
Principles of Bible Preservation

**By
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One hundred years ago John Burgon wrote: *"If you and I believe that the original writings of the Scriptures were verbally inspired by God, then of necessity they must have been providentially preserved through the ages."*

This is the crux of the matter; does God preserve that Word which He originally inspired? And if so, to what extent? Is it merely the concepts and basic message that is kept intact; or does preservation, -as inspiration,- extend to the *words* themselves? That the Bible declares both the fact and extent of its preservation is made abundantly clear in the following: **"Know now that there shall fall unto the earth nothing of the word of the LORD"**

(2 Kings 10:10). "The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD; thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever"

(Psa. 12:6,7). "The law of the LORD is perfect converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple"

(Psa. 19:7). "The counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations"

(Psa. 33:11). "For the LORD is good, his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations"

(Psa. 100:5). "For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven"

(Psa. 119:39). "Thy word is very pure: therefore thy servant loveth it"

(Psalm 119:140). "Concerning thy testimonies, I have known of old that thou hast founded them for ever"

(Psa. 119:152). "Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous "Every judgments endureth for ever" (Psa. 119:160). "Every word of God is pure..."

(Prov. 30:5). "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever"

(Isa. 40:8). "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it"

(Isa. 55:11). "For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled"

(Matt. 5:18). "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away"

(Matt. 24:35). "And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail"

(Luke 16:17). "The scripture cannot be broken"

(John 10:35). "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever"

(1 Pet. 1:23). "But the word of the Lord endureth for ever"

(1 Pet. 1:25). We have a strange anomaly today; Christians claim to believe what the Bible says about its own inspiration but virtually ignore the equally direct statements concerning preservation. To say that you believe in the full inspiration of Scripture while at the same time accepting the textual theories inherent in the modern versions, is about as incongruous as taking Genesis one literally while holding to the theories of Darwin.

One: The starting point of apostasy

The questioning of the Bible's preservation is the starting point of all other kinds of apostasy. Satan in Genesis 3 did not begin his attack by questioning whether there was a God, or whether God created, or whether the doctrine of the Trinity is true. Nor did it begin with the question of whether God's word was inspired in the originals. Apostasy began when Satan asked Eve, "Yea hath God said?" "Eve, are you certain that you presently have a full recollection of what God said?" When doubt was given a bridgehead at this point, the other defenses soon fell. The same principle applies today: Has God preserved His word and kept intact His original work of inspiration or has He not? It is a fact that the one common denominator in all the varied errors, deviations, and heresies is that their advocates will first criticize the standard received edition or translation of Scripture.

Two: Preservation must be approached in an attitude of faith

Like all other Bible truths, the Scripture's teaching on its own preservation

is to be in the first instance accepted by faith. Edward F. Hills in his outstanding book *The King James Version Defended*, calls it "the logic of faith." The facts and evidence of such preservation will then follow.

Three: Preservation is grounded in the eternal counsels of God

The Bible's preservation is rooted in the eternal counsels of God. The Scriptures are as eternal as God Himself. "For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven" (Psa. 119:89).

Four: Preservation is brought to pass through the priesthood of believers

The preservation of the Scriptures took place through the priesthood of believers. The Old Testament text was preserved by the Aaronic priests and the scribes who grouped around them. "Unto them were committed the oracles of God" (Rom. 3:2). In the New Testament dispensation every believer is a priest under Christ. Hence, the New Testament text has been preserved by faithful Christians in every walk of life. "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13). It was not the pronouncements of church fathers or counsels that determined the text and canon of the New Testament. Rather, the Holy Spirit guided His own into the acceptance of the true word of God. Such copies proliferated, while defective ones were ignored. The Holy Spirit continues this work today in the questions that arise over the wording in the modern versions.

Five: Preservation extends to the actual words

Preservation has to do with the actual words of Scripture, not merely the general teaching or concepts. This is made clear in the list of verses just given. Advocates of the modern versions commonly say: "There is not a single doctrine missing." But what they fail to tell you is that the words which support and develop these doctrines are frequently missing. Thus, the force of the doctrine is diminished. As inspiration of the Scriptures is verbal so also is preservation.

Six: Preservation is operative in the spread of the Scriptures

Preservation has taken place in the diffusion of God's word, not in its being hidden or stored. Stewart Custer, in seeking to somehow equate the use of *Vaticanus* and *Sinaiticus* with the doctrine of preservation, said: "God has preserved His word in the sands of Egypt." (This statement was made in a debate at the Marquette Manor Baptist Church in Chicago, 1984.) To take

such a position would mean that believers have had the wrong text for 1800 years, and it has been only with the advent of two liberal British churchmen, and the retrieval of two disused Alexandrian manuscripts that we now have the "true preserved" Word of God. No! The miracle of preservation was operative while the Scriptures were being disseminated. "The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it"

(Psa. 68:11). "Have they not heard? Yes, verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world"

(Rom. 10:18).

Seven: preservation must of necessity apply to key translations

As so few can read the original languages, God's promise to preserve His Word has no practical relevance if it does not extend to translations. The Scripture frequently affirms "that we are born again by the Word of God" (James 1:18; 1 Cor. 4:15; 1 Pet. 1:23). If a translation cannot be equated with the actual Word of God, then ultimately this leads to the situation that one must know Hebrew and Greek before they can be saved, or built up in the faith (Rom. 10:17; Matt. 4:4). Further, the Bible's use of the term "preserved" demonstrates that it is an absolute and not a relative term. To speak of the Bible, or in this discussion, a translation as being "almost preserved" is a misnomer. Either it is preserved or it isn't, either it has errors or it doesn't. Either the flower fades and the grass withers or it does not.

Eight: The meaning of the term "Scripture"

While it may be assumed that the Bible usage of the word "Scripture" has reference to the original autographs; yet virtually each time the word is used it is the copies or even translations of the Scriptures that are in view, e.g. it is the Scriptures that the people had access to.

"But I will shew thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth"
(Dan. 10:21).

"Did ye never read in the scriptures?"
(Matt. 21:42)

"Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures"
(Matt. 22:29).

**"How then shall the scriptures be fulfilled"
(Matt. 26:54)?**

**"That the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled"
(Matt. 26:56).**

**"That the scriptures must be fulfilled"
(Mark 14:49).**

**"The scripture was fulfilled, which saith"
(Mark 15:28).**

**"This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears"
(Luke 4:21).**

**"He expounded unto them in all the scriptures"
(Luke 24:27).**

**"And while he opened to us the scriptures"
(Luke 24:32).**

**"That they might understand the scriptures"
(Luke 24:45).**

**"They believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said"
(Jn.2:22).**

**"Search the scriptures"
(Jn. 5:39).**

**"He that believeth on me as the scripture hath said"
(Jn. 7:38).**

**"Hath not the scripture said"
(Jn. 7:42).**

**"The scripture cannot be broken"
(Jn. 10:35).**

"That the scripture may be fulfilled"

(Jn. 13:18).

**"That the scripture might be fulfilled"
(Jn. 17:12; 19:24; 19:36).**

**"Another scripture saith"
(Jn. 19:37).**

**"They knew not the scriptures"
(Jn. 20:9).**

**"This scripture must needs have been fulfilled"
(Acts 1:16).**

**"The place of the scripture which he read"
(Acts 8:32).**

**"And began at the same scripture and preached "
(Acts 8:35).**

**"Reasoned with them out of the scriptures"
(Acts 17:2).**

**"They searched the scriptures daily"
(Acts 17:11).**

**"Mighty in the scriptures"
(Acts 18:24).**

**"Showing by the scriptures"
(Acts 18:28).**

**"Promised before by his prophets in the holy scriptures"
(Rom. 1:2).**

**"What saith the scripture?"
(Rom. 4:3)**

**"The scripture saith unto Pharaoh"
(Rom. 9: 17).**

**"The scripture saith"
(Rom. 10:11).**

**"Wot ye not what the scripture saith"
(Rom. 11:2).**

**Comfort of the scriptures"
(Rom. 15:4).**

**Scriptures of the prophets"
(Rom. 16:26).**

**"Christ died...according to the scriptures"
(1 Cor. 15:3).**

**"He rose again...according to the scriptures"
(1 Cor. 15:4).**

**"The scripture, foreseeing that God would justify"
(Gal. 3:8).**

**"The scripture hath concluded all under sin "
(Gal. 3:22).**

**"What saith the scripture"
(Gal. 4:30)?**

**"The scripture saith"
(1 Tim. 5:18).**

**"That from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures"
(2 Tim. 3:15).**

**"All scripture is given by inspiration of God"
(2 Tim. 3:16).**

**"The royal law according to the scripture"
(James 2:8).**

**"The scripture was fulfilled which saith"
(James 2:23).**

**"Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain?"
(James 4:5)**

**"It is contained in the scripture"
(1 Pet. 2:6).**

**"No prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation"
(2 Pet. 3:16).**

**"Wrest, as they do the other scriptures"
(2 Pet. 3:16).**

The above shows clearly that the word "Scripture" refers to what the people had access to, what was at hand, what was current, what they could then actually read and hear. Therefore, the biblical usage of the word refers primarily to copies rather than the original autographs. The fact that these copies and possibly even translations are called "Scripture" strongly implies their preservation, and that the very qualities of the inspired original have been brought over unto them.

These copies are holy (II Tim. 3:15; Rom. 1:2).

These copies are true (Dan. 10:21).

These copies are not broken (Jn. 10:35).

These copies are worthy of belief (Jn. 2:22).

The prophecies contained in these copies have been fulfilled to the very letter and await fulfillment (Luke 4:21).

These copies are the very voice of God.

This can be shown by a comparison of the following: "And the LORD said unto Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh, and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of the Hebrews...For this cause have I raised thee up, for to shew in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth"

(Ex. 9:13-16). "For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same

purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth"
(Rom. 9:17).

And again: "Now the LORD had said unto Abram...In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:1-3). "And the scripture...preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying in thee shall all nations be blessed" (Gal. 3:8).

And further: "Wherefore she [Sarah] said unto Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac"

(Gen. 21:10). "Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman"

(Gal. 4:30). These verses establish the fact that there is no difference between the Scriptures speaking and God speaking. And as the Scriptures refer to that which is current and available, it follows that our copies are as much the voice of God as the original is. Consider also that classic passage on inspiration: "And that from a child thou has known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:15-17). There are some remarkable things about this passage that are often overlooked. The words "is given by inspiration of God" are translated from the one Greek word, theopneustos (God-breathed). And "is profitable" is from Ophelimos. These two words are joined by the conjunction kai. Thus, all scripture (graphe) is said to be "God-breathed and profitable." The Jamieson, Fausett and Brown Commentary says of this phrase: "Graphe is never used in the Bible of any writings except the sacred Scriptures. The position of the two Greek adjectives (theopneustos kai ophelimos) forbids taking the one as a modifier and the other as a predicate. i.e. 'every God-breathed scripture is also profitable.' The adjectives are so closely connected that as one is a predicate the other must be too." Therefore, the translation "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof..." must be adhered to. But what is remarkable here, is that while the Scriptures were inspired in the past and their profitability has to do with the present, yet both facts are joined together in an identical grammatical

construction. Therefore, it is the work of past inspiration which makes the Scriptures profitable in the present. And conversely, the Scriptures cannot be profitable in the present if the manifold blessings of inspiration have not been preserved. Past inspiration is inseparably linked to present profitability.

Nine: The bearing of John 16:13 upon the translation and preservation process

"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13). God has promised to guide His people into all truth. "All" here does not mean "basically," "generally," "almost," "nearly," "relatively." It must surely mean ALL! "Truth" is defined in the next chapter of John as referring to the Bible. "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (Jn. 17:17). Through the priesthood of believers, God guided His people into all truth as to the canon of Scripture, e.g. which books were and were not inspired. He also guided them into all truth as to the text of Scripture (which were and were not the correct readings). And in order to make this relevant and practical He must also guide them into all truth concerning the translation of Scripture.

Three important things can be seen in John 16:13:

(1) The Guide--"the Spirit of Truth"

(2) The Journey--"will guide you"

(3) The Arrival--"into all truth"

The history of how our Bible came down to us after its' inspiration in the original autographs is to be found under these three points. These must be considered in the history of every Bible of every language.

The Guide

The same Holy Spirit of Truth who verbally inspired the Word in the autographs is committed also to its verbal preservation in the textual, transmissional, and translation process.

The Journey

The statement "will guide you" indicates that a process is in view. In the history of a given Bible where God was actively guiding there will be at least three key periods:

(1) The Manuscript Period

(2) The Early Printed Edition Period

(3) The Period of an Authoritative Standard Edition

In each of these periods God's Word will be current and available to His people. "But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart that thou mayest do it" (Deut. 30:14). In the first two periods God's Word may not have been available from the same written source. Relatively minor variations existed in the hand copied manuscripts of the Received Text tradition. The early printed Greek texts of Erasmus, Stephanus, and Beza had some variation, as did the early printed English versions. Yet, God's promise of guiding into all truth could still be counted on, and through the comparing of several sources He would put upon the heart of his people which of the variants was the true reading. For example, Wycliffe's Bible was based on the Latin Vulgate and was therefore flawed. Yet it could be clarified with the Celtic, Waldensian, and Old Latin translations which had a Received Text tradition. This same general principle could hold even today in those remote and primitive areas where only a preliminary translation is available. The earnest seeker of truth can know what a true reading is, for God has promised to "guide into all truth." There is, however, the disadvantage today that many missionary Bibles are based on the Alexandrian text.

The Arrival

If "will guide you" refers to the process or journey; then "into all truth" must refer to the arrival at a destination. This destination refers to that point when a given language receives an authoritative standardized Bible accepted over a considerable period of time by the great mass of believers. By any criterion the publication of the King James Version in that language which is most used in international communication is the single most important event in the transmissional history of Scripture. Certainly here we see the biblical principle of 1 Corinthians 13:10 (at least in a secondary application): "But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." History has shown this version in its widespread appeal to tower above the other great standard versions of Europe. Even to this day it is the measuring rod against which all others are judged. The King James Version is the grand culmination of God's promise to guide His people into all truth. Our conviction that this pinnacle was reached in 1611 is enforced by the fact that since then textual scholarship has been rationalistic, has denied the inspiration of Scripture, and has moved in precisely the opposite direction.

Ten: Lifegiving qualities in a translation

Inspiration in the originals will not only ensure preservation in certain key translations, but also animation. It is this quality which enables a translation to convict the sinner and bring manifold grace to the believer: Heb. 4:12; Acts 2:37; Isa. 55:11; Psa. 119:9,11,130; Rom.10:17. It is this which ensures that a translation will become an enduring standard among the humble people of God. The Old Latin, Syriac Peshitta, Ethiopic, Armenian, Georgian, Gothic, Slavonic, Luther, Tyndale, Geneva, and King James are examples of versions which in a sweetly natural way worked their way into the hearts of millions of God's people. High pressured promotion was not needed as in the case of Constantine's Bible, the Latin Vulgate, or the New International Version. Thus when a translation is being prepared in accordance with the will of God, the life giving breath of God will be felt in that translation. Modern versions claim to be the "results of the most recent scholarship," but there is no life in them and they fall flat after a few years. God's work of preservation does more than keep the Bible from error in its transmission and translation, it gives to the Bible an enduring freshness. Therefore, a translation can be as much the Sword of the Spirit as the original autographs. When God is active in the work of a translation (and is there are reason to think that He would not be?), the manifold blessings of the once delivered work of inspiration are transmitted to that translation. Our standard translation is not a valley of dry bones, it has breath! To test this fact, read John 14 in the New International Version and then in the Authorized Version.

Eleven: A standard translation should be accepted as the preserved word of God

It is only God who can make a translation or version a true Standard. Such a Standard will endure the test of time, receive universal acceptance, and result in widespread conversion. Such a Standard will spawn and encourage the publication of vast amounts of supplemental literature: commentaries, concordances, theological works, study helps of all kinds. And such a Standard will evoke the wrath of Satan. Since its inception, the King James Version has been called "the paper pope of the Protestants." That the Authorized Version is such a Standard and the only Standard in the English language for nearly 400 years argues convincingly that it is God's preserved word in that language. In response to God's promises of preservation and the abundant evidence of the same, the believer may be fully confident that the AV has no blemishes and is without proven error. There are places that may need explanation, and it is right for the teacher

within reasonable limits to amplify, elucidate, and expound the English as well as the underlying text. But this must not be done in such a way as to imply to the listener that errors exist. For example, "This word means" is acceptable; but, "A better rendering would be" is not. Certainly also, before being too concerned about the "force of the Greek or Hebrew," the reader should be certain that he has a grasp on "the force of the English"! I say that the KJV is without "proven error" because I am not aware of errors having been proven! Given all that can be said in behalf of the King James Bible, the burden of proof must rest with the one making the charge. If he feels he has better understanding and spiritual insight at a given point than did the fifty AV translators--not to mention the translators of the seven Bibles from Tyndale to the Bishops which prepared the groundwork of the AV--then he must set forth his evidence. That this is not so easy can be seen from the following incident involving one of the AV translators: Dr. Richard Kilby, the translator in the Old Testament group at Oxford, heard a young parson complain in an earnest sermon that a certain passage should read in a way he stated. After the sermon Dr. Kilby took the young man aside and told him that the group had discussed at length not only his proposed reading but thirteen others; only then had they decided on the phrasing as it appeared (Gustavis S. Paine, *The Men Behind the KJV* (Baker Book House, 1959), pgs. 137,138). Great and totally unnecessary harm has been done by "young parsons" (and old ones too!) who do this. Long ago it was said: Nothing can be more unseemly than for the unskillful to be always correcting with their literal translations and various readings, distressing simple souls rather than seeking that which tends to godly edifying. Anyone who approaches a so-called problem passage in an attitude of honour toward God's Word will find the solution equally honoring. He will find that God's promise of preservation has been vindicated.

Twelve: Will there be another standard Bible?

It is possible that in the providence of God another universally accepted standard translation could be produced. However, given the lateness of the hour, the lack of spiritual scholarship, and the fact that our language no longer has the depth and vitality it once had, this seems most unlikely. All indications point to the KJV as the Bible God would have His people use in these last days before the Second Coming of Christ.

A final word

What is it that make the King James Version unique? Does it indeed have a

sense of the supernatural that is lacking in the modern versions? That is does, is given remarkable confirmation in the following extended quotation from the research of a secular author: Can a committee produce a work of art? Many would say no, yet we have seen that this large group of the king's translators, almost threescore of them, together gave the world a work greater not only in scope but in excellence than any could have done singly. How did this come to be? How explain that sixty or more men, none a genius, none even as great a writer as Marlowe or Ben Jonson, together produced writings to be compared with (and confused with) the words of Shakespeare? ... if hard work alone were the secret of success, we would have the answer, for we know that the learned men worked hard. Many of them labored like monks in rooms so cold and damp, except close to the fires, that fingers and joints got stiff even though they swathed themselves in their thick gowns. They worked at odd hours, early in the mornings and late at night, as other duties permitted. They endured rigors that we would think beyond us. But hard work alone, singly or in groups, does not insure a great result. Were the learned men saints, under direct inspiration? As we have seen, these men who made the translation for King James were subject to like passions as we are. Even as they gave themselves to the great work, they yielded also to petty vanities and ambition and prejudice zeal for the great undertaking survived their own wrangles over doctrine and their differences of opinion in personal matters. The quarrels that are recorded were over such differences rather than the work in hand. There they must have learned to rise above themselves for the good of the whole, an act of grace deserving of reward. But does even this account for the result? To know that the Bible words were beyond the choosing of the best of them, we have only to look at their individual writing. And this writing of theirs in books or sermons or attempted poetry also answers the suggestion that their work on the Bible was great because they lived in a great age. It was an age of great writing, in which poets and dramatists flourished, yet these men as individuals lacked the skills of those who made the Mermaid Tavern and the Globe Theater live in literature. In vain do we look to the eloquent Lancelot Andrewes or even to Miles Smith for the dulcet temper and torrents of sound in concord that mark the religious prose of Sir Thomas Browne, or for the dooming ire, like a knell, of Dr. John Donne. At the same time their Bible surpassed others in an excellence not to be attributed wholly to the original writers in the ancient tongues, so that Lytton Strachey could say of the prophets, "Isaiah and Jeremiah had the extraordinary good fortune to be translated into English by a committee of Elizabethan bishops." Badly as some of the

committee could write on other occasions, not only was theirs the best of the English Bibles; there is, in no modern language a Bible worthy to be compared with it as literature. Though such verse as we have of their own lacks value for us, they were poets who fashioned prose without knowing how expert they were ... Keats, silent on a peak as he marveled at Chapman's Homer, might have marveled still more if he had much traveled through the realms of gold in the King James Bible. Chapman's Homer of those same years no longer has the power to dazzle us, while the Bible's power has shown increase. At Oxford and Cambridge the learned men breathed the air of noble language, amid brilliant buildings and gardens which could excite them to lofty efforts in a domain that seemed timeless. And they produced a timeless book. Are we to say that God walked with them in their gardens? Insofar as they believed in their own calling and election, they must have believed that they would have God's help in their task. We marvel that they could both submerge themselves and assert themselves, could meekly agree yet firmly declare, and hold to the words they preferred as just and fitting. At the same time they could write and they could listen, speak clearly, and hearken to the sounds they tested, as well as to the voice of what they deemed the divine Author. And that must have been the secret of their grace and their assurance: they agreed, not with the other men like themselves, but with God as their guide, and they followed not as thinking themselves righteous but as led by a righteousness beyond them. ... So they put down what they had to put down; their writing flows with a sense of must. Some of it they took wholly from former works, yet the must extends to what the 1611 scholars had the wisdom to adopt and, as it were, to inlay in the rest. ... They knew how to make the Bible scare the wits out of you and then calm you, all in English as superb as the Hebrew and the Greek. They could make their phrasing proceed as though caused by the First Cause, without shadow of turning; they could make the stately language of threat and wrath or the promises of tender mercy come word for word from God Himself. ... Soul and body, the work of the learned men still moves the world because they wrought inside each sentence a certain balance of letter and spirit. If other versions have their day and pass, it is because this balance is somehow marred. Miles Smith in his preface bears out this idea that the work carried them above themselves. "The Scripture ... is not an herb but a tree, or rather a whole paradise of trees of life, which bring forth fruit every month, and the fruit thereof is for meat, and the leaves for medicine ... And what marvel? The original thereof being from heaven, not from earth; the author being God, not man; the inditer, the Holy Spirit, not the wit of the Apostles or prophets. But

how shall men ... understand that which is kept close in an unknown tongue? As it is written, 'Except I know the power of the voice, I shall be to him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian to me'." "Translation it is," Smith continued, "that openeth the window, to let in the light; that breaketh the shell, that we may eat the kernel; that putteth aside the curtain, that we may look into the most holy place; that removeth the cover of the well, that we may come by the water." ... "After the endeavors of them that were before us, we take the best pains we can in the house of God ... Truly (good Christian reader) we never thought from the beginning, that we should need to make a new translation, nor yet to make a bad one a good one ... but to make a good one better, or out of many good ones, one principal one." ... "neither did we disdain," Smith declared, "to revise that which we had done, and to bring back to the anvil that which we had hammered: but having and using as great helps as were needful, and fearing no reproach for slowness, nor coveting praise for expedition, we have at the length, through the good hand of the Lord upon us, brought the work to the pass that you see." ... "And in what sort did these assemble? In the trust of their own knowledge, or of their sharpness of it, or deepness of judgment, as it were in an arm of flesh? At no hand. They trusted in him that hath the key of David, opening and no man shutting; they prayed to the Lord" (Gustavus Paine, *The Men Behind The KJV*, pgs. 167-76). God has preserved in the King James Version His original work of inspiration. The flower has not faded.

The sword is as sharp as in the day it was first whetted.