PREFACE

Although it was published over 400 years ago, and has been superseded by modern editions, the original King James Authorized Version of the Bible issued in 1611 remains both a curiosity and a subject of scholarly interest. Several facsimile editions and roman type editions have been published over the years, and some are still in print. Even years after the quatercentenary of the King James Bible in 2011, both popular and scholarly articles and books relating to the Authorized Version continue to be issued.

In 2016—on August 18th to be exact—a few months after the publication of the second edition of my book *King James, His Bible, and Its Translators* (since 2022 available in a third edition), I began what I anticipated, by the time it was published, to be a ten-year project by drawing up a tentative list of things that I wanted to research and write about as relating to the text of the King James Bible: spelling, abbreviations, and compound words in the 1611 Bible; spelling and word changes in modern King James Bibles; changes in the English language since 1611; variations in the editions of King James Bibles; differences between Oxford, Cambridge, and American King James Bibles; the correspondence between the Blayney 1769 edition of the King James Bible and modern editions; the relationship between the Catholic Rheims New Testament of 1582 and the Authorized Version; and the history of the Greek text underlying the New Testament text of the King James Bible and the correlation between the two.

Because of other commitments and circumstances, work slowed to a crawl after two years of painstaking research and writing that resulted in the completion of the first two chapters. After the passage of year three, and not much progress on chapter 3, I began to issue the work in fascicles (chapters 1 & 2 in 2019, chapter 3 in 2020, chapter 4 in 2021, chapter 5 in 2022), and for two reasons. One, I wanted to make the results of my completed research available to those interested parties who didn't want to wait an undetermined number of years for the finished book to be published. And two, I wanted to make the completed parts of my research available in the event that I was never able to finish or publish the book. The material in the published fascicles, and especially that in the first three chapters, was subsequently corrected, revised, and expanded before publication herein. The form in which any previously published material appears in this work supersedes anything in the fascicles.

The text of the King James Bible means many things: the typefaces used, the wording of the text, the frequency with which the words of the text are used, the abbreviation of words in the text, the hyphenation of words in the text, the spelling of the words in the text, the editions of the text, the nature and categorization of the changes in the text, the printing of the text, the publishing of the text, the language of the text, the influences on the text, and the underlying Hebrew and Greek texts.

The only thorough (albeit limited in scope) analysis in this country of the text of the King James Bible was that undertaken by the American Bible Society (ABS) during the middle of the nineteenth century. In 1851, the ABS issued its *Report on the History and Recent Collation of the English Version of the Bible* after collating the 1611 Bible and four British editions of the King James Bible with an ABS edition of the same. The number of variations recorded "solely in the text and punctuation of the six copies compared" was said to be "but little short of *Twenty Four Thousand*."[1] This figure is still cited today, but usually

[1] American Bible Society, *Report on the History and Recent Collation of the English Version of the Bible: Presented by the Committee on Versions to the Board of Managers of the American Bible Society, and Adopted, May 1, 1851* (New York: American Bible Society, 1851), 31.

out of context. For example, when speaking of the 1769 edition of the King James Bible, a recent writer says: "Blayney's edition, that incorporated Parris's modifications, soon became the universally accepted text of the KJV that has hardly altered since that time. This version differed from the 1611 text in no fewer than 24,000 places. However, many of the changes were simply the correction of accumulated printers' errors, though others were more substantial changes."[2] The ABS *Report* went on to say:[3]

> With the exception of the *first* class, or errors of the press, the present copies of the Bible accord throughout with the edition of 1611.
>
> With the exception of typographical errors, and of the changes conformed to, and required by, the progress of orthography in the English language, the text of our present Bibles remains unchanged, and is without variation from the original copy as left by the translators.
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> The English Bible, as left by the translators, has come down to us unaltered in respect to its *text*; except in the changes of orthography which the whole English language has undergone, to which the version has naturally and properly been conformed; and excepting also the slight variations and discrepancies, which in so long an interval must necessarily arise, by reason of human imperfection, in the preparation and printing of so many millions of copies.

The analysis of the text of the King James Bible contained herein is much more detailed, methodical, and comprehensive, and will allow the reader to judge the accuracy of these statements. Outside of the United States there is, of course, the work of Frederick H. A. Scrivener (19th century) and David Norton (21st century). I stand on their shoulders.

If you have not done so already, the four quotes preceding this preface should be read and then read again. I write with no agenda, and neither am I trying to prove anything. I have no thesis and no conclusion. I am merely doing the critical research that has either never been done satisfactorily or never been done at all and reporting the results. Thus, the book is more descriptive than analytical.

This is my fourth book on the King James Bible. To get the most out of this work, I recommend that my books *The Making of the King James Bible—New Testament* and *King James, His Bible, and Its Translators* be read before this one. My other book, *Archaic Words and the Authorized Version*, can be profitably read before or after any of the other three.

I make no apologies for the many lists of Bible words that appear in *The Text of the King James Bible*. It should always be remembered:

> The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times (Psa. 12:6).
>
> Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him (Pro. 30:5).
>
> But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God (Mat. 4:4).

A work of this nature and magnitude is inevitably prone to a variety of typos and mistakes. The reader is encouraged to report to the author any he finds, or thinks he finds, no matter how insignificant they seem, so that they can be corrected in future printings.

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[2] Brian Talbot, "The King James Bible: A Reflection on 400 Years of Its History," *Evangelical Review of Theology* 35 (Oct. 2011), 298.
[3] American Bible Society, 7–8, 11.