later carried to Constantinople should become the predominant text of the Greek Church.¹⁷

The W-H theory judges the TT inferior because it exhibits "conflation," i.e., a certain text is supposed to have combined the different readings of two or more MSS. "Conflation is the term used to denote... editorial change in which two variant readings of a text are combined forming a new reading not precisely identical with either of the two source readings."¹⁸ The TT was alleged by Hort to be characterized by a combining of the readings of the "Neutral" and of the "Western" texts. As a result, the TT (called "Syrian" by Hort) is a more complete text than the others. This, too, is mere speculation and is rightly challenged, and exploded, today.¹⁹

The W-H theory charged that the scribes responsible for the form of the TT deliberately added material to the text and simplified hard readings. Hence, two sacred canons (cows?) of textual criticism are that the shorter reading is to be preferred and that the harder reading is to be preferred. On this basis, W-H criticized the TT for "lucidity and completeness," "apparent simplicity," and being "conspicuously a full text." The natural reaction is: Why should not the authentic text, faithfully transmitting the autographa, be lucid, complete, simple, and full? These characteristics are not unworthy of inspired Scripture!

It is this aspect of the W-H theory that may be the most dangerous of all. Called "the internal evidence" of the readings, it really consists of the scholar's judgment as to what the original reading of a given passage probably was. The scholar judges that scribes added material; the scholar decides that scribes simplified passages. There is reason to fear that this subjectivity is manifest today in the "eclectic" method of establishing the Greek text - a select body of scholars pick and choose readings as suits them. The NIV acknowledges that "the Greek text used in the work of translation was an eclectic one" ("Preface"). Should the church be so at the mercy of the scholars in such a matter as determining the Greek text of the New Testament? Still more, some who develop the W-H theory of textual criticism have come to have doubts about the very possibility of the church's possession of the authentic text of the New Testament. In his "Introduction" to Burgon's *The Last Twelve Verses of the Gospel According to S. Mark*, Edward F. Hills quotes F.C. Conybeare:

The ultimate (N.T.) text, if there ever was one that deserves to be so called, is for ever irrecoverable.²⁰

Hills quotes Kirsopp Lake to the same effect:

In spite of the claims of W-H and of vonSoden, we do not know the original form of the Gospels, and it is quite likely that we never shall.²¹

Now this may be the personal doubt of scholars who lack the faith that God preserves His Word, seeing to it that not one word falls to the ground; but it may also be the final working out of the very principles of W-H.

It is not correct to minimize the significance of this issue of the Greek text, as though the differences in any case are minor. According to Pickering, there are over 5,000 differences between the TT and the text of W-H. Although many are minor, adoption of the text of W-H means that we lose a sizable portion of the New Testament, including [Mark 16:9-20](#); [John 7:53-8:11](#); and [John 5:3b, 4](#). One can check these passages in TEV or NIV, to see that the modern versions set these passages aside as uninspired. In his convincing work, *The Woman Taken in Adultery and God Was Manifested in the Flesh*, Burgon shows, among other arguments, that the omission of [John 7:53-8:11](#) destroys the coherence of the passage: [John 8:12](#) does not relate to [John 7:52](#).²² It is significant that the translators of the NIV, feeling the

incoherence, were forced to translate 8:12 in a manner wholly unwarranted by any Greek reading: "When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said," etc. The Greek text does not have "when," nor does it have "the people."

Another serious aspect of the issue is the weakening of the doctrine of the Deity of Jesus in the text of W-H. An outstanding instance is [I Timothy 3:16](#), unaccountably omitted from the chart reproduced by D.A. Carson in which he tries to disprove the charge that the modern versions weaken the testimony to the Godhead of Jesus.²³ Where the KJV has "God was manifest in the flesh," the text of W-H and the modern versions, including the NIV, have, "He," or "Who" , thus nullifying at a crucial point the testimony to the Deity of Jesus Christ. Textually, the reading, "God," is well-supported; indeed, the support is overwhelming. Aleph stands virtually alone in rejecting the reading, "God." The passage itself demands the reading, "God," just as [Isaiah 7:14](#) requires the translation, "virgin." No more than it is a sign that a young woman has a child is it the great mystery of godliness that "he" is manifest in the flesh. For myself, I will accept no Bible that does not read "God "in [I Timothy 3:16](#). Yet another example is the omission of "the Son of God" in [Mark 1:1](#) by the text of W-H. Where the KJV reads, "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God," the W-H text reads, "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ." Although the NIV and the New American Standard Bible do translate, "the Son of God," in [Mark 1:1](#), both have weakening footnotes, that some MSS omit these words. Other instances of a weakening of the doctrine of the Deity of Jesus by the W-H text include [John 6:69](#); [Acts 8:37](#); [Acts 20:28](#); and [I Corinthians 15:47](#).

In its fine pamphlet, "The Bible A Sure Foundation," the Trinitarian Bible Society points out that by its omission of the words, "...and carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him...", " in [Luke 24:51, 52](#), in connection with its omission of the last twelve verses of the Gospel of Mark, the W-H text not only removes a powerful testimony to Jesus' Deity, but also the entire account of the historical event of Jesus' Ascension in the Gospels.

In opposition to the theory of W-H, we should at least consider, with utmost carefulness, the claim of the Greek text in the majority of MSS to be the authentic text of the New Testament Scriptures. This is essentially the text of our KJV. VanBruggen ²⁴, Pickering, the TBS, and Burgon ²⁵ before them have convincingly defended the TT on textual grounds. The TT is the text of nineteen-twentieths of the manuscript evidence; it is an ancient text; it is the text found everywhere in Christendom.

And this is the Greek text that the church, in the Providence of God, accepted and used for some 1500 years.

The Argument from God's Providence

Christ promised His church that she would always have His Word: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" ([Matt. 24:35](#)). This is necessarily implied in the doctrine of Scripture. If Scripture is God-breathed, as [II Timothy 3:16](#) teaches, God in His Providence will surely preserve Scripture for His church in all ages. The Greek Church maintained the TT for some 1000 years prior to the Reformation. The Protestant Churches accepted it and used it for some 350 years (and some continue

to use it to this very day). It is, of course, the text not only of the KJV, but also of Luther's German Bible and of the Dutch Bible of the Synod of Dordt, as well as others.

How widely this text has prevailed in the actual use of the church, Bruce M. Metzger, himself no advocate of the TT, indicates. It "spread widely throughout Greek speaking lands." It was the text of the first translation of the Bible into Teutonic language, by Ulfilas, "apostle to the Goths," in the second half of the fourth century. It was the text of the first translation of the Bible into a Slavic language, thus forming "the basis of the New Testament ... for millions of Slavic peoples." Metzger concludes:

As regards the history of the printed form of the Greek New Testament, the so-called *Textus Receptus*, which was based chiefly on manuscripts of the Antiochian recension (sic), has been reprinted, with only minor modifications, in almost one thousand editions from 1514 down to the twentieth century. When one considers how many translations into the vernaculars of Europe, Asia, Africa, and South America have been based on the Greek *Textus Receptus* of the New Testament (such as the King James version or Luther's translation), it will be appreciated how enormous has been the influence of Lucian's recension (sic), made in Antioch about the turn of the third and fourth centuries of the Christian era.[26](#)

Although the defenders of the text of W-H and of the modern versions are severely critical of the argument from Providence, it is striking that W-H could never account for the use of the TT by the church after A.D. 300, along with the disuse of the text of B and Aleph. Nor can the present critic of the TT give satisfactory explanation.

It is, at the very least, difficult to imagine that the genuine text went unused and largely unknown for some 1500 years, only to be picked out of a waste-paper basket on Mt. Sinai and discovered in the Pope's library in the nineteenth century (as Burgon sarcastically put it).

The text of B and Aleph, then, is a text which God led the church to reject, just as He led her to reject spurious books from the New Testament canon. The church recognized this text as corrupted by heretics in the time when the doctrines of the Deity of Jesus and of the Trinity were being assailed, and corrupted by careless scribes who were prone to omission.

Our Present Task

We ought to renew our gratitude to God for the KJV. Our congregations should be instructed to prize the KJV, not only because of its reliability and other precious characteristics as a translation, but also because it presents the authentic text of the New Testament. We ought to defend it, and repudiate the modern versions, on this ground, as well as others. We should continue to use it, and it only, in our churches, homes, personal devotions, and schools, as our English Bible.

We could profitably arrange lectures in which we teach the fascinating history of the English Bible; set forth the worth of the KJV; and warn concerning the dangers of the modern versions.

The preachers should acquire a TR and the Byzantine, or Majority, or Traditional, Text.[27](#) They should stop referring to B and Aleph as the best text.

We should acquaint ourselves with the work and materials of the Trinitarian Bible Society.

As VanBruggen points out, there is still room for work in textual criticism, determining the exact text of the majority of MSS.

Is there a need for a new English version based on the TT? In my judgment, this would be warranted only if the English of the KJV is not clear to present readers. It is conceivable that the English language undergoes such change that this is the case. But this is not the case today. The reason for the ignorance of many church-members is not the darkness of the KJV. The proof is our own children. I make bold to say that they, reared solely on the KJV, know more of Scripture than most who use the modern versions. The reason is, first, that the KJV is clear and, second, that they are thoroughly instructed in the truth of Scripture. Lack of good instruction, and not the KJV, is the reason for much ignorance in Protestantism today. As for the few out-dated words in the KJV, let preachers, parents, and school-teachers explain them to the children.

Our main task, therefore, is that which it has always been: preaching, teaching, hearing, reading, and studying Holy Scripture, the God-breathed Word, which, by the grace of God, we have: "...from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" ([II Tim. 3:15](#)).

Endnotes

1. Cf. Jacob Van Bruggen, *The Future of the Bible* (Nashville and New York: Thomas Nelson Inc., 1978), pp. 67ff., 151ff.
2. Eugene A. Nida, *Message and Mission* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1960), p.59. Quoted in Theodore P. Letis, "A New Hearing for the Authorized Version" (Springfield, Missouri: Reformation Research Press Inc., 1978), p. 13.
3. Martin Luther, "Defense of the Translation of the Psalms," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 35 (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1960), pp. 209, 213.
4. *Ibid.*, p.216.
5. Martin Luther, "On Translating; An Open Letter," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 35 (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1960), p.194.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 185ff.
7. VanBruggen, *op. cit.*, pp.149, 169ff.
8. Luther, "On Translating: An Open Letter," *Op. cit.*, p 194.
9. Wilbur N. Pickering, *The Identity of the New Testament* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1977), p. 16.

10. B. B. Warfield, *Critical Reviews* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1932), p.29. Warfield enthusiastically embraced the W-H theory and became an influential promoter of the theory in Presbyterian and Reformed circles. Cf. also his *The Westminster Assembly and Its Work* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1931), pp. 23~242, and his *An Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, a popular textbook.
11. D.A. Carson, *The King James Version Debate* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979), p.36.
12. *Ibid.*, pp.101, 102.
13. *Ibid.*, p.102.
14. Pickering, *op. cit.*, p.96.
15. *Ibid.*, p.126.
16. Bruce M. Metzger, *Chapters in the History of New Testament Textual Criticism* (Leiden, Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1963), pp.19, 20.
17. Gordon D. Fee, "Modern Textual Criticism and the Revival of the *Textus Receptus*," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, March, 1979, pp.19-33.
18. Richard N. Soulen, *Handbook of Biblical Criticism* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1976), p.41.
19. Cf. Pickering, *op. cit.*, pp. 58~2.
20. John W. Burgon, *The Last Twelve Verses of the Gospel According to S. Mark* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Sovereign Grace Book Club, 1959), p. 41.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 41.
22. John W. Burgon, *The Woman Taken in Adultery and God Was Manifested in the Flesh*, pp. 235ff. (Neither publisher nor date is given.)
23. D.A. Carson, *op. cit.*, p.64.
24. Jakob Van Bruggen, *The Ancient Text of the New Testament* (Winnipeg: Premier Printing Ltd., 1976). Cf. also his *The Future of the Bible*.
25. Edward F. Hills has been instrumental in reviving John W. Burgon's defense of the TT and opposition to the W-H theory. Cf. Hills, *The King James Version Defended* (Des Moines, Iowa: The Christian Research Press, 1956, 1973). Cf. also *The Majority Text: Essays and Reviews in the Continuing Debate*, Theodore P. Letis, Ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Institute For Biblical Textual Studies, 1987).
26. Metzger, *op. cit.*, pp.27-30.

27. The TR is available from the Trinitarian Bible Society (Canada), 39 Caldwell Crescent, Brampton, Ontario L6W 1A2. The JT is available from D.C. Divry, Inc., 293-7th Ave., New York, N.Y. 10001.

