

## Book Review

D. K. Madden. *Remarks on the New King James Version*. Tasmania, Australia: D. K. Madden, 1989. 43. pp.

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This self-published booklet is a critical review of the New King James Version (NKJV) of the Bible. The author does not indicate what his qualifications are for criticizing a translation of the Bible. Nevertheless, he criticizes the NKJV for the following reasons: (1) absence of certain distinctive pronouns; (2) capitalization of pronouns referring to God; (3) the use of subject headings; (4) certain mistranslations; (5) creation through Jesus Christ; (6) the use of footnotes; (7) not affirming his theory of the preservation of the autographic text. The following is a response to each of these criticisms.

### Absence of Certain Pronouns

Madden criticizes the NKJV for using the pronouns of Modern English rather than the archaic pronouns used in the King James Version (KJV). Of course he overlooks the fact that the purpose of the NKJV was to update the language of the KJV to Modern English. His criticism is really of Modern English, which he regularly uses in his own everyday affairs without being in anyway hampered by the absence of *thee, thou, thine, ye*, etc. Everyone understands him without those archaic words, and if he ever used them in public, many would not understand him, or wonder if he was beside himself. He objects because Modern English does not distinguish between the singular and plural of the second person pronoun *you*. He stated:

Now in the Hebrew and Greek texts of the Bible a distinction **is made** between the singular and plural personal pronouns, and this **always** conveys some information, and frequently the full meaning of a passage is obscured when a translator renders all the second person personal pronouns as you, your, or yours.<sup>1</sup>

What Madden failed to tell his readers, perhaps because he does not know, is that the Hebrew and Greek texts of the Bible also make certain distinctions of gender in the pronouns that are not found in either King James English or Modern English. So for example Greek has feminine third person plural pronouns. Likewise, Greek has feminine reflexive pronouns for all persons, singular and plural; and feminine reciprocal pronouns. The same is true for the demonstrative, interrogative, and relative pronouns. Similarly, Hebrew distinguishes gender for both second and third person pronouns, singular and plural; also Hebrew distinguishes gender for the singular demonstrative pronouns. These also convey information that may obscure the full meaning of the text. Yet neither King

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<sup>1</sup> Madden, 3; emphasis his.

James English nor Modern English is capable of translating this important information. Clearly the problem is with English, not with translations.

Furthermore, the KJV is not flawless in the way the translators handled pronouns. So for example, in the original language of the following passages, the second person subject pronoun is plural, but the KJV renders it *you* instead of *ye*:

“And ye shall dwell with us: and the land shall be before you; dwell and trade ye therein, and **get you** possessions therein.” (Genesis 34:10)

“And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Say unto thy brethren, This do ye; lade your beasts, and go, **get you** unto the land of Canaan” (Genesis 45:17)

“And the king of Egypt said unto them, Wherefore do ye, Moses and Aaron, let the people from their works? **get you** unto your burdens.” (Exodus 5:4)

“So now *it was not you that* sent me hither, but God” (Genesis 45:8). But contrast this with: “For it **is not ye** that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you” (Matthew 10:20; Mark 13:11)

“But *as for you, turn you,* and take your journey into the wilderness by the way of the Red sea.” (Deuteronomy 1:40). But contrast this with: “**Turn ye** not unto idols, nor make to yourselves molten gods: I *am* the LORD your God.” (Leviticus 19:4). Numerous other instances exist.

Note also Matthew 24:32 “When his branch is yet tender” as compared with Mark 13:28 “When her branch is yet tender.” The Greek text has the same pronoun in both passages, but the KJV translators refer to the fig tree with a masculine pronoun in one passage, and with a feminine pronoun in the other; whereas everyone knows that the proper English possessive pronoun for a tree should be *its*, whether King James English or not.

So Madden’s complaint should be directed against Modern English, not the NKJV and other modern versions. In passages where the difference between singular and plural (or between masculine and feminine) is significant, the translators usually indicate so with a marginal note. Otherwise, it is the responsibility of the pastor, or commentator to bring out those special nuances. One shouldn’t criticize a translation when the weakness is in the target language—in this case, English.

## Capitalization of Pronouns Relating to God

Madden criticized the NKJV for capitalizing pronouns referring to God. He stated: “The reader needs to be aware that the Hebrew and Greek manuscripts of the Bible do not provide this distinction, thus the translator who would employ this device must of necessity become an interpreter.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Madden, 7; emphasis his.

What Madden failed to tell his readers, perhaps because he doesn't know, is that the ancient Hebrew and Greek<sup>3</sup> manuscripts also do not provide capitalization of nouns referring to God, yet that was a common practice of the KJV translators. The same is also true about punctuation, verse numbers, chapter numbers, and much more. In all such circumstances, the translator must exercise some degree of intelligent interpretation. But the translator, who is an expert in the original language, is in a much better position to decide such issues, than to leave that to the whims of the uninformed. It appears that Madden failed to check the marginal notes in the NKJV, because in most instances where the capitalization of the pronouns is uncertain, a marginal note records the alternate spelling.

The prophetic passages in the Old Testament require more comment. In some prophetic passages, particularly in the Psalms, if the entire passage is regarded as Messianic then the pronouns (and nouns) referring to the Messiah were capitalized in the NKJV. However, if only a portion of the passage is regarded as possibly Messianic, then the pronouns (and nouns) were not capitalized. This does not mean that the translators denied that the passage is Messianic, but only that there is some degree of uncertainty as to whether the passage had a local reference, or a Messianic reference. This seems to be the explanation of most of the passages to which Madden objected. They represent places where reputable expositors disagree, some interpreting the passage one way, and some another, both based on equally valid exegetical reasons.

Furthermore, in the vast majority of places where the pronouns (and nouns) that refer to deity are capitalized in the NKJV, the practice is helpful to the reader. The alternative in the KJV is that all pronouns are left without an indication of the deity of their antecedent, resulting in greater potential for confusion than otherwise. However, one must not assume that the KJV is flawless in the way it handles capitalization with respect to deity. Check the following passages where some editions of the KJV fail to capitalize the word *spirit* when it clearly refers to the Holy Spirit (Exod. 31:3; 35:31; Num. 24:2; Job 26:13; Psa. 51:11; Isa. 11:2; Ezek. 37:1; Mic. 2:7; 3:8; Matt. 4:4; Mark 1:12; Acts 11:12; 1 Pet. 4:14; etc., etc.). Similar discrepancies of capitalization occur in the KJV for the words *Creator, Father, Maker, Redeemer, Saviour, Mighty God, King, and Judge*.

What Madden should advise his readers is that while such interpretive helps as capitalization provided by the translators are helpful, the translators were not infallible, and their work is always subject to careful evaluation. This is true of any translation, including the KJV, as the above evidence, and much more, indicates.

## **The Use of Subject Headings**

Madden objected to the subject headings used in the NKJV. He acknowledged that the KJV uses chapter headings, but that somehow seemed different to him. Actually,

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<sup>3</sup> It is true that some of the later Greek manuscripts written in cursive script do capitalize the sacred names of God, but this must be regarded as interpretation of the copyist, the same as that found in the KJV and modern versions.

the so-called chapter headings in the KJV have verse numbers before them (numbers corresponding to the paragraph breaks in the text) indicating where the individual headings belong in the text. Thus they too are subject headings. What he actually objects to is that the headings are not worded like those in the KJV. He wants the NKJV headings to reflect the same allegorical interpretations found in the KJV headings. But he just objected to the capitalization of pronouns because it involved an element of interpretation by the translators. Now he wants the translators to interpret the text according to his preferred allegorical theory. There seems to be something inconsistent here.

The headings in the NKJV were intentionally limited to the literal, normal, historical meaning of the text, without an interpretive element. They were to be interpretively neutral. Madden particularly objected to the headings in the Song of Solomon. Madden is free to interpret “the beloved” (the words of the NKJV heading and the text in that book) allegorically as Christ, and “the Shulamite” allegorically as the Church; but he must remember that such an allegorical interpretation is different than the historical story recorded in the book. Surely he believes that the story recorded there actually happened, and that the characters were real people! He should also remember that while his allegorical *beloved* might be a figure of the divine Christ, yet the historical *beloved* was a real human king.

However, the chapter headings in the KJV may not always be consistent with Madden’s preferred interpretation. For example, there is little doubt that Madden believes that Psalm 22 refers to the suffering and death of Christ. But the KJV chapter heading reads “David complaineth in great discouragement.” Since Madden criticized the NKJV for not referring to Christ in the paragraph headings in Song of Solomon, to be consistent, he should criticize the KJV for not referring to Christ in the headings of Psalm 22, and other of his favorite Messianic passages. What Madden should advise his readers is that the paragraph headings (or chapter headings) in any translation (including the KJV) are not part of the inspired Biblical text, but are put there to help readers, and are not to be used to establish doctrine.

## **Certain Mistranslations**

Madden next criticized the NKJV for certain alleged mistranslations. What this boils down to is that the NKJV wording sometimes doesn’t support Madden’s own idea of what the text actually says.

### **“Are Being Saved”**

(1 Cor. 1:18)

Madden condemned the NKJV wording “are being saved” (1 Cor. 1:18) because he prefers the KJV wording “are saved.” He argued that the phrase “being saved” contradicts the certainty of the once-for-all aspect of salvation. However, the Greek verb here is *σῳζομένοις*, a present passive participle. Such forms usually should be translated as a current ongoing activity; and Greek does have verb forms that unambiguously express the concept “are saved” (see Rom.8:24; 1 Cor. 15:2). So one wonders why the Apostle Paul didn’t use one of those verb forms if he wanted to emphasize the once-for-all certainty of salvation in this passage. However, there are several passages in the KJV

where the subjects clearly are regenerate believers, and yet the text refers to their salvation as future—“shall be saved” (Matt. 10:22; 24:13; Mark 13:13; Acts 15:11; Rom. 5:9, 10; 1 Cor. 3:15). Does Madden suppose that these passages contradict the certainty of the once-for-all aspect of salvation? I guess not, because these passages are in the KJV. Nevertheless, these passages indicate that although the believer’s salvation is certain, there is an aspect of that salvation that is yet in the future. There is a popular maxim that says: “We now are saved from the guilt and punishment of sin; we are being saved from the power of sin; and we shall be saved from the presence of sin.” Clearly Paul must have had the ongoing aspect of salvation in mind when he wrote this passage, otherwise he would have used another word.

### “Give Aid to the Seed of Abraham”

(Hebrews 2:16)

Madden condemned the NKJV for translating the Greek word ἐπιλαμβάνεται in Hebrews 2:16 as “give aid to” rather than as “took *on him the nature of*.” However, according to Thayer, in the Bible this word means “to take hold of, to lay hold of” or “to help” in the sense of “laying hold of another to rescue him from peril.”<sup>4</sup> However, Madden failed to inform his readers that the words “*on him the nature of*” are in italic print in the KJV, indicating that the translators added their theologically interpretive thoughts to the text. He then implied that the NKJV rendering denies the eternal pre-existence and deity of Jesus Christ “by making this verse refer to what Jesus Christ does for believers rather than what he **became** for them.”<sup>5</sup> But such a charge is ridiculous and illogical. A reference to what Jesus Christ does for believers neither denies nor affirms His pre-existence and deity.

Now the problem is that this verb is transitive and grammatically requires a direct object. However, if the verb means “take hold of,” then neither “angels” nor “the seed of Abraham” logically complete the thought of the verb in this context, as anticipated by the flow of thought in the author’s argument. So the translator has two possible alternatives: (1) understand the verb to have its alternate meaning “to help” or “to give aid to,” which does make sense with “angels” and “the seed of Abraham”; or (2) to add a supposedly implied direct object like “nature of” in order to complete the thought. The latter might satisfy the theological desires of the KJV translator, but it amounts to adding to the text. Common sense dictates that if the author had intended for the verb to refer to the nature of angels and to the nature of the seed of Abraham, then it would have been incumbent on him to supply the word “nature” in the text. To do otherwise would leave the text obscure, because there is nothing in the preceding context to infer the idea of “nature”; if the text infers anything, it infers “flesh and blood,” the antithesis of “nature.” What the implied expectation of the preceding verse is that Christ gives aid to the seed of Abraham to overcome the fear of death.

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<sup>4</sup> Joseph Henry Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1901), 240.

<sup>5</sup> Madden, 24; emphasis his.

In this instance, the NKJV translator was faced with the decision to either support the KJV's theologically interpretive addition to the text, or to literally translate what the Textus Receptus actually says, without interpretive addition. He correctly chose the latter, making the translation more consistent with the TR. Madden's charge that the NKJV translation supports the Socinian views of the Jehovah Witnesses is as ridiculous as his previous charge.

Madden has objected to the NKJV translation, not because it is contrary to the grammar of the passage, but because he thinks it contradicts his theological preference. But one should base translation and theology on the grammar and syntax of the Greek or Hebrew text, not on his theological preferences. The NKJV has not mistranslated the passage—it is in perfect harmony with the grammar of the Greek text, but evidently not in harmony with Madden's preferences.

### **“Who Rebelled?”**

(Hebrews 3:16)

Madden condemned the NKJV for rendering this passage “For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses.”<sup>6</sup> The issue hinges on the accent mark on the Greek word *τίνας* (*tines*), whether it is on the first syllable (*τίνας*) or on the last (*τινάς*). With the accent on the first syllable, the word is the interrogative pronoun “who?” as in the NKJV; with it on the last syllable, the word is the indefinite pronoun “some” as in the KJV. Madden knows that the accent marks were not part of the autographic text nor of the earlier copies of the Greek Bible, including the early copies of the Bibles in the Byzantine tradition. Thus the accent mark on this word is an interpretive addition to the text that is not part of the original. Madden should also know that most of the Bibles in the Byzantine tradition have the accent on the first syllable, not the last. That is the case in the Hodges-Farstad Majority Text, and also in the Robinson-Pierpont text. This is also true in F. H. A. Scrivener's edition of Stephen's 1550 text. This means that the majority of Greek speaking churches understood the text the way the NKJV translated it. Likewise, the context favors the interrogative pronoun in this case because this rhetorical question is followed by two others in the succeeding verses.

Madden objects to the NKJV's correction of the KJV here because he imagines that the NKJV introduces a contradiction when it says “was it not all who came out of Egypt?” He noted that there were a few exceptions like Joshua and Caleb who didn't rebel, so not *all* were involved. However, the author clearly had Numbers 14:2 in mind when he wrote this passage—“And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would God we had died in this wilderness!” (KJV). The author's Jewish audience was familiar with that passage and understood that the universal terms “all” and “whole” did not include the small group of believers like Joshua and Caleb. So they also understood that the author's use of “all” here is not contradictory either.

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<sup>6</sup> Madden, 25.

However, this seems to be a rare exception, perhaps the only place, where the NKJV translators chose not to follow the minority reading of the Textus Receptus (TR). To the best of my knowledge, in all the other places the NKJV translators followed the TR, even when the TR reading was not supported by the majority of copies, sometimes by a very small number, or by no Greek authority at all. I can't give the reason for this exception, unless they understood the KJV rendering to be inconsistent with the author's line of reasoning. The KJV certainly seems to be inconsistent here, because the author obviously was focusing of the judgment that came on all of the congregation—the 40 years in the wilderness, and the exclusion from God's rest—not on the very few who survived.

### **“Epileptic”**

(Matthew 4:24; 17:15)

Madden condemned the NKJV for changing the KJV word “lunatick”<sup>7</sup> to “epileptic.” This word comes from the Greek *σεληνιαζομαι*,<sup>8</sup> which literally means “to be moon-struck.” Madden is correct that in Latin and English culture, one who is “moon-struck” is a lunatic. However, the Greek lexicons<sup>9</sup> indicate that this idiom refers to an epileptic. Philologists all agree that usage, not etymology, is what determines meaning in any language. If one were to say in American English: “He is drunk with moonshine,” no one would suppose that the reference is to someone being overwhelmed with the beauty of the full moon. So this expression in Koine Greek refers to an epileptic, not to a lunatic. Madden should have checked the context of Matthew 17:5, and that of the parallel passages in Mark 9:17-18 and Luke 9:37-43. There he would have seen that the symptoms described there are those of an epileptic, not a lunatic. The NKJV did a service for English readers by correcting this medical and linguistic inaccuracy in the KJV.

### **“Righteousness of the Saints”**

(Revelation 19:8)

Madden condemned the NKJV for rendering this expression as “the righteous acts of the saints” instead of the KJV “righteousness of the saints.”

The most common Greek word translated “righteousness” is the word *δικαιοσύνη* (*dikaiousune*) which occurs 92 times in the New Testament. The Greek word used Revelation 19:8 is not that common word, but *δικαιώματα* (*dikaikomata*), the neuter plural of, *δικαιωμα* (*dikaionoma*), which occurs only 10 times in Bible. Three times the KJV translated it as “ordinances”--ordinances (of the Lord) [Luke 1:6]; ordinances (of divine service) [Heb. 9:1]; (carnal) ordinances [Heb. 9:10]. The KJV translates it twice as “judgment” (of God) [Rom. 1:32; Rev. 15:4], once as “justification” (Rom. 5:16); and four times as “righteousness.” Of the four times the word is translated “righteousness,” three times it refers to righteous deeds-of the Law (Rom. 2:26; 8:14), or of Christ in

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<sup>7</sup> Madden, 27; note that he corrected the KJV spelling to “lunatic.”

<sup>8</sup> Madden, 27; he incorrectly spelled the Greek word “SELENIAZO.”

<sup>9</sup> For example, Thayer states, “*to be epileptic* (epilepsy being supposed to return and increase with the increase of the moon) [p. 573].”

contrast to Adam’s offense (Rom. 5:18); so it seems reasonable that the fourth also refers to righteous deeds—those of the saints (Rev. 19:8).

Madden objected to the white robes of Christ’s bride being their righteous deeds, because he sees all human works as filthy rags (Isa. 64:6). However, the scene described in Revelation 19 is the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, which is after the Judgment Seat of Christ where all believers will have been judged and rewarded according to their works (1 Cor. 5:10). Evidently part of the reward will be heavenly clothing, for the negligent are in danger of being found naked (2 Cor 5:3; Rev 16:15). In any case, if the Apostle John had wanted to say the Bride would be clothed in the imputed righteousness of Christ, he could easily have used the expression “the righteousness (δικαιοσύνη) of Christ” instead of “the righteous deeds (δικαιώματα) of the saints.” Interestingly, however, the expression “the righteousness of Christ” never occurs in the Bible.

## Miracles

Madden condemns the NKJV for reducing the number of times the word “miracle” occurs. This, of course, was done to provide a greater translational consistency for the various Greek words that refer to supernatural works of God or Christ. Unfortunately, the KJV lacks consistency in translating these important technical terms. The KJV is noted for its richness and variety of expression. But this variety sometimes contributes to confusion of terms when the words are not really synonyms. F. H. A. Scrivener, a great friend of the Authorized Version, and a defender of the Traditional Text, made this comment about the KJV:

Nor can the attentive student of the Authorized Version fail to marvel at the perfect and easy command over the English language exhibited by its authors on every page. The fullness and variety of their diction, the raciness of their idiomatic resources, seem almost to defy imitation, while they claim our just and cheerful admiration. We need not extenuate that great error of judgment which is acknowledged to be the capital defect of the Translation, especially in the New Testament, in that the same foreign word is perpetually translated by several English ones, while on the other hand a single English word is made to represent two or three in the original, and that too in the same context, where the cogency of the argument or the perspicuity of the narrative absolutely depends on identity in the rendering.<sup>10</sup>

This complaint of Madden is a good example of the problem. The New Testament uses several terms to refer to the different supernatural works of God or Christ: miracle, wonder, sign, mighty work. These terms are translated primarily from three different Greek words: δύναμις (*dunamis*) power, σημεῖον (*semeion*) sign, and τέρας (*teras*) wonder. The word δύναμις occurs 120 times in the New Testament, and is translated “power” 77 times, “mighty work” 11 times, “strength” 7 times, “miracle” 7 times, “might” 4 times, “virtue” 3 times, “mighty” 2 times, and by other miscellaneous words 9 times. The word τέρας occurs 16 times, and is always translated “wonder.” The word

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<sup>10</sup> F. H. A. Scrivener, *The Cambridge Paragraph Bible of the Authorized English Version* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1873), lxxv.



σημείον occurs 77 times, and is translated “sign” 50 times, “miracle” 23 times, “wonder” 3 times, and “token” one time.

The problem is obvious: The English word “miracle” is translated from two different Greek words: δύναμις and σημεῖον. The word “wonder” is translated from two different Greek words σημεῖον and τέρας. The term “mighty work” is translated from the same Greek word as “miracle.” There is no need for this confusion of terms for people who are trying to study the Bible carefully. The NKJV addressed this problem and provided the needed consistency of terms. Nothing was lost, for each of these terms refers to a particular miraculous activity within its given context. It is not as though the NKJV has diminished the reference to miraculous activity.

### Creation By Jesus Christ

Madden condemned the NKJV for translating such that the universe was created *through* Jesus Christ instead of *by* Jesus Christ.<sup>11</sup> Madden insisted that “Jesus Christ, the Divine Word, was the **active** Agent in creation.”<sup>12</sup> The problem is a grammatical one centering around the prepositions used to express agency. With passive verbs, the active agent is usually introduced by the preposition ὑπὸ (*hupo*), whereas the intermediate agent is introduced by διὰ (*dia*). So for example:

“Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized by (ὑπὸ) John in the Jordan” (Mark 1:9).

“There are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by (ὑπὸ) men” (Matt. 19:12)

“And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made by (ὑπὸ) God to our fathers” (Acts 26:6).

“Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh--who are called Uncircumcision by (ὑπὸ) what is called the Circumcision” (Eph. 2:11).

“But all things that are exposed are made manifest by (ὑπὸ) the light” (Eph. 5:13).

“And to make all see what *is* the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through (διὰ) Jesus Christ” (Eph. 3:9).

In regard to this distinction, the well-known theologian Angus H. Strong stated: “Creation is the act of the triune God, in the sense that all the persons of the Trinity, themselves uncreated, had a part in it—the Father as the originating, the Son as the

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<sup>11</sup> See the NKJV at John 1:3, 10; 1 Cor. 8:6; Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:12.

<sup>12</sup> Madden, 31; emphasis his.

mediating, and the Spirit as the realizing cause.”<sup>13</sup> In regard to John 1:3, he also noted: “Creation requires the divine presence, as well as the divine agency. God creates through Christ. All things were made, not ὑπὸ αὐτοῦ—‘by him,’ but δι’ αὐτοῦ—‘through him.’”<sup>14</sup>

Regarding this same passage, the Greek authority Henry Alford noted: “We never read in the Scripture that ‘Christ made the world;’ but ‘the Father made the world διὰ the Son,’ or ‘the world was made ὑπὸ the Father, and διὰ the Son:’ because the *Son never works of Himself*, but always as the revelation of the Father.”<sup>15</sup>

Thus Madden, in his desire to have Jesus Christ act independently of the Father, prefers to read the text contrary to the normal conventions of Greek grammar. On the contrary, the NKJV made the KJV more consistent with Greek grammar.

## Footnotes

Madden condemned the use of textual footnoted in the NKJV. He regarded them as a Trojan horse that “smuggled parts of another vastly different text into their work.”<sup>16</sup> He complained that “this maze of alternate readings will surely cast doubts in the minds of many readers concerning the authenticity and supreme authority of God’s Holy Word.”<sup>17</sup>

Madden evidently is unaware that the KJV 1611 (and most later editions that have marginal notes) has numerous textual notes in the margin. Miles Smith, in his introduction to the KJV 1611, entitled “The Translators to the Reader,” defended the inclusion of alternate translations and textual readings in the margins. He stated:

Some perhaps would have no variety of senses to be set in the margin, lest the authority of the Scriptures for deciding controversies, by that show of uncertainty, should somewhat be shaken. But we do not hold their judgment to be so sound in this point. For though, “whatever things are necessary are manifest,” as St. Chrysostome said,<sup>18</sup> and as St. Augustine said, “In those things that are plainly set down in the Scripture all such matters are found that concern Faith, Hope, and Charity.”<sup>19</sup> Yet for all that it cannot be ignored, that partly to exercise and whet our wits, partly to wean the curious from loathing of them for their uniform plainness, partly also to stir up our devotion to crave

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<sup>13</sup> Angus H. Strong, *Systematic Theology* (Chicago: Judson Press, 1907), 373.

<sup>14</sup> Strong, 311.

<sup>15</sup> Henry Alford, *The Greek New Testament* (London: Deighton, Bell, and Co., 1880), 681; emphasis his.

<sup>16</sup> Madden, 33.

<sup>17</sup> Madden, 33.

<sup>18</sup> St. Chrysostome, in 2 *Thess.* chapt. 2.

<sup>19</sup> St. Augustine, *de doct. Christ.*, Book 2, chapt. 9.

the assistance of God's Spirit by prayer, and lastly, that we might be forward to seek aid of our brethren by conference, and never scorn those who are not in all respects so complete as they should be, being for us to seek out many things ourselves, it has pleased God in his divine providence, here and there to scatter words and sentences of that difficulty and doubtfulness, not in doctrinal points that concern salvation, (for in such it has been vouched that the Scriptures are plain) but in matters of less importance, that fearfulness would better become us than confidence, and if we will resolve, to resolve upon modesty with St. Augustine (though not in this same case altogether, yet upon the same ground) *Melius est dubitare de occultis, quam litigare de incertis*,<sup>20</sup> "it is better to make doubt of those things which are secret, than to strive about those things that are uncertain." There are many words in the Scriptures, which are never found there but once, (having neither brother nor neighbor, as the Hebrews speak) so that we cannot be helped by comparing parallel passages. Again, there are many rare names of certain birds, beasts and precious stones, etc., concerning which the Hebrew themselves are so divided among themselves for judgment, that they may seem to have defined this or that, rather because they would say something, than because they were sure of that which they said, as St. Jerome somewhere said of the Septuagint. Now in such a case, does not a margin do well to admonish the reader to seek further, and not to conclude or dogmatize upon this or that without investigation? For as it is a fault of incredulity to doubt those things that are evident, so to determine such things as the Spirit of God hath left questionable (even in the judgment of the judicious), can be no less than presumption. Therefore as St. Augustine said that "variety of translations is profitable for the finding out of the sense of the Scriptures,"<sup>21</sup> so diversity of signification and sense in the margin, where the text is not so clear, must needs do good, indeed, it is necessary, as we are persuaded. We know that Sixtus Quintus expressly forbid that any variety of readings of their Vulgate edition should be put in the margin<sup>22</sup> (which though it is not altogether the same thing to what we have in hand, yet it looks that way), but we think he doesn't have all of his own side in his favor for this idea. They that are wise, had rather have their judgments at liberty in differences of readings, than to be captivated to one, when it may be the other. If they were sure that their high Priest had all laws shut up in his breast, as Paul the Second bragged, and that he were as free from error by special privilege as the dictators of Rome were made by law inviolable, it would be another matter; then his word would be an oracle, his opinion a decision. But the eyes of the world are now open, God be thanked, and have been a great while; they find that he is subject to the same affections and infirmities that others are, that his skin is penetrable, and therefore as much as he proves, not as much as he claims, they grant and embrace.

It is obvious that the KJV translators regarded the inclusion of marginal notes of more value to the reader than the potential danger that the reader would suppose absolute certainty where some degree of uncertainty exists. Lest the reader suppose that the KJV 1611 has no textual notes in the margin, let him see the following references in modern Oxford and Cambridge editions: Luke 10:22; 17:36; Acts 13:18; 25:6; Eph. 6:9; Heb. 10:2; James 2:18; 1 Pet. 2:21; 2 Pet. 2:11, 18; Rev. 13:5; 14:13; 17:5; 22:19. This does not include some 67 textual notes in the Old Testament.

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<sup>20</sup> St. Augustine, Book 8, de Genes.ad liter. chapt. 5.

<sup>21</sup> St. Augustine, 2 de doct. Christian. chapt. 14.

<sup>22</sup> Sixtus S., pref. *Biblic*.

Madden is mistaken to imagine that the inclusion of marginal textual notes questions the authenticity and authority of the Scripture, unless he also imagines that the same things in the KJV likewise question that authenticity and authority; or that he imagines that 21<sup>st</sup> century Christians have less spiritual discernment than those of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

### **Providential Preservation**

Finally, Madden condemns the NKJV because the translators made no specific statement about providential preservation. He stated: **“They say nothing about the extant apographs of the Scripture, which are, of course, the only authoritative records still available.”**<sup>23</sup> It is insufficient that the NKJV translated the Hebrew and Greek Textus Receptus—exactly those texts that Madden identifies as the “apographs.” Evidently, the fact that these texts were not specifically declared to be the “apographs” renders the translation an anathema. Herein Madden exposes his hidden agenda—the King James Only agenda. This is not the place to debate the issue of providential preservation, except to say that all the NKJV translators would agree with the doctrine of preservation, but not the way Madden and his King James Only colleagues define the doctrine. His appeal in the conclusion indicates that only the Old King James Version is satisfactory. Any modern translation of his “apographs” is disapproved, because it is not the so-called “apographs” that are authoritative, but a single English translation, nothing more, nothing less.

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<sup>23</sup> Madden, 37; boldface emphasis his.