

ERRORS IN THE KING JAMES VERSION?

by
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INTRODUCTION

For those of us who believe in the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture, the subject of errors in the Bible is not something that is normally confronted head on. That is, one does not generally preach a sermon or teach a class entitled “The Errors in the Bible.” We normally associate that kind of language with liberals who reject the authority of Scripture. But notice the doctrinal statement of Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary on the issue of the Bible: “We believe in the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Bible, the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testament canon, which, being inerrant in the original manuscripts, is the final authority on all matters of faith and practice and any other subject on which it touches.” This statement is explained more fully in an amplification of the Seminary’s doctrinal statement entitled “Inspiration & Preservation of Scripture,” a pamphlet published in 1996. There we say that

It is the *original text* (words, script, autograph—*graphe*, 2 Tim 3:16) that partakes of inspiration proper. All other texts, copies, reproductions, translations, and versions partake of inspiration in an indirect, linear fashion from previous copies and translations to the extent that they reproduce the text of the original manuscripts. We hold that only the autographs of Scripture are inerrant and that copies and translations of Scripture are inerrant insofar as they are true to the inerrant autographs. Thus any translation or version of Scripture in any language is the Word of God if it accurately reproduces what is in the original manuscripts.

Thus, our Seminary statement limits inspiration primarily to the original manuscripts. We go on to say in that same pamphlet: “We do not hold that the Word of God is to be found exclusively in one English translation or any one translation in any other language since all such have mistranslations, miscopying, or misprinting, however minor, and are not therefore inerrant.” Thus, translations can be said to be inspired

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in a limited, derivative sense, but they cannot be said to be inerrant in any full sense. The theological truth that drives us to these conclusions is something that is said earlier in the pamphlet: "We hold that inspiration is a direct miracle of God by which human authors and human languages were employed by God to give human beings His revelation in written form (2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:21)." Thus we are saying that a miracle of inspiration is necessary in order to produce a written document that one can say with absolute certainty is without errors, and that miracle only occurred when the authors of Scripture penned the autographs. Therefore, translations, being not directly inspired, cannot be said to be without error. Though preachers do not normally tell their congregations that their particular translation of the Bible has errors in it, neither should they tell them that their translation of the Bible has *no* errors in it. No such guarantee is possible.

Nevertheless, we find that today there are those who teach that one Bible, the KJV, has no errors. Certainly, no one is arguing, or has apparently ever argued, that any other English translation is without error. Those individuals who argue for the inerrancy of the KJV are part of the KJV-only movement, which insists that the KJV is the only English version that should be used today and that it is the only one that can truly be called the Word of God. Donald Waite, a leading advocate of the KJV-only position, is at least somewhat cautious when describing the character of the KJV: "I don't like to use the word 'inerrant' of any English (or other language) translation of the Bible because the word 'inerrant' is implied from the Greek word, *theopneustos* (2 Timothy 3:16) which means literally, 'God-breathed.'" ¹ However, Waite is quick to add that he has "not found any translation errors in the King James Bible."² Waite makes an even stronger statement when he notes that "the King James Bible is 'God's Word Kept Intact.'" ³ What does "intact" mean? Waite explains: "It means 'not harmed.' Nothing harms or defiles it.... The King James Bible—in my studied opinion—is the only translation that completely and accurately reflects, in English, the original Hebrew/Aramaic and Greek."⁴ Clearly, Waite believes the KJV is inerrant, even if he chooses not to use the word.

David Cloud, who has been heavily influenced by Waite, does not use the word *inerrant* itself to describe the KJV, but he does say it is

¹*Defending the King James Bible* (Collingswood, NJ: Bible for Today Press, 1992), pp. 245–46.

²*Ibid.*, p. 246.

³*Ibid.*, p. 1.

⁴*Ibid.*

“perfect.”⁵ “I believe the King James Bible is an accurate and lovely translation of the preserved Greek and Hebrew text of Scripture. I do not believe the King James Bible contains any errors.”⁶ In a similar vein, Thomas Strouse writes: “The KJV is the Word of God in the English language. It has no errors in it because it carefully reflects the original language texts closest to the autographa.”⁷ Again, a Bible that contains no errors and is perfect would appear to be an inerrant Bible.

Some defenders of the KJV are more forthright in their stance that the KJV is inerrant. Wallace Miller, for instance, insists that the “Authorized 1611 Version is the preserved, inerrant, inspired, and perfect word of God in the English language.”⁸ Charles Perkins says that “there are no mistakes in it [KJV] and not one word, comma, period, chapter heading, or verse number needs to be changed.”⁹

After reading these kinds of statements, we might wonder about the data itself. Does the evidence actually demonstrate that the KJV is really without error, or are there, in fact, indisputable errors in the KJV? We will now turn to that question.

DEFINITION OF ERROR

We might begin by looking at the dictionary’s definition of error: “(1a) an act or condition of ignorant or imprudent deviation from a code of behavior; (1b) an act involving an unintentional deviation from truth or accuracy; (1c) an act that through ignorance, deficiency, or accident departs from or fails to achieve what should be done.”¹⁰ As far as Bible translation is concerned, we might simplify by saying that “an error is any failure to convey accurately the meaning of the autographs.” If a translation does not accurately convey the meaning of the autographs, it must be in error. For example, any translation that fails at any point to convey accurately what Paul said in his epistle to the Romans is in error at that point. The kinds of errors a translation might contain can be

⁵Cloud says: “I personally take exception to any position which claims that we no longer have a perfect Bible” (*For Love of the Bible: The Battle for the King James Version and the Received Text from 1800 to Present* [Oak Harbor, WA: Way of Life Literature, 1995], p. 9).

⁶Ibid., p. 10.

⁷*The Lord God Hath Spoken: A Guide to Bibliology* (Virginia Beach, VA: Tabernacle Baptist Theological Press), p. 23.

⁸*The Revelation of God to Man* (Cincinnati, Published by the author, 1992), p. 79.

⁹*Flaming Torch*, April–June 1998, p. 7.

¹⁰*Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, 10th ed., s.v. “error,” p. 394.

roughly grouped into three areas: (1) errors originating from the Hebrew/Aramaic and Greek texts used by the translators; (2) errors produced by a faulty translation; and (3) errors generated in the transmission of a translation. We will now examine each of these areas.

TEXTUAL ERRORS

By textual errors I mean those where the reading found in the translation is not in agreement with that of the autographs. One might wonder how these errors can be detected since we are not in possession of the original manuscript of any biblical book. In fact, some KJV-only advocates point to the passing of the autographs in order to criticize anyone who would say that the KJV contains errors. For example, Jack Hyles says:

It bothers me when people say, "We believe that the Bible, in the original manuscripts, is the Word of God." If that's true, we have no Bible. Did you hear what I said? We have no Bible. One day they did, but WE don't.

Dr. Ed Hindson of Liberty Baptist College said concerning 1 John 5:7, "Thus, according to John's account here, 'there are three that bear record in heaven.' The rest of verse 7 and the first nine words of verse 8 are not in the original and are not to be considered as part of the Word of God." I'd like to ask Mr. Hindson a question: "When did you see the original?" How does he know they are not in the original? Look at me now. How does he know? The only way an honest man can say they are not in the original manuscripts is to have seen them, and they are not available.¹¹

While Hyles is correct in saying the autographs are not available, this does not mean that we cannot determine what was in them, and determine it with a great deal of precision. Clearly, the original scrolls and codices have long since perished, but that does not mean we do not have access to the original words themselves. It does not mean we are in doubt about every word in the Hebrew/Aramaic and Greek texts we do have. And while there is disagreement over which printed Hebrew/Aramaic and Greek texts are closest to the autographs, most reasonable people would be willing to concede that where all extant manuscripts are in agreement, we can safely conclude that we *do* have the text of the autographs. Based on this criterion, the KJV does contain indisputable errors, since, in a number of instances, it contains readings that have no basis in any manuscript.

In the OT it is universally agreed, even by KJV-only advocates,¹²

¹¹"Logic Must Prove the King James Bible," A sermon preached at the First Baptist Church of Hammond, IN, 8 April 1984, pars. 37–38 [<http://www.biblebelievers.com/Hyles1.html>].

¹²Waite, *Defending the King James Bible*, p. 27.

that the KJV was based on the Second Bomberg Edition of 1525 edited by Jacob ben Chayyim. However, on occasion the translators did not follow the Hebrew/Aramaic text before them.¹³ For instance, in Isaiah 13:15 the KJV reads “joined” (“every one that is joined *unto them* shall fall by the sword”). There is no support for this reading in any Hebrew manuscript, text, ancient version, or rabbinic tradition. Instead, the correct reading is “captured” (“anyone who is captured will fall by the sword,” NASB). Possibly, the KJV translators misread one Hebrew letter for another, mistaking the word *sāpāh* (סָפָה), “capture,” for *sāpah* (סָפַח), “join.” Whatever the case, the reading of the KJV is not the reading of the autographs and is thus an indisputable error.

In the NT the translators of the KJV used a Greek text commonly called the Textus Receptus. Its origins go back to the various editions produced by the Roman Catholic scholar Erasmus beginning in 1516.¹⁴ There is no one edition of the TR, but a number of editions with some differences among them. It is generally agreed that the edition used by the translators of the KJV was the fifth edition (1598) of Theodore Beza.¹⁵ All editions of the TR have some readings that are clearly erroneous, but have remained in the KJV. For example, in Revelation 17:8 the KJV reads:

The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.

The final words in the verse, “and yet is,” should actually read “and shall come”—“the beast that was, and is not, and shall come.” No Greek manuscript reads “and yet is”; all have “and shall come.” This error, and a few others, derive from the circumstances surrounding the production of Erasmus’ Greek NT (1516). For the book of Revelation, Erasmus had

¹³The following example was supplied to me by Dr. James D. Price, who is currently producing a manuscript on this subject.

¹⁴Textus Receptus is a Latin term that means “Received Text.” The name itself comes from an edition of the Greek NT produced by Bonaventura and Abraham Elzevir (or Elzevier). The second (1633) of their seven editions has this sentence in the preface: “Textum ergo habes, nunc ab omnibus receptum, in quo nihil immutatum aut corruptum damus” (Therefore you [dear reader] have the text now received by all, in which we give nothing changed or corrupted). From this statement (Textum...receptum) comes the term Textus Receptus or TR. See my “Erasmus and the Textus Receptus,” *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 1 (Spring 1996): 35–53 [also available online at <http://www.dbts.edu/journal.html>].

¹⁵Waite agrees (*Defending the King James Bible*, p. 48).

access to only one manuscript (1^r). However, this was not really a separate manuscript of the text of Revelation but was actually imbedded in a commentary on Revelation by Andreas of Caesarea. As such it was difficult for the printer to read the text itself, so Erasmus had a fresh copy of the text made. The copyist himself misread the original at places, and thus a number of errors were introduced into Erasmus' printed text. In Rev 17:8 the copyist mistakenly wrote καίπερ ἔστιν ("and yet is") instead of καὶ παρέσται ("and shall come"). This is an indisputable error in the KJV and the Greek text (TR) that underlies it. Interestingly, Edward F. Hills, who was one of the leading exponents of the KJV, admitted that this *is* an error.¹⁶ He observes: "Admittedly the King James Version is not *ideally* perfect. No translation ever can be. But it is the product of such God-guided scholarship that it is *practically* perfect. Its errors are few and very minor."¹⁷

Another error is found in Revelation 16:5, where the KJV reads:

And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus.

The words "shalt be," should actually read "holy one"—"Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, the holy one...." This error came into the KJV because, as we noted earlier, the translators mainly used Beza's Greek NT (1598). Beza simply speculated (guessed), without any evidence whatsoever, that the correct reading was "shall be" (ἐσόμενος) instead of "holy one" (ὅσιος). All previous editions of the TR (i.e., Erasmus, Stephanus) and all previous English Bibles (i.e., Wycliffe, Tyndale, Coverdale, Matthew's Bible, Great Bible, Geneva Bible, Bishops' Bible) read "holy one" (ὅσιος). There is no manuscript evidence whatsoever for the KJV's "shalt be." It is an indisputable error. Again, Hills admits this error.¹⁸

Another error, which comes from Beza, is found in Romans 7:6. The KJV reads:

But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not *in* the oldness of the letter.

In the KJV the phrase "that being dead" (genitive ἀποθανόντος) refers to "the law" (genitive νόμου). There is no manuscript evidence whatsoever for the phrase "that being dead" to modify "the law." Instead, the

¹⁶*Believing Bible Study*, 3rd ed. (Des Moines, IA: Christian Research Press, 1991), p. 83.

¹⁷*Ibid.*

¹⁸*Ibid.*

reading of all Greek manuscripts has “that being dead” (nominative ἀποθανόντες) modifying “we” (“we are delivered,” κατηργήθημεν). Thus, Paul is not saying that the law is dead but that we died to law—“we being dead wherein we were held are delivered from the law.” Here is another indisputable error, one that is also conceded by Hills.¹⁹

Another textual error is found in Acts 9:6, where the KJV reads:

And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord *said* unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

The words “And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him” (τρέμων τε καὶ θαμβῶν εἶπε, κύριε, τί με θέλεις ποιῆσαι; καὶ ὁ κύριος πρὸς αὐτόν) are not found in any Greek manuscript. They are found in the KJV because they were inserted by Erasmus into his Greek NT (1516), which became the basis for future editions of the TR like the one used by translators of the KJV. Erasmus frankly admitted that he took the words from the parallel passage in Acts 26:14 and inserted them at this point in the Greek text. He did so because they are in the Latin Vulgate at Acts 9:6, and he thought his Greek manuscripts were defective at this point. Unfortunately, Erasmus was wrong. These words have no Greek manuscript support whatsoever, and thus constitute an indisputable error in the KJV.

TRANSLATION ERRORS

Identifying errors in the translation process is not as clear-cut as in the previous category. Exactly how far off does a translation have to be in order to qualify as erroneous? If we hold strictly to my previous definition of error—“any failure to convey accurately the meaning of the autographs”—then it would seem to be difficult to find any translation without some error. That is why in the Seminary’s statement on “Inspiration & Preservation of Scripture” we say: “We do not hold that the Word of God is to be found exclusively in one English translation or any one translation in any other language since all such have mistranslations, miscopying, or misprinting, however minor, and are not therefore inerrant.” However, no matter how many of these problems with the KJV one points out, those in the KJV-only movement are usually quick to defend the translators. I will therefore attempt to point out a few translation problems in the KJV that would appear to be clear errors, which no amount of finessing can mitigate.²⁰

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰For other examples, see James R. White, *The King James Only Controversy*

Probably the most indisputable translation error in the KJV is found Hebrews 10:23,

Let us hold fast the profession of *our* faith without wavering; (for he *is* faithful that promised;)

The phrase “profession of *our* faith” should be “profession of *our* hope.” Everyone concedes that the actual Greek word is *hope* (ἐλπίς), not *faith* (πίστις); *hope* is found in all manuscripts and all editions of the TR. *Hope* and *faith* are two entirely different words, so one cannot sincerely argue that the translators simply decided on “faith” as the correct translation at this point. Besides, the Greek word for *hope* (ἐλπίς) is used 52 others times in the NT and in *every* case the translators of the KJV rendered it “hope,” not “faith.” How this error slipped past the translators is unclear; nevertheless, it is an indisputable error in the KJV.

Another problem is found in Acts 19:37, where the KJV says:

For ye have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of churches, nor yet blasphemers of your goddess.

The word translated “robbers of churches” should be “robbers of temples.” The Greek word, which is found in all manuscripts and all editions of the TR, describes someone who robs temples (ἱερόσυλος), not churches. In the context of Acts 19, Paul and his companions at Ephesus find themselves in the midst of a riot instigated by Demetrius (v. 24) and his fellow silversmiths, who are upset that Paul’s preaching against idolatry will diminish their profits from the “silver shrines for Diana” (v. 24) they sell for a living. In trying to quiet the riot, the “townclerk” (v. 35) argues that Demetrius and his friends have no basis for the commotion they are causing since the two Christians they have detained, Gaius and Aristarchus (v. 29), are “neither robbers of churches, nor yet blasphemers of your goddess.” The townclerk’s point is that these men must be released since they have obviously not robbed the *temple* of Diana; besides, there were no church buildings to rob in Ephesus. “Robbers of churches” is simply an erroneous translation.²¹

(Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1995), chapt. 9.

²¹Peter Ruckman, as one would expect, tries to defend the KJV at this point. He admits that the Greek word does mean “temples,” yet he says: “the careful student of the scripture, through long familiarity with the A.V. text, has been surprised more than once by the marvelous undesigned ‘coincidences’ which God the Holy Spirit has inserted in the Bible, without the awareness of the translating committee” (*The Christian’s Handbook of Manuscript Evidence* [Pensacola, FL: Pensacola Bible Institute, 1970], pp. 125–26). He goes on to say that if the translators had not used the word “churches,” “all future application is nullified, for the pagan temples of Diana disappeared with the pagan idolatry of pagan Rome” (p. 126). Ruckman concludes by saying: “Moral: *Mistakes in the A.V. 1611 are advanced revelation!*” (p. 126).

Another clear example is found in Acts 12:4,

And when he had apprehended him, he put *him* in prison, and delivered *him* to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people.

Again, no one questions that the word translated “Easter” is actually “Passover” (πάσχα) since it is found in all manuscripts and all editions of the TR. It is used 28 other times in the NT, and in every other instance the translators of the KJV rendered it “Passover.” In the context of Acts 12, Herod has just put James to death (v. 2), and when he saw that it “pleased the Jews,” he proceeded to arrest Peter and kill him also (v. 3). However, because this happened during the Passover season,²² Herod decided to hold him in prison since he did not wish to pollute the Jewish feast. All of this has nothing to do with Easter, the Christian celebration of Christ’s resurrection. We are told that “the term Easter was derived from the Anglo-Saxon ‘Eostre,’ the name of the goddess of spring. In her honor sacrifices were offered at the time of the vernal equinox. By the 8th cent. the term came to be applied to the anniversary of Christ’s resurrection.”²³ “Easter” in Acts 12:4 is an erroneous translation.

TRANSMISSION ERRORS

There have been a number of well-known printing errors in various editions of the KJV over the years. A 1631 edition omitted the word “not” from the seventh commandment (Exod 20:14), yielding “Thou shalt commit adultery.” For this error the king’s printers were fined £300 and the offending edition was commonly known as the “Wicked Bible.” A 1795 Oxford edition became known as the “Murderer’s Bible” because Mark 7:27 read “Let the children first be killed,” instead of “filled.” It may be unfair to include these examples of transmission errors in our discussion since it is almost certainly true that most all those who argue that the KJV is without error would naturally exclude printing errors. I only bring this up to demonstrate the fundamental distinction between the autographs and all subsequent copies of the autographs and translations of those copies. The miracle of inspiration produced autographs that contained no errors of any kind. That cannot be said for

²²The Passover came on the 14th day of Nisan and was followed by the week-long Feast of Unleavened Bread. However, any part of the eight-day celebration could be referred to as Passover, as it is in Acts 12:4. Cf. Luke 22:1, “Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover.”

²³*International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, 1979 ed., s.v. “Easter,” by D. W. Burdick, 2:6.

copies of the autographs and translations. Preservation is not a direct miracle; thus, it cannot be errorless. This is easily demonstrated from the evidence. For instance, we presently possess over 5,000 copies, or partial copies, of the Greek NT, and no two of these manuscripts agree exactly.

The KJV has had its own transmission problems. There has never been one KJV, even in 1611. When the KJV was published in 1611, there were actually two printed editions, with 216 variations in the biblical text.²⁴ These are commonly called the “He” and “She” Bibles, from their respective readings in Ruth 3:15 (“he went into the city” and “she went into the city”). So if the 1611 KJV is without error, which one is it?

Since 1611 the KJV has gone through many changes. The following table will help illustrate the point.

*Examples of Changes in the King James Version Since 1611*²⁵

	1611 KJV	Modern KJV
Gen 39:16	until <u>her</u> lord came home	until <u>his</u> lord came home
Num 6:14	and one <u>lamb</u> without blemish	and one <u>ram</u> without blemish
Deut 26:1	which the LORD giveth	which the LORD <u>thy God</u> giveth
Josh 3:15	Jordan overfloweth all his banks <u>at</u> the time of the harvest	Jordan overfloweth all his banks <u>all</u> the time of the harvest
Josh 13:29	half tribe of Manasseh	half tribe <u>of the children</u> of Manasseh
Judg 11:2	and his <u>wives</u> sons grew up	and his <u>wife's</u> sons grew up
1 Sam 18:27	David arose, he and his men	David arose <u>and went</u> , he and his men
1 Sam 28:7	And his <u>servant</u> said to him	And his <u>servants</u> said to him
1 Kings 8:61	Let your heart therefore be perfect with the LORD <u>your</u> God	Let your heart therefore be perfect with the LORD <u>our</u> God
2 Kings 11:10	that <u>were</u> in the <u>Temple</u>	that <u>were</u> in the <u>temple of the Lord</u>
2 Kings 18:8	from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced <u>cities</u>	from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced <u>city</u>
1 Chron 7:5	<u>were</u> men of might	<u>were valiant</u> men of might
2 Chron 28:11	the fierce wrath of <u>God</u> <u>is</u> upon you	the fierce wrath of the <u>LORD</u> <u>is</u> upon you
Job 39:30	where the slain <u>are</u> , there <u>is</u> <u>he</u>	where the slain <u>are</u> , there <u>is</u> <u>she</u>
Jer 34:16	whom <u>ye</u> had set at liberty	whom <u>he</u> had set at liberty

²⁴Erroll F. Rhodes and Liana Lupas, eds., *The Translators to the Reader: The Original Preface of the King James Version of 1611 Revisited* (New York: American Bible Society, 1997), p. 5.

²⁵For a much more comprehensive list of changes, see F. H. A. Scrivener, *The Authorized Edition of the English Bible (1611), Its Subsequent Reprints and Modern Representatives* (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1884), pp. 148–202.

1611 KJV

Modern KJV

Jer 38:16	So the king sware secretly	So <u>Zedekiah</u> the king sware secretly
Jer 49:1	why <i>then</i> doth their king inherit <u>God</u>	why <i>then</i> doth their king inherit <u>Gad</u>
Ezek 3:11	unto thy people	unto <u>the children</u> of thy people
Dan 3:15	into the midst of a fiery furnace	into the midst of a <u>burning</u> fiery furnace
Dan 6:13	Daniel which <i>is</i> of <u>the captivity of the children</u> of Judah	Daniel, which <i>is</i> of <u>the children of the captivity</u> of Judah
Joel 1:16	Is not the meat cut off before <u>your</u> eyes	Is not the meat cut off before <u>our</u> eyes
Mal 4:2	But unto you that fear my name, shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings, and shall go forth and grow up	But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and <u>ye</u> shall go forth, and grow up
Matt 12:23	Is this the son of David?	Is <u>not</u> this the son of David?
Luke 1:3	having had perfect understanding of things	having had perfect understanding of <u>all</u> things
Luke 19:9	This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is <u>the</u> son of Abraham	This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is <u>a</u> son of Abraham
John 7:16	Jesus answered them, My doctrine is not mine	Jesus answered them, <u>and said</u> , My doctrine is not mine
John 15:20	The servant is not greater than <u>the Lord</u>	The servant is not greater than <u>his lord</u>
Rom 3:24	through the redemption that is in <u>Jesus Christ</u>	through the redemption that is in <u>Christ Jesus</u>
Rom 12:2	prove what is that good, <u>that</u> acceptable and perfect will of God	prove what <i>is</i> that good, <u>and</u> acceptable, and perfect, will of God
1 Cor 12:28	<u>helps in governments</u> , diversities of tongues	<u>helps, governments</u> , diversities of tongues
1 Cor 15:41	another of the moon	<u>and</u> another <u>glory</u> of the moon
2 Cor 5:2	For in this we <u>groan earnestly</u> , desiring to be clothed	For in this we groan, <u>earnestly desiring</u> to be clothed
2 Cor 11:32	the King, kept the city with a garrison	the king kept the city <u>of the Damascenes</u> with a garrison
1 Tim 1:4	rather than edifying	rather than <u>godly</u> edifying
2 Tim 4:13	when thou comest, bring <i>with thee</i> , but especially the parchments	when thou comest, bring <i>with thee</i> , <u>and the books</u> , <i>but</i> especially the parchments
1 Pet 2:1	and envies, and evil speakings	and envies, and <u>all</u> evil speakings
1 John 5:12	he that hath not the Son, hath not life	he that hath not the Son <u>of God</u> hath not life

Even present editions of the KJV still contain what is apparently an original printing error that was never corrected. In Matthew 23:24 the KJV reads:

Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.

Instead of “strain at a gnat” the correct reading is “strain out a gnat.” There is no textual problem here; all manuscripts and all editions of the TR have the Greek word for “strain out” (διυλίζοντες), which means “strain” or “filter out.” All English versions before the KJV had “strain out” or a synonymous expression. There is a vast difference in meaning between “to strain at” something and “to strain out” something. This error in the KJV has never been corrected.

ERRORS AND THE AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE

It must be admitted that the identified errors discussed so far are rather minor in terms of the overall message of Scripture. And although they do not exhaust the list of errors in the KJV, still, the total number is relatively small and not of major significance. No Christian need be concerned about identifying them in order to live the Christian life. My only reason for pointing out these particular errors in the KJV is not to disparage it above other translations, but to disprove this new heresy of a perfect, inerrant translation, a heresy that has now invaded fundamental circles. I should not have to do this since historically it has not been the position of fundamentalism.²⁶ For example, James M. Gray, writing in *The Fundamentals*, said:

*The record for whose inspiration we contend is the original record—the autographs or parchments of Moses, David, Daniel, Matthew, Paul or Peter, as the case may be, and not any particular translation or translations of them whatever. There is no translation absolutely without error, nor could there be, considering the infirmities of human copyists, unless God were pleased to perform a perpetual miracle to secure it.”*²⁷

R. A. Torrey, speaking specifically about translations, said:

I have said that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments *as originally given* were absolutely inerrant, and the question of course arises to what extent is the Authorized Version, or the Revised Version, the inerrant Word of God. The answer is simple; they are the inerrant Word of God just to that extent that they are an accurate rendering of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as originally given, and to all practical intents and purposes they are a thoroughly accurate rendering of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as originally given.²⁸

²⁶See Rolland D. McCune, “Doctrinal Non-Issues in Historic Fundamentalism,” *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 1 (Fall 1996): 171–77; Edward M. Panosian, “Early Fundamentalists and the KJV,” *Faith for the Family*, July–August 1984, p. 3.

²⁷“The Inspiration of the Bible,” in *The Fundamentals: A Testimony to the Truth*, 4 vols., ed. by R. A. Torrey, A. C. Dixon, et al. (Grand Rapids: Baker reprint, 1980), 2:12.

²⁸*The Fundamental Doctrines of the Christian Faith* (New York: George H. Doran,

W. B. Riley wrote in similar fashion:

Is the King James version absolutely inerrant?

On this point we are inclined to think that, even unto comparatively recent years, such a theory has been entertained. The result, of course, is to make a sort of fetish of the book. That is why, in many a family, it is kept on the center-table and seldom used. They do not want to soil its sacredness....

To be sure, there are multitudes who do not understand that the Scriptures were originally written in Hebrew, Aramaic or Greek; that all the original versions were lost, and that the copies of the New Testament date many years this side of Jesus, and that our Scriptures are translations which have come by the way of the Septuagint and the Coptic versions, and have been improved in the passage by Martin Luther, John Wycliffe, Tyndale, Coverdale, and others; that in 1611, seventy of the most scholarly men, at the King's command, gave us our "authorized version," and that between 1870 and 1885 the Canterbury Revision Committee, made up of a hundred of the world's most accurate scholars, accomplished the text of the Revised Version. To claim, therefore, inerrancy for the King James Version, is to claim inerrancy for men who never professed it for themselves; to clothe with the claim of verbal inspiration a company of men who would almost quit their graves to repudiate such equality with prophet and apostle.²⁹

Many more early fundamentalists could be cited with similar statements denying this new view of the KJV. None of these men felt threatened by the idea that the Bible they held in their hands was not inerrant. There is nothing deceptive or hypocritical about referring to our Bibles as authoritative Scripture, even though they are not absolutely perfect. Although only the autographs were directly inspired and inerrant, they are, as Torrey phrased it, "to all practical intents and purposes...a thoroughly accurate rendering of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as originally given." Thus, it is perfectly proper to refer to our English Bibles as the Word of God. Recall what the translators of KJV themselves said about this point in their preface to the 1611 edition:

Now to answer our enemies: we do not deny, rather we affirm and insist that the very worst translation of the Bible in English issued by Protestants (for we have seen no Catholic version of the whole Bible as yet) contains the word of God, or rather, is the word of God. In the same way, when the King's speech delivered in Parliament is translated into French, German, Italian, and Latin, it is still the King's speech, even if it is not interpreted by every translator with the same skill, or perhaps with as

1918), pp. 36-37.

²⁹*The Menace of Modernism* (New York: Christian Alliance Publishing Co., 1917), pp. 11-13.

appropriate phrasing or always with as great clarity. For as everyone knows, things are classified by their major characteristics. Anyone will admit that a person may be regarded as virtuous even though he has made many slips during his life, otherwise no one could be called virtuous, because "all of us make many mistakes" (James 3:2). A person may be called handsome and charming, even though he may have some warts on his hand, and not only some freckles on his face, but also scars. So there is no reason why the word when it is translated should be denied to be the word, or should be declared inauthentic, simply because there may be some imperfections and blemishes in the way it is published. For has there been anything perfect under the sun in which Apostles or their colleagues, people endued with an extraordinary measure of God's Spirit and privileged with the privilege of infallibility, were not involved?³⁰

CONCLUSION

The KJV is not, as KJV-only advocates are fond of saying, the final authority. Instead, the final authority for the Christian must be the inspired autographs. Translations such as the KJV, NKJV, NASB, and NIV are all the Word of God even though they disagree at points. Any faithful translation of the Scriptures is sufficient to communicate the truth of God and more than adequate for the ordering of the Christian's life. As James White has wisely observed: "Our relationship with Jesus Christ is not based upon a particular Bible translation. Men and women had fine Christian lives for fifteen hundred years before the KJV came on the scene. Obviously one can live such a life without ever opening a KJV Bible."³¹

³⁰Rhodes and Lupas, eds., *The Translators to the Reader*, p. 78.

³¹*King James Only Controversy*, p. v.