

## Book Review

Lloyd L. Streeter. *Seventy-five Problems with Central Baptist's Seminary's Book: The Bible Version Debate*. LaSalle, IL: First Baptist Church of LaSalle, 2001. 322 pp. \$14.00.

Reviewed by James D. Price.

The author is the pastor of the First Baptist Church of LaSalle (Illinois) holding degrees from an unidentified university and seminary. The book is a defense of the King James Only view presented in the form of a critical review of a book defending the historical Baptist doctrine of Scripture. The author presents what he regards as seventy-five problems in that book. The author wrote in a caustic,<sup>1</sup> sarcastic, and condescending style,<sup>2</sup> employing many words and phrases written in all capital letters for emphasis. In an appendix, the author reviewed a second book that defends the historical Baptist doctrine: *One Bible Only? Examining Exclusive Claims for the King James Bible*, Roy E. Beacham and Kevin T. Bauder, eds. (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2001). In a second appendix, he reviewed yet another defense of that doctrine: *From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man*, J. B. Williams, ed. (Greenville, SC: Ambassador-Emerald International, 1999).

1. The first problem Streeter quibbled over was Douglas McLachlan's use of the word "book" in reference to the original autographs. Streeter denied that the original autographs constituted a book, in spite of the common practice of referring to the Book of Genesis, the Book of Mathew, the Book of Acts, the Book of Romans, etc., as though each of these autographic books were not individually divinely inspired, inerrant, and canonical, and as though a collection of those books into one volume would not itself constitute the Bible (a book). He stated: "The Bible is not the autographs" (p. 27). He used this quibble to falsely accuse McLachlan (and Central Seminary) of not believing in the preservation of Scripture. He asserted that the position of Central Seminary is: "THERE IS NO INSPIRED AND INFALLIBLE BOOK OR BIBLE" (p. 28; emphasis his). Streeter used the term "Bible" to refer only to the King James Version, presupposing that it is the only "book" that has final authority.

2. The second problem Streeter saw was in McLachlan's statement that the "overwhelming majority of these variants are of minor importance." Streeter failed to respond to this statement, perhaps because he does not know how to evaluate the importance of variants. Instead he changed the subject and stated: "McLachlan (and others who hold to the Critical Text) has no final authority EXCEPT HIS OWN MIND" (p. 28; emphasis his). He accused McLachlan of not having an authoritative Bible because he must decide which textual variants are original. Yet Streeter apparently does not know that among the current editions of the KJV hundreds of

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<sup>1</sup> "Intellectually dishonest" (p. 22), "dishonest" (p. 22, 41, 182), "duplicity" (p. 22), "unfair" (p. 25), "harsh" (p. 25), "egotistical" (p. 34), "propaganda" (p. 39), "insincere" (p. 41), "ruse" (p. 42, 54), "hoax" (p. 54), "deceptive" (p. 42), "blasphemous" (p. 112), "reckless" (p. 135), "disinformation" (p. 141), "crudeness" (p. 146), "indecenty" (p. 146), "nonsense" (p. 150, 165), "unorthodox" (p. 174), "sectarian" (p. 176), "dangerous" (p. 179), "man-centered" (p. 179), "misleading" (p. 184),

<sup>2</sup> Note that he uses feminine pronouns to refer to Central Seminary—"she" (pp. 267, 273, 274), "her" (pp. 131, 274). See also, "desperate" (p. 184), "neo-evangelical" (p. 264), "piddling" (p. 295).

variants exist of the same kind as those in the Greek and Hebrew manuscripts. He, too, must decide which KJV variants are authoritative, or blindly accept the edition he owns as final authority, ignoring the fact that some of his KJV Only colleagues use a different KJV text. There is no perfectly standardized KJV edition. So Streeter, by his own criterion, also has no final authority. He cannot claim that the “overwhelming majority of these variants are of minor importance,” because those are McLachlan’s words about the various Greek texts, rejected by Streeter without any response. An appeal to a greater degree of purity is of no benefit for final authority; a variant is a variant without excuse in Streeter’s view because he strongly declared that “those who believe that the Bible is the Word of God SHOULD NOT BE WILLING TO HAVE ONE SYLLABLE OF IT CHANGED” (p. 29; emphasis his).

3. Streeter saw a third problem in McLachlan’s statement: “Textual variants do no harm to one’s theology.” To this Streeter responded that “every time a doctrinal word is added, subtracted, or changed it impacts doctrine in a destructive and harmful way” (p. 29). He supported this statement with the example of the doctrine of Christ’s ascension, listing three passages that explicitly state that Christ ascended to Heaven (Mark 16:19; Luke 24:51; and Acts 1:9-11). He incorrectly declared that “of these three, the NASV wants to omit Mark 16:19 and Luke 24:51” (p. 30). Actually the NASV contains both verses, indicating by a footnote at Mark 16:19 that “some of the oldest mss. do not contain vv. 9-20,” and at Luke 24:51 that “some mss. add *and was carried up into heaven.*” These notes provide no evaluative comment declaring which reading is better. Even if these omissions were to be conceded, the doctrine of the ascension would be left unaltered—no details are lacking that are not stated elsewhere (see Acts 2:33; 7:55f; Rom. 8:34; Col. 3:1; Heb. 10:12; 1 Pet. 3:22). Streeter is also wrong in insisting that all variants are doctrinally destructive. Several modern versions are more explicit about the deity of Christ and other doctrines than the KJV.

4. Streeter’s fourth problem was with McLachlan’s statement: “There is no evidence that previous generations of fundamentalists have used the translation issue as a hallmark of an authentic kind of fundamentalist” (pp. 30-31). McLachlan is right; as a septuagenarian and a life-long fundamentalist, I only learned of the King James Only issue about thirty years ago. More recently, the issue has become a hallmark of fundamentalism for some champions of the KJV. On the other hand, Streeter claimed that “almost all fundamentalists have been KJV-only people” (p. 31), clearly intending to include earlier generations. Of course, he used the term “KJV-only” in that statement in a different sense than its understood meaning. Most earlier-generation fundamentalists used the KJV by preference, but did not demonize other modern translations. Conversely, Streeter admitted, “I have lived to see many men and schools come over to the KJV [only] position. I have lived to see other schools become more accepting, flexible, and understanding of the KJV [only] position” (pp. 32-33). The obvious implication of this statement is that he has witnessed what I have witnessed, many individuals and institutions departing from the historical Baptist doctrine of Scripture for the new KJV-only doctrine. It is true that most fundamentalists have used the KJV, but the claim that the KJV is the providentially preserved Word of God for the English-speaking world and the final authority in all matters of doctrine and practice was unheard of in my younger days. Streeter interpreted McLachlan’s words to imply that all KJV-only advocates make the translation issue a hallmark of fundamentalism. Of course, McLachlan did not say that, so Streeter’s denial of the universal interpretation is uncalled for.

However, it is true that a growing number of individuals and institutions have begun to make that claim, as David H. Sorenson's book *Touch Not the Unclean Thing* clearly indicates.

5. Streeter found a fifth problem in McLachlan's accusing KJV-only advocates of "absolutizing only one English translation or one narrow family of Greek manuscripts while ignoring all the rest of the textual evidence" (p. 33). Streeter countered by accusing McLachlan and the Critical Text advocates of the same kind of problem, stating that "it is the practice of the new version translators and advocates to ignore the vast majority of the evidence in favor of THREE newly found manuscripts. The new versions have 'absolutized' Sinaiticus, Alexandrinus, and especially Vaticanus while largely ignoring 5,000 Greek manuscripts and 15,000 other ancient witnesses where they differ" (p. 33; emphasis his).

This statement indicates that either Streeter is uninformed about the facts and principles of textual criticism or he has deliberately misrepresented the evidence. I have participated in translating two new versions, and I teach textual criticism as well. Textual decisions are never made on the basis of three witnesses against 5,000. To begin with, no book of the New Testament has 5,000 Greek witnesses to its text. There are only 59 manuscripts of any text tradition that contain the entire New Testament; and only 149 others that contain all the NT except the Book of Revelation. The Book of Revelation has only 287 manuscripts of any kind, including 8 fragments; only 779 manuscripts of any kind exist for the Pauline Epistles, including 62 fragments; and only 655 manuscripts of any kind exist for Acts and the General Epistles, including 42 fragments.<sup>3</sup> The Critical Text rarely has readings selected on the witness of only three manuscripts; usually the selections are made on the basis of the consensus among all the ancient independent witnesses. Occasionally the Critical Text agrees with the Byzantine Text against the three witnesses (see Gal. 1:8; 2:12; Phil. 1:14, etc.)

Further, translators are not bound by the decisions of the editors of the Critical Text, but evaluate the evidence on their own, often making more conservative decisions. The witness of the many manuscripts belonging to the Byzantine tradition is not ignored, but is represented by the ancestral archetype from which they all descend. Their witness contributes to the selection of readings almost half the time. Streeter ignores the fact that the Byzantine Text is the text of the Greek Orthodox Church, which is not significantly different from the Roman Catholic Church theologically.

The 15,000 other ancient witnesses consists of well over 8,000 manuscripts of the Roman Catholic Latin Vulgate, a number of manuscripts of other ancient translations that bear only indirect witness to the Greek words of the NT, and a number of ancient church fathers whose witness is seldom complete. The truth is that the wording of the KJV is occasionally supported by only a handful of very late manuscripts or by none at all, the wording being borrowed from the Roman Catholic Latin Vulgate. Evidently Streeter thinks it is acceptable to borrow from the Latin Vulgate when the KJV wording is supported by a very limited number of Greek witnesses.

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<sup>3</sup> Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, *The Text of the New Testament* (Eerdmans, 1987), p. 83.

Based on Streeter's batting average on the first five "problems," one may anticipate that he does not fare very well on the remaining seventy. Space does not permit examining every one of his "problems" in the same depth. The rest of this review consists of evaluating a few more of his most challenging "problems."

### **Preservation**

Streeter objected to Glenny's view of the preservation of Scripture, attributing to him a naturalistic means of preservation by man, as opposed to his own view of miraculous preservation by God, based on alleged promises of Scripture (p. 81). He set up a false dichotomy, pitting science against faith, as though anyone who uses valid scientific principles could not be a man of faith. Streeter argued that "There have always been **TWO METHODS** of textual criticism. The method which has given us the King James Bible is a biblical and spiritual method; [sic] whereas, the method which brought to the world the new versions is a naturalistic and humanistic method" (p. 80, emphasis his). Again, "what we believe about the text of Scripture must be based upon what the Bible says about itself and not upon modern textual criticism" (p. 273). In addition, "Most King James Bible defenders **do** base their faith on explicit promises and statements of Scripture" (p. 275, emphasis his).

Streeter presented Scriptural passages he interprets as promises that God would preserve His Word. Not all fundamentalists agree with his interpretation, but that is not significant here. What is important is what the Scripture does not say about preservation. The Scripture does not indicate how its text will be preserved, or how one should recognize its specific details. It contains no promises that fallible copyists would produce error-free manuscripts, or that fallible translators would produce error-free translations, any more than it promises that fallible preachers and interpreters would produce error-free sermons, commentaries, and book reviews.

Presumably, according to Streeter, true believers in all ages have been able to recognize the true text of Scripture. He stated: "There *were* mistakes made in most, if not all, of the witnesses, but where a mistake was made God saw to it that it was corrected in other witnesses, and He gave guidance to His people to know the correct reading so that we have the Word of God today without errors of omission or addition (intact)" (p. 140, emphasis his). However, the believers must not have been able to perfectly recognize the correct readings; otherwise wrong readings would not have survived in the manuscripts, especially in the Bibles of the believers. But that did not happen as even Streeter admitted above.

Rather than searching Scripture in vain to find how its text was preserved and recognized, one must look at what God actually did throughout history—He providentially permitted thousands of ancient Hebrew and Greek Bibles to survive from every century and from a variety of different communities, none of which are error-free. The text is preserved in the consensus of the surviving ancient Bibles and other ancient witnesses. Without the surviving Bibles, believers today would have no text to recognize.

Although Streeter criticized Glenny for drawing conclusions from history (ancient Bibles), he nevertheless used the evidence of history to claim the validity, antiquity, and

originality of his preferred text—the Majority (Traditional) Text. He stated that “The Traditional Text is the old text that every generation has possessed” (p. 276).

In spite of this claim, Streeter argued that the surviving early Bibles (manuscripts) are corrupt. He asserted that “the best of the very earliest manuscripts were worn out from continuous use and were destroyed; but Vaticanus, Sinaiticus, and Alexandrinus survived because they were inferior (corruptions) and, therefore, not used” (p. 90). Again, “early copies were worn out and destroyed (especially the best ones!)” (p. 99). Evidently, according to Streeter’s view of preservation, God was not able to preserve what Streeter regards as good Bibles, only corrupt ones; but strangely, after about the ninth century, God finally figured out how to preserve the good ones. There is something inconsistent and self-contradictory here. If preservation is more than a natural process, if God was involved in the preservation process, surely He would know how to preserve at least *some* early “good Bibles” as well as “bad Bibles”; and one wonders why God would preserve any “bad Bibles” at all.

### **The Early Papyri**

Streeter denied the value of P<sup>52</sup> as an early witness (c. AD 125) supporting the Alexandrian text, claiming that its fragmentary nature renders it meaningless as a witness to any text tradition (pp. 181-82). It is true that the fragment includes only John 18:31-33, 37-38, but in the eight places where variations occur in that small segment of text, P<sup>52</sup> is almost identical with Codex Vaticanus.<sup>4</sup> Somewhat like DNA tests, the genetic affinity of a part of a manuscript indicates what may be expected of the whole.

On the other hand, in order to support the early date of the Traditional Text (Textus Receptus), Streeter minimized the importance of nearly all the early papyrus manuscripts, listing only five as having any importance (P<sup>45</sup>, P<sup>46</sup>, P<sup>47</sup>, P<sup>66</sup>, and P<sup>75</sup>). He dismisses the others as insignificant fragments: “Beyond these, we have only some fragments dating before the last half of the Fourth Century. Some of the fragments contain part of a verse or part of a chapter” (p. 93). The problem with this blithe dismissal is that there are over 115 papyri, most of which date from the second to the fourth century; they are remnants of complete manuscripts, many of which have sufficient text to determine their textual affinity; and none of them support the Byzantine (Traditional) Text. Their textual value and witness cannot be so easily dismissed.

Streeter claimed that “P<sup>46</sup> and P<sup>45</sup> support the Majority Text readings” (p. 137). He further asserted that “many believe P<sup>66</sup> is the oldest [NT] papyrus in the world. P<sup>66</sup> has predominantly KJV readings. Many others believe that P<sup>46</sup> is the oldest Greek New Testament document. It also supports the Traditional Text” (p. 181). Without providing any confirming evidence, Streeter gave his readers the impression that these manuscripts are essentially Byzantine in character, and support the early existence of the Byzantine Text; but he failed to tell his readers that P<sup>66</sup> also is only a fragment of the Gospel of John, not of the entire New Testament. It contains only about 73 percent of that book. According to actual count, of the 174 places of variation listed in the

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<sup>4</sup> Reuben Swanson, ed., *New Testament Manuscripts: John* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey International University Press, 1995), pp. 248-51.

United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.), P<sup>66</sup> has only 128 entries. Of these 128 entries, 42 readings support the Alexandrian Text against the Byzantine Text; 49 support readings shared by both the Alexandrian and Byzantine traditions; only 17 support the Byzantine Text against the Alexandrian; and 20 support a different tradition. Because of the overlap of the text traditions, P<sup>66</sup> supports the Alexandrian Text  $(42 + 49)/128 = 72$  percent of the time; it supports the Byzantine Text  $(49 + 17)/128 = 51$  percent of the time; and it supports another tradition  $20/128 = 16$  percent of the time. The evidence indicates that the manuscript contains only  $17/128 = 13$  percent of the readings that are exclusively Byzantine, scarcely enough to conclude the existence of the Byzantine Text as a text—that is, a text tradition consisting of all, or nearly all Byzantine readings.

P<sup>66</sup> Distribution of Readings

Alex. Only	Alex. & Byz.	Byz. Only	Other
42	49	17	20

The same may be concluded from the evidence of P<sup>46</sup>. That manuscript contains approximately 66 percent of the Pauline Epistles, but lacks all of First and Second Thessalonians and First and Second Timothy. Of the 349 places of variation listed in UBSGNT3, P<sup>46</sup> has 231 entries. By actual count, of the 231 entries, 96 readings support the Alexandrian Text against the Byzantine Text; 58 support readings shared by both the Alexandrian and Byzantine Texts; only 13 support the Byzantine Text against the Alexandrian; and 64 support a different tradition. Thus P<sup>46</sup> supports the Alexandrian Text  $(96 + 58)/231 = 67$  percent of the time; it supports the Byzantine Text only  $(58 + 13)/231 = 31$  percent of the time, and another text tradition  $64/231 = 28$  percent of the time. The evidence indicates that the manuscript contains only  $13/231 = 6$  percent of the readings that are exclusively Byzantine. Thus, these manuscripts are of a mixed text tradition, fully supporting none of the ancient text traditions.

P<sup>46</sup> Distribution of Readings

Book	Alex. Only	Alex. & Byz.	Byz. Only	Other
Romans	11	15	2	16
1 Corinthians	23	10	4	15
2 Corinthians	12	7	4	8
Galatians	6	4	1	8
Ephesians	15	4	0	2
Philippians	4	4	2	4
Colossians	11	3	0	1
Hebrews	14	11	0	10
Total	96	58	13	64

What is true of P<sup>46</sup> and P<sup>66</sup> is true of P<sup>45</sup>. Finally, P<sup>47</sup> contains only the Book of Revelation. The text of this book has several textual sub-groups, none of which was supported by a significant majority of witnesses, and none of which consistently support the Textus Receptus.

Finally, P<sup>75</sup>, an early third century manuscript containing significant parts of the Gospels of Luke and John, is almost identical with the text of Codex Vaticanus,<sup>5</sup> moving the date of that text tradition back by more than a century. A careful examination of the ancient Bibles Providence has preserved indicates that while a number of random Byzantine readings existed in the early centuries, no preserved evidence establishes the existence of the Byzantine Text (as a text) at that time. The facts fail to support Streeter's claim.

### **The Ancient Versions**

While denying the value of the ancient papyrus Bibles, Streeter lauded the ancient translations as containing the Traditional Text. He asserted: "The Syriac, Italic, and especially the Peshitto . . . most resemble the Traditional Text" (p. 90). Later he reiterated that "the Old Italic Bibles (A.D. 150-400) agree with the King James readings" (p. 185). Likewise, he affirmed: "The first version of Scripture which reflects the Majority Text is the Italic Bible which was translated no later than about A.D. 160" (p. 135). Also he declared: "The entire Traditional Text of the New Testament is preserved in many ancient versions (especially Italic and Egyptian) of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Centuries" (p. 137).

The word "Italic" is another term for "Old Latin." While some defenders of the Traditional Text claim the Old Latin (Itala) preserves the Traditional (Byzantine) Text, this claim is not supported by the evidence. The Old Latin (OL) usually agrees with the Western Text of the Latin Vulgate against the Alexandrian Text and the Byzantine Text. There are over fifty manuscripts (or fragments) of the OL dating from the fourth to the thirteenth century. None of them contain the entire New Testament; there are about thirty-two mutilated manuscripts containing the Gospels, about twelve of Acts, four together with some fragments of the smaller Pauline Epistles, and only one plus some fragments of the Revelation.<sup>6</sup> Thus, the Old Latin has limited witness to the text of the NT. In addition, the Old Latin Old Testament was translated from the Greek Septuagint, not from the Hebrew Bible.

For example, in the UBSGNT4 text of First Peter, 37 places of variation are recorded. The following Old Latin manuscripts bear witness, the others are fragmentary:

- (1) Manuscript it<sup>ar</sup> differs from the Vulgate at only 5 places of variation (86% agreement); of those 5 only 2 readings support the Byzantine Text against the Vulgate.
- (2) Manuscript it<sup>q</sup> differs from the Vulgate at 14 places of variation (62% agreement); but of those 14, only 1 reading supports the Byzantine Text against the Vulgate.
- (3) Manuscript it<sup>z</sup> differs from the Vulgate at 16 places of variation (57% agreement); but of those 16, only 2 readings support the Byzantine Text against the Vulgate.

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<sup>5</sup> Aland and Aland, 87. According to my own research, of the 376 places of any kind of variation in the third chapter of John, P<sup>75</sup> differs from Vaticanus (B) in only 46—that is, it agrees with B 88 percent of the time. Of the 46 places of difference, B supports Byz against P<sup>75</sup> 29 times. P<sup>75</sup> supports Byz against B only once.

<sup>6</sup> Bruce Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament* (London: Oxford Press, 1992), p. 72.

On the other hand, manuscript it<sup>ar</sup> and it<sup>q</sup> agree with the Byzantine Text in only 9 places of variation (24% agreement); and manuscript it<sup>z</sup> agrees with the Byzantine Text in only 14 places of variation (38% agreement). Obviously, the evidence does not support Streeter's claim that the Old Latin "preserves" the Traditional Text. The same may be said of the other ancient versions and early church fathers in varying degrees.

Streeter stated: "The [Latin] Vulgate agrees with the Critical Text" (p. 84). However, in the UBSGNT4 edition mentioned above for First Peter, the Latin Vulgate agrees with Codex Vaticanus (the alleged principal manuscript of the Critical Text) in only 11 of the 37 places of variation (30% agreement); and the Vulgate agrees with the Byzantine Text in only 11 of the 37 places of variation (30% agreement). Clearly the Vulgate supports neither text, but belongs to an independent tradition.

### **Uncertain Preservation**

Streeter admitted that "most 'King James only' advocates would agree that God did not preserve all of His words, with no omissions, *in one manuscript*, and maybe not in one text-type or one group of manuscripts. However, we certainly do believe that God has perfectly preserved all of His words among all of the witnesses." (p. 124, emphasis his). Thus, according to Streeter, there were no perfectly preserved witnesses in the days of Erasmus. Further, there were no perfectly preserved witnesses between Erasmus and 1611; Streeter himself admitted that "the Textus Receptus of Erasmus went through many improvements A.D. 1516 through A.D. 1611" (p. 99). Even then the perfect witnesses did not exist, since he conceded that "the KJV is not based in every single instance upon the majority reading, nor on the Textus Receptus" (p. 145), and again, "the King James Bible is not based on the TR in every single instance" (p. 320). Finally, according to Streeter, the true text was not perfectly preserved in the consensus of the existing Greek manuscripts up to 1611, for he confessed that "there were places where the Vulgate preserved the correct reading even when the Greek church did not" (p. 105).

### **Miraculous Recognition**

This admission creates a serious dilemma for Streeter in so much that he also reasoned that "if God has perfectly preserved His Word, then God's people had the perfect Word of God in every age" (p. 111). But the evidence God preserved, the existing ancient Bibles, indicates that Streeter's premise was not true from the time the autographs perished until A.D. 1611. According to Streeter's own admission, none of the ancient Bibles and other witnesses God permitted to survive were flawless; thus, the preserved evidence indicates that none of God's people had "the perfect Word of God" in any post-autograph generation until 1611.

To solve this dilemma, Streeter and his colleagues have introduced a miraculous element into the recognition process. He reasoned that "God wanted us to be absolutely certain that we had the genuine Word of God" (p. 147). He contended: "Nor can Glenny and his colleagues prove that God did not guide and teach Erasmus, Beza, and Stephanus, in their reconstruction and refining of the Greek Receptus so that we have the Word of God without omissions or additions" (p. 122). Also, "the perfection and trustworthiness of the King James Bible should be looked upon as a winnowing or refining process extending from Tyndale through 1769" (p. 104). Of course, "refining" and "winnowing" imply imperfection. Streeter gave no Scriptural proof

that God would give some of His people a special ability to recognize the correct words, but not others. He gave no Scriptural basis for why God gave select people the ability to progressively recognize the correct words, intermediately over many years, permitting some errors to remain until the culmination of the miracle in 1611, or perhaps in 1769. Nor did Streeter provide Scripture to explain why God ceased the miraculous preservation process after 1611.

Streeter stated that “the King James translators were able to find all the words of God. We believe almost all of the words were found in Beza’s fifth edition of the **TR**. A few words were found in some of the other witnesses. We do not know exactly what materials the translators had available, or exactly what their reasons were for using each word that they used since their notes and their printer’s sheets seem to have been lost. However, we believe God gave the King James translators wisdom so that they translated all of the words correctly” (p. 284, emphasis his).

Again, he stated: “Some King James Bible defenders believe, as I do, that the translators of the KJV were able to find all the words of God. They found all the words of God, though perhaps not all in the TR; but they found all the words among all the witnesses. They translated accurately all the words of God into English, so that we have in the KJV the inspired and inerrant Word of God, nothing added, nothing deleted, and nothing changed” (p. 276).

Further, he declared: “We believe that all of the words of God were found by the translators of the King James Bible, so that the King James Bible has everything in it that God wanted in it” (p. 124). Streeter provided no Scriptural basis for God miraculously giving one group of scholars the ability to perfectly recognize and perfectly translate all the correct readings, but withholding that ability from all godly scholars before and after 1611. Evidently, Streeter and his cohorts have put their absolute trust in the eclectic textual decisions of a group of Anglican scholars. In so doing, they have made those scholars their absolute authority in matters of text and translation. On the other hand, speaking of contemporary godly scholars, Streeter argued, “to have to consult Hebrew and Greek professors, of course, makes THEM the final authority. How is this better than what the Catholics do when they make the church their final authority?” (p. 303, emphasis his). Conversely, how is dependency on the textual and translational decisions of a group of Anglican scholars for final authority better than what the Catholics do?

Streeter did not explain why God failed to preserve the alleged textual principles that the God-guided Anglican KJV translators used to recognize the words of the correct text they produced, nor did he explain why each word was selected, or why God failed to move the translators to publish their immaculately correct Greek text for posterity. That perfect text did not exist until F. H. A. Scrivener published the Greek text underlying the English words of the King James Version for the first time in 1894. All these inconsistencies do not fit into a rational doctrine of preservation.

### **Priesthood of Believers**

Streeter associated the doctrine of preservation with the priesthood of believers: “The doctrine of preservation of Scripture is wrapped up in the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, a Baptist doctrine” (p. 145). Of course, he believes that the true text of the NT is

preserved in the Byzantine (Traditional) Text, the text of the Greek-speaking Greek Orthodox Church. This fact alone explains the numerical superiority of the late Byzantine manuscripts. Ironically, that church does not accept the priesthood of believers, but has an ecclesiastical hierarchic system much like the Roman Catholic Church, and their doctrine is not far removed from Catholicism. That text was controlled by priests, bishops, and archbishops, and was copied primarily by monks or professional scribes. Many ordinary believers in that church were illiterate and had no personal copy of the Bible. They only heard the Bible read at church. How can one read Baptists and Baptist doctrine into that context?

### The New King James Version

Streeter objected to Pettegrew's statement: "The King James only position teaches that the King James Version alone is the inspired Word of God in the English Language" (p. 42-42). Streeter denied the statement, claiming "that it is **POSSIBLE** that another accurate translation **COULD** be made" (pp. 43-44, emphasis his). Later he summarized the possibility as follows: "We do not say that every word in the KJV is translated in the *only* possible way. In a few cases some modern words that have identical meaning *could* also be used" (p. 150, emphasis his). However, after denying Pettegrew's assertion, he admitted "we are not in favor of anyone trying to make a new English version, and we do not believe any could be **BETTER** than the KJV" (p. 44, emphasis his). With such a limited possibility, who can truthfully deny that Pettegrew was right?

The truth of Pettegrew's statement is illustrated by Streeter's treatment of the New King James Version and other modern versions translated from the Textus Receptus, such as KJV II, KJV2000, etc. Streeter asserted: "The NKJV is not translated strictly from the Traditional Text. The newly-found Vatican manuscript influenced this translation in many places." (p. 42). As one who was deeply involved in the production of the NKJV, I can personally verify that it was translated from the Textus Receptus in every instance. Neither Streeter nor any of his anti-NKJV cohorts have produced a single instance where the NKJV failed to translate from the TR. They may disagree as to how the text was translated, but they cannot demonstrate that the translation was ever made from the Critical Text rather than the TR, or that it was ever influenced by the Vatican manuscript.

Streeter further stated of the NKJV, "the notes are unfaithful to the Traditional Text. It is highly deceptive in many ways" (p. 42). Again, he failed to cite one instance. Evidently what he objects to are the marginal notes that list alternate translations and variant readings of the Hebrew and Greek texts. But such an objection is without excuse because the KJV itself lists a good number of alternate translations and variant readings. For example, see the textual notes at 1 Corinthians 15:31 "Some read, *our*"; Ephesians 6:9 "Some read, *both your and their Master*"; James 2:18 "Some copies read, *by thy works*"; etc. Like the textual notes in the KJV, the notes in the NKJV are not evaluative, specifying that one variant reading as better than the others.

Streeter also criticized the NKJV, affirming that "besides the issue of the underlying Greek text, the NKJV is a poor translation because it makes many of the same mistakes as the NIV, NASB, RSV, NEB, and New World Version" (p. 41), again giving no examples. The underlying text is not an issue! So in such a statement, he must mean by "mistakes" that the

NKJV translators wrongfully selected words differing from the KJV wording, such as using “since” instead of “sith” (Ezek. 35:6), “waste” instead of “piss” (2 Kings 18:27), “affection of Jesus Christ” instead of “bowels of Jesus Christ” (Phil. 1:8), “my heart yearned for him” instead of “my bowels were moved for him” (Song 5:4), “advise” instead of “advertise” (Num. 24:14), “conduct” instead of “conversation” (Gal. 1:13), “report” instead of “bruit” (Jer. 10:22), “patched” instead of “clouted” (Josh. 9:5), “cows” instead of “kine” (Gen. 32:15), “falsehood” instead of “leasing” (Psa. 4:2), “wished” instead of “listed” (Matt. 17:12), “cooked” instead of “sod” (Gen. 25:29), “think” instead of “trow” (Luke 17:9), “Passover” instead of “Easter,” etc. Further, the inclusion of the New World Translation is an unjustifiable cheap shot.

Streeter also rejected the NKJV because “it weakens the deity of Christ, for example, in Acts 3:13, 26; Acts 4:27, 30 **WHERE THE GREEK TEXT IS NOT AN ISSUE**” (p. 42, emphasis his). I repeat: the Greek text is never an issue! In these passages, the KJV uses the word “Son” in reference to Jesus, where the NKJV uses the word “Servant.” In these passages, the Greek TR has the word *pais*, which is usually translated “servant,” rather than *huios*, the usual word for “son.” Streeter objects to the NKJV word “Servant,” as though it weakens His deity, ignoring the fact that the first letter of the word “Servant” is capitalized signifying deity. The term “Servant of the LORD” is an often repeated title for the Messiah in the Old Testament. In these passages, Peter, addressing the Jews, used this well known title to present Jesus as the Messiah, not as deity. Christ’s deity was not the point of Peter’s messages. Streeter ignores Matthew 12:18 where the KJV translates the word *pais* as “servant” (lower case), in a quotation from the Old Testament where God Himself speaks of the Messiah (Jesus) as His Servant. Should this KJV verse be interpreted as weakening the deity of Christ? Hardly. Note also that in this verse, the KJV fails to capitalize the word “Spirit” in reference to the Holy Spirit, whereas the NKJV capitalizes both “Servant” and “Spirit” as a sign of deity. The truth is that the NKJV expresses (strengthens) the deity of Christ by means of capitalized nouns and pronouns in hundreds of places where the KJV does not.

In regard to all modern translations, regardless of the underlying text, Streeter dogmatically affirmed: “If one of the new versions is the Word of God, then the KJV is not. If, on the other hand, the KJV is the Word of God, then the new versions are not. They cannot both be the Word of God when they differ so greatly from one another. Things different are not the same” (pp. 250-51). Again, “where any new translation differs from their King James Bible they should just ignore the new translation and believe the KJV” (p. 257). Further, “the KJV, on the other hand, **IS** the Word of God because there are no errors in it” (p. 260, emphasis his). Finally, he proclaimed: “The KJV is our final authority” (p. 256). Obviously, Pettegrew was right after all.

### **Revision of KJV**

Streeter denied Pettegrew’s claim that the KJV has undergone revisions, asserting that “it is a hoax to say that the KJV has been revised” (p. 54). He emphatically declared, “There has never been a *revision* of the KJV” (p. 187, emphasis his). Finally he pronounced that “nowhere in the history of publishing have such changes been called a revision” (p. 310).

Evidently, Streeter is unaware of the excellent history of the King James Version written by the well-known defender of the Traditional Text, F. H. A. Scrivener, in the introduction to the *Cambridge Paragraph Bible of the Authorized English Version* (1873), itself a revision of the KJV. In reference to the 1629 edition of the KJV, Scrivener stated: “The text appears to have undergone a complete revision, although I can find no record of such having been done officially” (p. xvii). Likewise, of the 1638 edition, he noted that “the revision indeed was a work of great labour” (p. xviii). In regard to Thomas Paris, Fellow of Trinity College, who was the editor responsible for the 1752 revision of the KJV, and to Benjamin Blayney, Regius Professor of Hebrew at Oxford, who was the editor responsible for the 1769 revision, Scrivener stated: “It cannot be doubted that these two editors are the great modernizers of the diction of the version, from what it was left in the seventeenth century, to the state wherein it appears in modern Bibles” (p. xx). In his voluminous history of the English Bible, David Daniell discussed the latter revisions, referring to the 1752 work of Paris as a “widespread revision” resulting in a “much-altered form” of the 1611 KJV, and referring to the two revisions as “two modern versions of that very work which were most strikingly changed from the original.”<sup>7</sup>

In regard to the differences between the KJV 1611 edition and modern editions, Streeter asserted that “The list of supposed changes he presents (p. 59) are spelling and printing errors” (p. 107). Again, he stated that “almost all of the words referred to differ only as to spelling and printing. . . . There have been many **EDITIONS** of the KJV, and in those many editions there have been spelling, grammar, and printing changes. Almost all of the changes have been of that sort” (p. 310, emphasis his). It is true that many of the changes were merely modernization of spelling or correction of printing errors, but “almost all” is not *all*. “Almost does not avail; almost is but to fail.” Many of the differences consist of different words, added words, deleted words, different punctuation, and different word order. Here are a few examples:<sup>8</sup>

<u>Reference</u>	<u>1611 Edition</u>	<u>Current Editions</u>
Gen 39:16	her lord	his lord
Lev 7:23	no manner fat	no manner of fat
Lev 11:10	nor	and
Num 6:14	lamb	ram
Josh 19:2	or Sheba	and Sheba (Oxford ed)
Ruth 3:15	he	she
1 Kings 6:1	fourscore	eightieth
2 Kings 8:19	he promised to give	he promised him to give
2 Kings 23:21	this book of the covenant	the book of this covenant
Ezra 2:22	children	men

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<sup>7</sup> David Daniell, *The Bible in English* (London: Yale University Press, 2003), p. 620.

<sup>8</sup> Lists of significant differences are available for those who want the truth.

<u>Reference</u>	<u>1611 Edition</u>	<u>Current Editions</u>
Job 4:6	confidence: the uprightness of thy ways and thy hope?	confidence, thy hope, and the uprightness of thy ways?
Job 30:3	flying	fleeing
Jer 34:16	ye	he (Oxford ed.)
Ezek 6:8	that he may	that ye may
Ezek 24:7	poured it upon the ground	poured it not upon the ground
Ezek 46:23	new	row of
Matt 12:23	Is this the son of David?	Is not this the son of David?
John 5:18	not only because he	because he not only
Acts 10:9	house	housetop
Acts 27:18	being exceedingly tossed with a tempest the next day, . . .	being exceedingly tossed with a tempest, the next <i>day . . .</i>
1 Cor 15:6	And	After

Some differences do affect doctrine to some degree and cannot be ignored. Modern editions of the KJV do not compare word-for-word or meaning-for-meaning with the 1611 edition. According to Streeter's own profound words: "Things different are not the same" (p. 251)—regardless of whether the differences are small or great.

In addition, modern editions of the KJV differ in many details of spelling, capitalization, and vocabulary, notwithstanding the presence of the Apocrypha in some editions. If the 1769 edition of the KJV is the absolute authority, it should be perfectly standardized and its text controlled by an official overseeing authority. Such long-standing differences should not be tolerated in an absolute authority. But would Streeter trust someone to standardize a revision and oversee its perpetual perfection? No, Streeter and his ilk prefer to leave the KJV in its differing and inconsistent editions, and still refer to it as the "final authority."

### **Textual Criticism**

When discussing the need for textual criticism, Streeter asserted, "after the King James Bible was delivered to the English world, in A.D. 1611, there was not much need for any further textual criticism (at least, for the purpose of producing more English Bibles)" (p. 80). He meant the form of textual criticism practiced by the KJV translators. Of course, he confessed: "We do not know exactly what materials the translators had available, or exactly what their reasons were for using each word that they used" (p. 284), but that does not matter to Streeter, because the materials and reasons were miraculously revealed and need not be repeated now that the perfect translation has been given.

When discussing the propagation of errors in the copying of manuscripts, Streeter stated that "the errors copied were very few" (p. 71). However, when discussing the differences

between the Traditional Text and the Critical Text, he declared that “the differences in both Greek texts and English versions are so gargantuan that anybody who has read them **should** have a very deep bias, one way or the other” (p. 271, emphasis his). Again, “the disputed words and passages are **extensive, massive, very numerous, and earthshakingly important to doctrine**” (p. 285, emphasis his). Streeter should make up his mind as to whether the copied errors were “gargantuan” or “few.”

Streeter discredited the Critical Text and the associated principles of textual criticism because of the theological views of its initial editors. Although Westcott and Hort were members of the Church of England and operated under its authority, Streeter accused them of “strong Catholic leanings,” such as “Mariolatry,” “sacradotalism” [sic sacerdotalism], and “purgatory” (p. 84-85), thus rendering their text as doctrinally corrupt. On the other hand, he justified the validity of the Textus Receptus, even though the first editions were the work of Erasmus, a Roman Catholic. He argued that “Erasmus was never a good Catholic” (p. 101). However, he admitted that “Erasmus never did leave the Catholic Church” (p. 141) and that “it is also true that he held to many Catholic heresies and that he was a compromiser” (p. 142). He justified his defense of Erasmus by reasoning that “even if Erasmus had been a Catholic humanist, it would not necessarily mean that his work was worthless, dishonest, or untrustworthy” (p. 103), and that “ad hominem attacks upon Erasmus, Beza, and the KJV translators only serve to point up the weakness of the critical (eclectic) text position” (p. 108). But if that reasoning is valid for Erasmus and the Textus Receptus, it also is valid for Westcott and Hort and the Critical Text. Streeter should practice what he preaches. It is important to note that the orthodoxy of Westcott and Hort was not questioned by any of their contemporaries, even by the greatest enemies of their textual methods, namely John Burgon and F. H. A. Scrivener.

Speaking of the Alexandrian and Western texts, Streeter stated: “More importantly, it is obvious that the manuscripts were not copied by Bible-believing Jews. The Jews were God’s choice as the preservers of the ancient text (Rom. 3:2)” (p. 89). It is impossible to see how this statement fits into his argument. If the Critical Text is invalid because its supporting manuscripts were not copied by believing Jews, then the same is true of the Byzantine manuscripts. The application of Romans 3:2 to copyists of the New Testament is faulty, and is even faulty for the copyists of the Hebrew manuscripts, because all the copyists of the Hebrew Bible would have been unbelieving Jews, particularly after the time of Christ.

### **The Apocrypha**

Streeter disqualified the Alexandrian Text partly because “Vaticanus contains the Apocrypha as Scripture” (p. 90). Yet Streeter criticized the authors of *From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man* for pointing out that the KJV 1611 contains the Apocrypha. He stated: “It is mentioned several times in the book that the Apocrypha was in the King James Bible in the beginning. The clear inference is that the King James translators thought that the Apocrypha was inspired Scripture and that the Apocrypha was put forth in the KJV **AS SCRIPTURE**. [pp. 45, 149, 155]” (p. 305, emphasis his). However, nowhere on pages 45, 149, 155, or anywhere else in that book do the authors say that the KJV translators put forth the Apocrypha as Scripture. Their point was that the inclusion of the Apocrypha without a disclaimer anywhere in the book,

together with the inclusion of ninety-four cross references to the Apocryphal books “leads one to believe that all eighty books are Holy Scripture” (*From the Mind of God*, p. 155).

Unbelievably, fundamentalist Streeter justified the inclusion of the Apocrypha: “The KJV translators put the Apocrypha between the Testaments of their Bible because it was considered good to read and helpful” (p. 307). He likened the Apocrypha to study helps and declared: “The Apocrypha is probably as helpful as many of the notes that are put on our, so-called, ‘study Bibles’ today” (p. 307). Of course, no Protestant study Bible includes fourteen entire books, some of which teach such false doctrines such as purgatory, prayer for the dead, the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary, and salvation by works. Since Streeter obviously does not think that the Apocrypha should be included in current editions of the KJV, his rationalization to justify its inclusion in the 1611 edition is blatantly inconsistent.

While the book has some helpful information, it is full of inconsistencies, self-contradictions, errors, and unjustified claims. It would be unprofitable to search through the book to glean the few items of value that could be found elsewhere with greater ease.