

Where Are We Going?

“Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established.

Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil.”

Proverbs 4:26-27

The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way: but the folly of fools is deceit. ... The simple believeth every word: but the prudent man looketh well to his going.”

Proverbs 14:15

*A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself:
simple pass on, and are punished.*

but the

- Proverbs 22:3

“See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise ...”

Ephesians 5:15

In 1776 Thomas Paine’s booklet *Common Sense* was a plea for the colonists to use common sense when considering whether or not to declare independence from England. This small booklet swept through the colonies like a wild fire and changed the course of our history. This article [this article is actually taken from a manuscript of a book that I am presently writing entitled: *Destroying Our Foundation: A Plea For Common Sense*] is a warning and a call for “prudence,” as well as a call to common sense among my Fundamental Baptist brethren. May the Holy Spirit use this in just a small way to keep us from entering the slippery slope of compromise concerning the FINAL AUTHORITY of God’s inspired and preserved words as found in the King James Bible.

The word “ponder,” according to Webster’s *American Dictionary of the English Language* means “to weigh in mind; to consider and compare the circumstances or consequences of an event, or the importance of the reasons for or against a decision.”

The word “prudence,” according to Webster’s *American Dictionary of the English Language* “implies caution in deliberating and consulting on the most suitable means to accomplish valuable purposes ... It is sometimes mere caution or circumspection.”

To be prudent according to the Webster’s *American Dictionary of the English Language* is to be “Cautious; circumspect; practically wise; careful of the consequences of enterprises, measures, or actions ...”

The word “circumspectly” and/or “circumspect,” according to Webster’s *American Dictionary of the English Language* means to be “looking on all sides; to be “cautious; prudent; watchful on all sides; examining carefully,” to “Cautiously; vigilantly; heedfully; with watchfulness to

guard against danger.”

In other words, we are commanded to be careful and to carefully consider the paths that we take for ourselves and lead others to take. We must look well beyond today when making choices or changes in the direction that we are heading. As Fundamental Baptist “direction” is vital! When preaching, I often remind people that “Today’s decisions determine tomorrow’s destiny” and “Today’s choices or changes will have lasting consequences tomorrow.” **The changes that this generation makes today may not affect us, but these very changes will affect the next generation tomorrow. Mark it down!**

In the past few years an issue, which for many Fundamental Baptists seemed to be settled, has arisen that has caused a great stir within our movement. I think of the words found in Hosea 10:14a, “*Therefore shall a tumult (uproar) arise among the people.*” This controversy has swept our fundamental Baptist churches like a ravaging wild fire, and there are good and godly men on both sides of the issue. Let’s hope and pray that the last part of that verse isn’t fulfilled because of this controversy. “Therefore shall a tumult arise among the people, and all thy fortresses shall be spoiled” (Hosea 10:14).

What is this controversy, you ask. Well, if you didn’t already know (which is hard to imagine), I guess I will have to be the first to spill the beans. Our Fundamental brethren are fighting about the Bible. Yes, that’s right, God’s Words to God’s people. More specifically, they are fighting about the King James Bible.

In a day such as ours, when all of the hordes of hell seem to have been loosed in opposition to the churches and the cause of Christ, this was the last thing that we needed. In a day such as ours, when the unity of fundamental believers is needed more than ever before, this was the last thing that we needed.

In a day such as ours, when the United States of America has become one of, if not the greatest mission fields in the entire world, this was the last thing that we needed. In a day such as ours, when fundamental churches are already being mocked, ridiculed, and scorned, this was the last thing that we needed. In a day such as ours, when the so-called seeker friendly, contemporary churches, and the Emergent churches have replaced Fundamental Baptist churches as the “in thing,” this was the last thing that we needed.

Let me chase a small rabbit right here. One of the great mistakes, in my opinion, of our movement has been to place such a great emphasis on numbers (buildings, bodies and budgets). Now that we have been “overtaken” by these compromising churches, which have been built on the philosophy “Come as you are and leave as you were,” and they appear to be more “successful” than we are, many of us have went into panic mode, and are contemplating new methods that will make us more acceptable and relevant.

Let me say this and let me make it very clear: American Christianity is not Biblical Christianity, and we must not compare ourselves with these compromising churches. Neither should we pattern ourselves after them. As one pastor friend of mine has remarked, “Comparing our Fundamental Baptist churches to those churches is like comparing apples with oranges.”

In a day such as ours, when even many Fundamental Baptists are leaving the Old Paths for what they think are “greener pastures,” this was the last thing that we needed. Yes, my brother, the last thing independent, Fundamental Baptist churches needed here in the twenty-first century, was a squabble about the Bible.

Like you, I wish this problem would just go away, but it cannot, it will not, and my premise

for this article is that it should not. This is a foundational issue. This is one of those issues, as church history will attest to, that must be dealt with, and if it isn't, we lose much ground by default.

Whether we like it or not, the storm is upon us. It does not look like the storm will cease anytime soon. Many of the Baptist brethren, unfortunately, are taking sides. In many, if not most cases, as the men of God take sides, they are standing for what they sincerely believe to be truth.

While I am not only taking the side of those who believe that the King James Bible is the inspired and preserved Words of God for the English-speaking people, and will do my best to convince others to take this stand, I am also appealing to those Fundamental Baptist brethren who have chosen a different position on the King James Bible.

May we come to a clear understanding that this is an important, very important issue; an issue that will continue to affect our churches for years to come if not handled properly. May we also understand that if we, as independent Baptist people, continue to travel this slippery slope of destroying the very foundation of our faith – God's Words by questioning the King James Bible, we will follow the path of those who have preceded us – the New Evangelicals, whether we want to or not.

Much like the War Between the States (Civil War) in the 1860s, this squabble is dividing friends of a lifetime. I know for a fact that this squabble is dividing family members and this squabble has caused contention in many Fundamental Baptist churches across this great land of ours.

Evangelists and others of us, who preach out some, know that this issue is BIG. You can hardly go anywhere without being asked, "So, brother where do you stand on this issue?"

Poor missionaries, who have surrendered their lives to go to a foreign land, to reach the lost and dying, are now being asked, "So, brother where do you stand on this issue?" And in some cases, support is being denied or pulled from the missionaries by churches who have chosen to stay loyal to one side or another. These poor missionaries were already suffering financially because of our nation's economic woes, and now this!

Even those who oppose my view on the King James Bible, agree that this controversy is not good for the fundamental churches in our nation. While not specifically referring to this latest controversy, James B. Williams, the General Editor of two books (*God's Words in Our Hands* and *From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man*), which attack my position on the King James Bible, writes:

The present controversy over the preservation of the Scriptures and the King James Version is unfortunate. It unnecessarily detracts from the main purpose of the church's existence and has developed an unchristian spirit among many believers (*God's Word in Our Hands*, p. XIV).

As Dr. Jack Schaap himself stated in his book *Independent Baptists, Where Were We? Where Are We? Where Are We Going?* "This issue is a 'hot-button' issue." No doubt about it! So those of us who have some knowledge of the issue at hand, and the effects that it is having in many of our churches, recognize that this is surely a troubling time. These are not the best of times for many a Fundamental Baptist church.

We thank God for the good and godly influence that First Baptist Church of Hammond and Hyles-Anderson College has had in this nation through Pastors' School and the graduates of the college. Even here on the West Coast (often referred to as the "Left Coast"), some of the strongest Independent Baptist Churches are pastored by Hyles-Anderson graduates, and

nearly all of the others have been influenced and greatly strengthened by the ministries of FBC and HAC.

We are also extremely grateful for the new passion coming out of FBC Hammond to reach the world for Christ. Any Christian with a heart for the lost of this world is bound to be grateful for the millions of dollars that your church is funneling into world missions. How can we not be thankful for the many issues (soul-winning, separation from the world, etc...), which are near and dear to Fundamental Baptists upon which FBC of Hammond has stood, and continues to stand even to this day.

We have always considered Dr. Jack Schaap our dear friend and a brother in Christ, and we still do. We have appreciated his graciousness, as well as the graciousness of his entire staff to us over the years. While in attendance at the King James Summit –as with everything else at First Baptist Church or Hyles-Anderson College, a spirit of excellence was evident and the hospitality was Biblical, to say the least. As always, it was good to see many friends, both those on staff in Hammond and those who have been sent all over this nation to fulfill the purpose of God in this generation.

In addition to much of what was taught at the Summit, **I was greatly concerned with material I found in the bibliography that was handed out to all the Summit delegates.** What I found in the bibliography (the source of their research) made me ask the question, “Where is the next generation going?” Let me give just a little background and hopefully a warning to all Fundamental Baptists.

In the late 1970s, when the battle for the Bible (King James Bible) was just beginning to get interesting, D.A. Carson, a professor at Trinity Evangelical School in Deerfield, Illinois, wrote a book entitled *The King James Version Debate: A Plea for Realism*. In the Introduction of his book, Carson’s writes:

There has arisen a sizeable vocal body of opinion that defends the King James Version (KJV) as the best English version now extant. Some of these defenders merely argue strongly; but others have gone so far as to make adoption of this view a criterion for orthodoxy. They dismiss those who dissent from them as modernists, compromisers, or dupers. I respect their desire to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints; but I disagree heartily with many of their conclusions and even more of their arguments.

Over the next 123 pages, Carson does his best to prove that the King James Only position is not exactly the most Fundamental position in regards to the Holy Scriptures, and in fact, it is probably a foolish position to stand upon. In addition to Carson’s book, others have been written over the years that for the most part come to the same conclusion that Carson did. A few of these books include James White’s *The King James Only Controversy* (1995); John Ankerberg & John Weldon’s *The Facts on The King James Only Debate* (1996); Central Baptist Seminary’s two books *The Bible Version Debate* (1997) and *One Bible Only* (2001); then there were the two books (*From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man* (1999) and *God’s Word in Our Hands* (2003), which for the most part were BJU productions; and Dr. James Price’s book *King James Onlyism: A New Sect* (2006). Combined, these books total just under-two thousand pages of arguments **AGAINST** the King James Bible, **AGAINST** King James Only advocates, as well as, in nearly every case, **AGAINST** the Hebrew and Greek texts that underlie the King James Bible. These men and their works are not friends of the King James Only position, to say the least.

One book that I was unfamiliar with until July of this year was written by Rick Norris, a

Temple graduate and former student of Dr. James Price. I was introduced to the book *The Unbound Scriptures: A Review of the KJV Only Claims and Productions* while at the King James Summit in Crown Point, Indiana. This book, along with a few other real “gems” was found by me while researching the bibliography that had graciously been handed out by Dr. Jack Schaap and the Summit Staff. We were told this bibliography would reveal where they got their research that helped them to prepare for the Summit.

That evening after the Summit had concluded, I returned to my hotel room and began to study the bibliography that they graciously passed out to all those who were in attendance. As we all know – especially those who have written some or those who are avid readers – bibliographies can speak volumes. I suppose I was searching for a few things. First of all, I wanted to see if the research included men like D.A. Waite, David Cloud, Sam Gipp, Bill Grady, Douglas Stauffer, Jack Moorman, David Otis Fuller, Edward Hills, David Sorenson, Barry Burton and Mrs. Gail Riplinger. These men, as well as Mrs. Riplinger and others that I could name but will not do so, have studied the topic at hand quite extensively and would all be called KJV Only men (and women, in the case of Mrs. Riplinger). Each of these individuals differs some on their view of the issue, but **one thing they all have in common is that the King James Bible is the final authority for the English speaking people.** These men all see the King James Bible, not the elusive “originals,” as the final authority.

What I did find reference to was a church, Mount Calvary Baptist Church which is pastored by Dr. Mark Minnick, a BJU graduate (also on the Bible faculty at BJU) and who is on the board of the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship. These men are our brothers in Christ. They love the Lord Jesus Christ like you and I do, but for years “we” have had differences with them on the Bible issue. When I went to Mount Calvary’s website they were promoting a book by D.A. Carson, who happens to be what we KJV Only folks refer to as a Bible (or KJV) critic (see opening paragraph) . In the bibliography we find quite a bit of material was lifted from the booklet “Trusted Voices on Translation,” which was put out by this church (actually written by the Dr. Minnick) and is sold at BJU. While I am not personally familiar with this booklet, I will quote what one writer has said of it:

I have been aware of this pamphlet since its publication in 2001 and have observed that it has been popular with some pastors who have used it as an excuse for lightly discounting the position defending the Greek Received Text and the King James Bible and for not looking carefully into all sides of the issue. Rather than giving a substantive refutation of so-called "King James Onlyism," this 12-page pamphlet is effective as smokescreen and straw man to draw the reader's attention away from the substantive issues of this debate and to give them the false impression that "King James Onlyism" is indefensible and that it is a new, rather cultic position.

This writer claims that many of the quotes found in *Trusted Voices on Translation* have been taken out of context. Whether that be true or not, I am not sure. **I do know that we can quote somebody out of context to make just about any point!**

Dr. Minnick was one of the many contributing authors of the books *From the Mind of God to the Mind of Men* (in fact he is the only one who wrote two chapters) and *God’s Word in Our Hands: The Bible Preserved for Us*. I have both of these books in my library and have read them in their entirety. As you well know both of these books are attacks on the validity of both the King James Bible and/or the Textus Receptus our final authority. According to

D.A. Waite, Dr. Minnick for years “has been ‘lobbying’ for the critical text against the Textus Receptus as he has been taught at Bob Jones University. He has also been pushing the New American Standard Version, using it at his church” (cited in *Fundamentalist Deception on Bible Preservation*, p. 91). **Are these the men whom we should be using for our research on the King James Bible?**

In this same bibliography, I also found references to R.V. Clearwaters (former president of Central Baptist Seminary and Pillsbury College). Again, Clearwaters was a fundamentalist (a past president of the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship), who as far as I know loved Christ and stood for many of the great fundamentals of our faith. He was probably a far greater man than I will ever hope to be, but Clearwaters and Central Baptist Seminary stood far off from us when it came to the Bible issue.

Central Baptist Seminary was one of a group of seven so-called “fundamentalist” colleges, universities, and theological seminaries that banded together in a coalition known as the “Coalition for the Defense of the Scriptures.” The other schools were BJU; Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary; Marantha Baptist Bible College; Northland Baptist Bible College; Clearwater Christian College; and Calvary Baptist Theological Seminary. Representatives of these seven schools, in 1998, produced a video against the validity of the Textus Receptus NT Greek text and the KJV Only position. It was Clearwaters who said,

Honesty compels us to cite the 1901 American Revised the best English version of the original languages which places us in a position 290 years ahead of those who are still weighing the King James of 1611 for demerits ... We know of no Fundamentalists ... that claim the King James as the best English translation. Those in the mainstream of Fundamentalism all claim the American revised of 1901 as the best English translation (*The Great Conservative Baptist Compromise*, pp. 192-199).

Clearwaters also is quoted as saying,

At the present time, only two translations are recommendable: ‘the King James Version’ and the ‘New American Standard Bible’ ... The ‘New American Standard Bible’ is unsurpassed in its accuracy and its fidelity to the Greek text. Its language is also very readable (“Bible Versions,” Central Bible Workshop, p. 6; cited in *The Bible Version Debate*, written and edited by the faculty of Central Baptist Seminary, pp. 16-17)

Central Baptist Seminary was one of seven “fundamental” schools (the others being BJU, Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary, Calvary Baptist Theological Seminary, Marantha Baptist Bible College, Clearwater Christian College, and Northland Baptist College) who united together in a coalition known as the COALITION FOR THE DEFENSE OF THE SCRIPTURES. Representatives of these seven schools, in 1998, produced a video **AGAINST** the validity of the Textus Receptus New Testament Greek Text (notice they stood not simply against the KJV, but they stood against the underlying Greek Text of the KJV and for the “Critical Text”).

Dr. D.A. Waite wrote an entire book entitled *Central Seminary Refuted on Bible Versions*, which as the title states refutes their false claims. Dr. Edward Glenny, who wrote four of the chapters in Central Baptist Theological Seminary’s booklet *The Bible Version Debate* wrote these words in his chapter on The Preservation of Scripture, “We gladly affirm ... that His

Word has been preserved ... in many extant manuscripts.” On the same page (71), he writes, “**We DO NOT BELIEVE THAT GOD HAS PERFECTLY PRESERVED HIS WORD** by miraculous, supernatural means in any one manuscript, version or text-type.”

What I also found in the bibliography was a man, whom I was not familiar with, named Rick Norris (I found out later he was a Temple graduate and a student of Dr. James Price). I immediately called my wife and had her order his book for me. Well, after reading most of his book it is very clear that much – if not most – of what was taught at the Summit came from this book. Norris is anything but a KJV man, and was critical not only of the King James Bible but also of nearly every pro-KJV author (D.A. Waite, David Cloud, Sam Gipp, Bill Grady, Mickey Carter, David Sorenson, Douglas Stauffer, Jack Moorman, and Mrs. Riplinger) and their works.

Mr. Norris was very, very convincing on his view, and that is the great danger!

Not only are bibliographies very telling, but so are the forewords of most books. When I saw that Dr. James Price (professor at Tennessee Temple Seminary and the executive director of the NKJV and author of the book *King James Onlyism: A New Sect*) had written a “blog” on the back of Norris’ book, as well as the foreword for the book, I pretty much knew what to expect. It was so much more than even I expected.

Let’s hear from Dr. Price in the foreword (pp. vi, vii) of the book, *The Unbound Scriptures: A Review of the KJV Only Claims*. That which is in **bold-lettering** is my emphasis.

In this book, Norris demonstrates how many of the KJV Only advocates disagree and contradict one another. He demonstrates **the folly of using one translation as the absolute standard** for judging other translations instead of using the Greek and the Hebrew texts. He shows that God’s blessing on the KJV is not evidence of its infallibility and authority. He demonstrates that the KJV is copyrighted just as the modern versions are. He deals with the claim that the translators of the KJV had scholarship and discernment superior to any modern translators. He discreetly discusses the deficiency of King James’ moral character.

Norris discusses the claim that the KJV translators had guidelines superior to those of modern versions. He shows that the subsequent revisions of the KJV made some significant changes in its text, and the current editions of the KJV exhibit differences from one another. He demonstrates that the KJV has marginal notes that list alternate translations and textual variants, features the KJV Only advocates condemn in the modern versions. He reveals the theological bias of the translators that made the KJV support the Episcopal form of church government contrary to historic Baptist doctrine (and that of other denominations). He gives evidence that the KJV Only advocates misrepresent the views of Charles Spurgeon.

... Norris shows that **the doctrine of preservation can be applied properly only to the text of the original autographs**, and that the application of this doctrine to the subsequent copies or translations is not historic Baptist doctrine. He exposes the error of the claim that

the KJV is essential for salvation and service. **He reveals the lack of uniformity in the KJV**, a criticism that KJV Only apply to the modern versions; and **HE COMPARES THE ACCURACY OF THE KJV WITH THAT OF MODERN VERSIONS, SHOWING THAT MODERN VERSIONS OFTEN EXHIBIT GREATER ACCURACY THAN THE KJV**. He demonstrates that the KJV translators did not always follow the Hebrew and Greek texts, but rather followed Jewish influence, Roman Catholic influence, or were guilty of inadvertent oversights.

This book provides an extensive appendix that compares the KJV with earlier English versions. It shows the strong dependency of the KJV on these early versions, **AND SHOWS SIGNIFICANT EXAMPLES WHERE THE KJV DEPARTED FROM EARLIER TRADITION IN ORDER TO STRENGTHEN ANGLICAN DOCTRINE**.

Norris is not an enemy of the King James Version. This work is not an attack on the integrity and worth of that great masterpiece of Bible translation. It is the exposure of the error of a new doctrine that proclaims that version to have authority above what the Scripture allows and the KJV translators claimed.

What can I say? Price and Norris are not friends of the King James Bible, to say the least. I am not so sure this is the book we would want to mention in the bibliography without some type of disclaimer.

I have read the book in its entirety; **now let's take a few moments to see what Norris has to say about the KJV**. While we are reading these quotes from Norris' book, we must ask ourselves this question **"Is this we are heading as a movement?" "Is this where we are going?"** "Aren't these the type of things many of us warned our people about over the past 20-25 years?" Though I could do so, with each citation, I will make very few comments, though I am presently putting this in book form. The author's comments are self-incriminating. **Bold lettering** will be my emphasis.

On **page 6** Norris writes, "This book uses the name KJV Only advocate to describe a person who advocates the idea that only one translation (the KJV) should be considered the Word of God and the standard in English." Norris then takes some time over the next few pages to list some of these "KJV Only advocates" men like Ruckman, Perkins, Morton, Cloud, Waite, Sorenson. Throughout the book he refers to many others such as Grady, Waite, Carter, Moorman, Stauffer, Riplinger, and others. All of the above, their views, and their publications are cast in a negative light!

On **page 11** Norris writes, "Of course, many believers, who defend the KJV and regard it as a good and reliable translation, do not fit the above variations. They may think that the KJV is the overall best English translation now available, **BUT THEY WOULD NOT CLAIM THAT IT COULD NOT BE UPDATED, CORRECTED, OR REVISED**. They would not imply that the KJV is **THE FINAL AUTHORITY** or the **only** 'accurate,' 'acceptable,' 'true,' or 'legitimate' translation in English. They would acknowledge that God's word in **THE ORIGINAL LANGUAGES** must be the final standard for evaluating all translations."

On the same page Norris writes, "They would not suggest that any translators including the

KJV translators could be perfect and inerrant in their translating. These believers should not be classified as KJV Only advocates even though they may use only the KJV in their churches.”

On **page 12** Norris writes, “... KJV Only advocates claim that any believer who rejects their view of the KJV as the infallible standard is left without a standard.” Norris then quotes David Bernard and Samuel Aaron from an 1842 book on Bible translation. “As to our being ‘left without a standard,’ through the multiplicity and variety of translations, we have only to say that there can, in the nature of things, **BE NO PERFECT STANDARD but the Hebrew and the Greek ORIGINALS**: these, being written by inspired men, are infallible, while all translations by men uninspired must be more or less imperfect.”

On **page 24**, Norris quotes John Owen, “Translations contain the word of God, and are the word of God, perfectly or imperfectly, according as they express the words the sense, and meaning of those originals.”

On **page 25** Norris writes, “To claim that the KJV is the final standard would be to imply that the KJV is not a translation. To claim that the **KJV IS THE FINAL AUTHORITY AND ULTIMATE STANDARD** seems to make it a separate or new source of direct revelation. ... God’s preserved word in the **ORIGINAL LANGUAGES** must be the ultimate authority and standard of truth for evaluating and validating ALL translations.”

On **page 32**, Norris quotes Jakob Van Bruggen who wrote, “One who holds to the KJV without updating it contributes to its neglect and progressive disuse.”

On the same page (**page 32**) Norris writes, “How are differences in explaining the meaning of the archaic words different from having an updated translation with the correct updated meaning of the archaic words?”

A few pages later (**page 45**) Norris writes, “The Bible does not work as a charm that magically gives understanding in spite of words whose meaning the reader does not know. A reliable translation should be clear and understandable in the language as it exists today and not as it existed three hundred years ago.” Now, that’s a mouthful there. Not only do we not have a perfect standard in the English language, not only do we not have a final authority in the English language, now we are being convinced that we need to a clearer translation. I wonder where this is heading? Norris continues, “If the current meaning of the many words in the KJV is not the same as the meaning of the inspired words in the Hebrew and the Greek, should not these words be updated to words with the correct meaning? ... When any translation becomes obscure because of words whose meaning has completely changed, it lacks authority and it needs updating. Should archaic words be allowed to cause the meaning of God’s inspired Word to be misconstrued?”

On **pp. 46-47**, Norris states, “The more deeply Bible-believers claim to believe in the verbal inspiration of God’s Word the more they should want to see any hindrances (that would of course, be those archaic words) to understanding it removed.” He then, once again quotes Bernard and Aaron who wrote in 1842, “For it is obvious to every intelligent reader that the

common version [the KJV] contains many defects, which obscure and pervert the meaning of the inspired writings, and thus impair the confidence of some in their divine origin. That these deficiencies ought to be remedied seems equally plain.”

On the same page, Norris writes, “Perhaps the reason that no KJV Only advocate will update any of the archaic words in the KJV is because they are afraid that they will be labeled a ‘Bible-corrector’ by other KJV Only advocates who may disagree over which words are archaic. Is this ‘fear of man’ or ‘peer pressure’ what keeps the KJV Only advocates in line or have they placed more confidence in the teachings of uninspired men than they have the Word of God? ... To continue to keep archaic terms that convey erroneous ideas to the mind of the uniformed reader is to promote error. Have the good intentions of KJV Only advocates become the enemy of the best translation of many inspired Hebrew and Greek words into English? ... God’s Word does not edify believers if the message is unintelligible because of archaic words.”

Let’s go ahead and skip a few pages. We aren’t skipping pages because there isn’t anything to quote. No sir! In fact, Mr. Norris does a very thorough job “destroying” just about every argument that the “KJV Only advocate,” as he calls them, would use to defend his position. Arguments such as the King James Version finding its source in a superior text (Masoretic and Textus Receptus) is pretty much leveled. The KJV having superior translators, or the KJV coming from the pure stream (“Antioch”) rather than the corrupted stream (“Alexandrian”) are also put to rest, at least in Mr. Norris’ view. The argument that the KJV is superior in its theology to modern versions is pretty much done away with. The slippery slope argument, which I firmly hold to, is also swept aside into the dust bin of foolishness.

On **pp. 362-363**, Norris writes, “Who says that all believers who speak English should use only the KJV? God does not say it. God’s Word in the original languages does not say it. ... Since the KJV Only view goes beyond or outside the facts and the commands of Scripture, **IT IS CLEARLY IN ERROR.** ... It is harmful to limit God’s inspired Word to the scholarly status of the finite KJV translators.”

On the very next page (**page 364**) Norris writes, “Since people fear change and desire to cling to what is familiar, the KJV Only view becomes an easy way out of having to study and examine the facts. A desire for certainty can replace an attempt to find truth. ... The KJV Only view leaves many important questions unanswered.” **I would agree with Norris here, when he says, “The KJV Only view leaves many important questions unanswered,” but so does the other view, which places all of its cards on the table of the “originals.” Herein is the need for faith!**

On **page 367-368**, Norris claims that the “KJV Only theory seems to survive on inconsistent reasoning, many fallacies, a little evidence, people’s desire for certainty, and an unfair demand of total evidence placed on those who disagree with them. They attempt to replace God’s Word in the original languages as the final standard ... All the apparent strength of the KJV Only view has been shown to rest on false assumptions, fallacies, inconsistencies, and conjecture.”

On **page 374**, Norris writes, “If some (referring to the KJV Only crowd) decide to flounder in

a quagmire of ignorance and carnal conjectures by ignoring the facts about this issue, they have no excuse. They allow themselves to be befuddled by falsehoods and fuzzy thinking. The ship of the KJV Only view is wrecked on the same reef of the facts with the Latin Vulgate-only view.”

On **page 384**, Norris makes this statement, “Therefore, it is clearly unscriptural for KJV Only advocates to interpose the KJV translators between believers and God and to forbid believers the right to read and interpret the Scriptures in the original languages or in a translation he believes most accurately translates them (I Tim. 2:5; John 16:13; Rom 14:12-13; Deu 12:32). English-speaking believers should not allow their liberty to use only the KJV to be a stumbling block or hindrance to other believers (I Cor 8:9), Rom 14:13). While believers are free to esteem one translation as better than others, they are not to impose or force their opinions on other believers (Rom. 14:5-6).”

On **page 385**, Norris writes, “The clear teaching of God’s Word refute the man-made KJV Only theory. Their claims for one infallible translation are not proven by the facts of Scripture that they cite.” A few sentences later Norris again makes his point, “KJV Only advocates are free to believe their man-made view, but they have no right to impose their view on other believers. ... To deny other believers the opportunity to translate God’s Word into ENGLISH (my emphasis) is in effect to set up the KJV translators as an exclusive group of priests who stand between believers and God’s Word. Every believer must be allowed to interpret God’s Word for himself, and he should not be forced to accept any men, including the KJV translators, as his infallible interpreters.”

Just a few sentences later Norris states, “The Word of God is not bound by any language, **any one translation**, or any other barrier (II Tim 2:9). Therefore, it is definitely unscriptural to attempt to bind God’s Word and limit it to one translation, especially one of the seventeenth-century.”

On **page 388** Norris continues with this theme, writing, “God’s Word cannot be locked up in one seventeenth-century translation anymore than it could be locked up in the Latin Vulgate ... If any translation of God’s Word including the KJV is permitted, who can legitimately **FORBID NEW TRANSLATIONS?**”

On **page 389** Norris writes, “If it is acceptable for KJV Only pastors to use synonyms or explanations of archaic words in the King James Bible in their speaking and thus in effect updating these words, how is it wrong to do the same thing in writing?”

On the same page, Norris writes these words, “Francis Turretin contended that translations ‘are subject to error and may be corrected, but they are authentic with regard to the doctrine they contain, which is divine and infallible.”

Norris closes his book on **page 394** (not including the many pages of Appendixes which continue to tear at the fabric of the KJV Only position). On **page 393** Norris quotes the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship and a resolution they passed in 1995: “**Since no translation can genuinely claim what only may be said of the original, inspired**

writings, any attempt to make a particular English translation the only acceptable translation of fundamentalism must be rejected.”

Again, let me say that **Mr. Norris was very, very convincing on his view**, so was KJV-critic James White (*The King James Only Controversy*), so was KJV-critic D.A. Carson (*The King James Version Debate: A Plea for Realism*), and so were the host of authors in the book *From the Mind of God to the Mind of Men*, edited by James Williams, and **that is the great danger**. At the same time, other authors who present their arguments for the King James Bible (*i.e.* D.A. Waite, David Cloud, Sam Gipp, Bill Grady, Douglas Stauffer, Jack Moorman, David Otis Fuller, Edward Hills, David Sorenson and Mickey Carter) are also very convincing.

When these “scholars” and others like them refer to the preserved **Word**, more often than not they are referring to the “*message, thoughts, ideas, concepts, truth, or revelation,*” but NOT the words. This is very apparent when one reads the many “scholarly” works they have put out such as *From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man*; *God’s Word in Our Hands: the Bible Preserved for Us*; *Bible preservation and the Providence of God*; *The Bible Version Debate: The Perspective of Central Baptist Theological Seminary*; D.A. Carson’s *The King James Version Debate: A Plea for Realism*; James White’s *The King James Only Controversy: Can You Trust the Modern Translations?* The first three of these books are products of BJU men and the next one was put out by our friends at Central Baptist Theological Seminary in Minnesota.

According to these brethren “the Bible teaches that God has providentially preserved His written word (notice the singular ‘**Word**’ rather than the plural ‘**Words**’). The preservation exists in the totality of the ancient language manuscripts of that revelation. We are therefore certain that we possess the very Word of God.” I have one question for the brothers: Do we have a copy of God’s Words (plural) in our hands or not? D. A. Waite writes concerning this view:

This statement indicates that the “preservation” they are talking about exists in the “totality of the ancient language manuscripts of that revelation.” That means the totality of the Hebrew, the totality of the Aramaic, and the totality of the Greek, “ancient language manuscripts” which are scattered all over the world. If “the Word of God” is out there somewhere, how can it be “God’s Word in Our Hands”? This is a strange contradiction from these very well educated Fundamental gentlemen.

Herein is the issue: Did God preserve for us today His words or do we simply have His Word, which can be defined as the “*message, thoughts, ideas, concepts, truth, or revelation*” of God. There was a time when the statements “His Word” and “His Words” had the same meaning. Such is no longer the case.

I do plan on making a “big deal” with those whom I know about Norris’ book, as well as James Princes’ book *King James Onlyism: A New Sect*). I am thoroughly convinced that one cannot read these books and come into agreement with their premise, and continue to claim the King James Bible as their final authority – it is simply not possible. As a soul-winning, separated and Fundamental Baptist people are we heading down a direction that will lead us to other English translations of the Bible? If we question our **FINAL AUTHORITY, if we are critical of our FINAL AUTHORITY, we may very well find ourselves “dooming”** the next generation of young preachers to a position of compromise!

The battle for the Bible, or our **FINAL AUTHORITY**, has been ongoing. Let's take a trip back in history. **We can we can learn much from history.** Over one hundred years ago, preachers were casting doubt on the Old Black Book. Listen to these words written in 1896:

It is a very common saying ... that though there are numerous errors, discrepancies, and contradictions in the Bible, these in no sense imperil or jeopardize the doctrinal teachings of the book. ... The fact is, men will not accept the doctrinal teachings of the book as infallible if they are led to believe that it is untrustworthy in other matters. ...The unspiritual condition of the churches ... and the alarming skepticism, infidelity, and atheism among the masses of the people in Germany, Switzerland, and Holland is, without a doubt, almost **WHOLLY ATTRIBUTABLE TO THE ADVOCACY OF THESE CRITICISMS** by a large majority of the prominent pastors and theological professors of these lands. (L.W. Munhall, the Highest Critics vs. the Higher Critics, 1896, pp. 203, 205, cited in *For Love of the Bible*, page 68).

What could possibly compel a preacher to say to his congregation that "there are numerous errors, discrepancies, and contradictions in the Bible?" Could these men not see that criticizing and casting doubt on the Bible would lead the next generation to not accept and embrace "the doctrinal teachings of the book?"

The prominent pastors and theologians of these European countries began to cast a shadow of doubt on the inerrancy of the Scriptures and it resulted in "unspiritual" churches, "alarming skepticism, infidelity, and atheism among the masses of the people." And that was over one hundred years ago. Look at Europe now. Look at where this "Higher Criticism" of the Bible has led the entire West. **CAN WE INDEPENDENT BAPTIST AFFORD TO CAST DOUBT ON THE BIBLE?**

As David Cloud writes, "... any reasonable person can see that **ANY CRITICISM OF THE BIBLE** [my emphasis] will destroy people's faith therein" (*For the Love of the Bible*, page 68). I guess the question I have for all of us today is this, "Are we reasonable enough to see that criticizing the King James Bible will destroy the faith of many?" This is true even if we are sincere in our casting doubt on the Bible! In his book *For Love of the Bible*, David Cloud refers to the 19th-century concerning this casting doubt on the Bible. Cloud writes:

Many wise men of the nineteenth century understood this when they rose in opposition to the proposed revisions of the Authorized English Version (King James Bible) and the underlying Received Text. Speaking of John Bellamy's efforts to revise the King James Bible in 1818 the *Quarterly Review* warned that it was "a course which obviously tended to **IMPAIR THE REVERENCE**, and to **SHAKE THE CONFIDENCE** [my emphasis] of the public in the truths derived from them" and warned that it was "a system which must tend to degrade the Holy Bible in public estimation."

... In 1856, D.H. Conrad made this prediction if new English versions were to vie for authority with the Authorized Version: "You open a crevasse through which you know not how soon the floods of innovation may sweep away the sacred landmarks." The same year John Cumming said that if "our noble version (KJB) is assumed or asserted to be at fault a fire would probably be kindled at which Dr. Wiseman would delight to warm his hands" (*For Love of the Bible*, page 68).

These are prophetic words to say the least. Not only has this happened in the past 130 years with the multiplicity of versions in the English language, but I can see very clearly that if we fundamental, separated, soul-winning, Baptist people aren't careful we will "impair the reverence" and "shake the confidence" of those attending churches. As Conrad said in 1856 we may be opening "a crevasse" that "may sweep away the sacred landmarks" even if this is not our intent. Reading men like James Price, Rick Norris and the BJU men

(Mark Minnick) on the bible issue is treading dangerous ground.

It is my premise that if we are not willing to fight this fight, we will “unknowingly” enter a path – a direction if you will – that will destroy the Fundamental Baptist movement as we know it. History records for us “times such as this.” Because the Bible is (or should be) the foundation of all that we are and all that we do, there is nothing that is more worth “battling” over than the Bible. In his book, *The Need for an Every Word Bible*, Dr. Jack Hyles wrote:

The issue that is dividing Baptists in my generation is the healthiest issue ever, the Bible. What better issue could divide? We're not going to divide over some piddling issue. We are going to divide over the foundation of our faith and that is, “What is the Word of God, and where is the Word of God?”

Dr. Hyles also wrote:

The biggest split that has ever come will come in the next ten years, if not sooner, over the King James Bible, and it couldn't come soon enough for me. I'm tired of colleges and universities advertising that they use the King James Bible. Tell the whole story! Tell everyone that you do not believe that it is inspired word for word.

Let me make this very, very clear I am one of those King James Only men who truly believes that, in the King James Bible we have God's preserved and inspired Words for the English-speaking people, and that the King James Bible – not the elusive “originals” – is our FINAL AUTHORITY for the English-speaking people. This position of mine, while definitely one of “faith,” is not only a position of “faith” but a position that I have taken after much study and looking at both sides of the issue. I not only believe that this is the Biblical position, but also it is the prudent position. Dr. Hyles always warned us to get as far right-of-center as possible. Why? So if we begin to drift some we will still be on the right side (our hearts are prone to wander).

My concern and purpose for this warning is simply this: “Regardless of what our stand is on inspiration, preservation, and the King James Bible, once we begin to cast a shadow of doubt upon the King James Bible (whether we know it or not, whether this is our ultimate goal or not) we doom the next generation to follow in the footsteps of our New Evangelical brethren and begin to accept the modern translations.”

In 1976, Harold Lindsell – a New Evangelical and former vice-president and professor of Fuller Theological Seminary – wrote a book called *The Battle for the Bible*. I have a copy of the book in my library. On the cover of we find these words, “The Book that Rocked the Evangelical World.” In this treatise, Lindsell exposes the great slide of New Evangelicals concerning the infallibility and inerrancy of the Scriptures. The book was written primarily to warn Evangelicals that once you change your position on the Bible it is inevitable that you will change in other areas, including doctrinal areas.

Again, let me say, from the outset, Lindsell was not a Fundamental Baptist, nor was he standing for the King James Bible as the inspired and preserved words of God for his generation, but the principle is the same. We can learn so much from history, if we are willing. His basic premise was two-fold:

- When one questions the inerrancy of the Bible compromise is soon to follow
- When one changes their position on the Bible compromise in other areas is soon to follow

It is interesting to note that another New Evangelical, Dr. Harold Ockenga, wrote the foreword to Lindsell's book. Ockenga is often credited with being the father of the New

Evangelical movement, if not the father of the movement, he surely coined the term “New-Evangelical” in the late 1940s. These men were men who had “repudiated separation,” especially ecclesiastical separation, and now almost thirty years were later were seeing the “fruit of their labor,” and they didn’t like what they were seeing. As Fundamental Baptists, we don’t want to make the same mistake and live to regret it in the distant future. Ockenga writes in the foreword of the book these words:

Dr. Lindsell mentions the acceptance of inerrancy is the watershed of modern theological controversy. He is right declaring that **the attitude we have toward the trustworthiness of Scripture determines our later position** [my emphasis], not only on faith, but also on practice. **The evidence that those who surrender the doctrine of inerrancy inevitably move away from orthodoxy is indisputable** [my emphasis]. It is apparent that those who give up an authoritative, dependable, authentic, trustworthy, and infallible Scripture must ultimately yield the right to use the name “evangelical.”

Again, these men were not Fundamental Baptist men. As far as I know, they were not King James Only men. These men were not “us,” but these men travelled down a path and found the final destination to be distasteful, and disastrous. A casual reading of this book in light of our present day controversy is almost “scary.” What I would like to do over the next few pages is simply quote Lindsell and possibly make a comment or two. In the Preface of the book, Lindsell writes:

I regard the subject of this book, biblical inerrancy, to be the most important theological topic of this age. A great battle rages about it among people called evangelicals. I did not start the battle and wish it were not essential to discuss it. The only way to avoid it would be to remain silent. **AND SILENCE ON THIS MATTER WOULD BE A GRAVE SIN** [my emphasis].

My brothers if history is right and repeats itself, **compromise is inevitable.** May the God of heaven help us to be a “prudent people” when it comes to our **FINAL AUTHORITY!**
