

The Henry Morris
SIGNATURE COLLECTION

THE BIBLE
HAS THE
ANSWER



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PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION

Solid and satisfying answers, whether to the problems of the world or to the needs of the individual life, seem hard to come by these days. It is easy enough to raise questions, but few people can offer more than opinions and speculations in response to these problems.

But the Bible does have the answer, either explicitly or implicitly, to every possible problem! “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” (Psalm 119:105). It is not that the Bible and biblical Christianity have been tried and found inadequate. Rather, they have been found offensive to man’s baser nature and therefore not tried. For that individual, or that nation, who genuinely desires the truth and is willing to obey the truth it is found, the Holy Scriptures will be found wonderfully “profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Timothy 3:16–17).

During the past several years the writer has had the privilege, even though not at the time engaged in what is normally considered a full-time Christian ministry, of speaking to hundreds of groups around the country — churches, colleges, men’s organizations, youth clubs, scientific meetings, service organizations, seminars, and others, in 35 states, as well in Canada and Mexico, representing many different denominational and non-denominational constituencies. These sessions normally dealt with what may be called “scientific biblical creationism” and practical Christian evidences, as well as biblical studies in general. Most of these meetings were followed by question and answer sessions with the audience.

It was noteworthy that, regardless of the type or location of the audience, the same general questions were raised again and again. These evidently are problems that concern many people.

Accordingly, the writer has attempted in this book to deal briefly but incisively with 100 of the more common and important of these questions.

The answers have already been helpful to many, as published originally in the *News Messenger*, the bi-weekly newspaper for Montgomery County, Virginia, where the writer lived from 1957 through 1970. The response of many of the wonderful people in this community to these articles has been most gratifying. It is, of course, now fervently hoped that their publication in this form will make them useful on a much wider scale.

The writer hopes that the book may be especially helpful to people who are seriously considering the claims of Christ and His gospel, but who still have real questions and reservations that need to be settled before they can yield their minds and hearts to Him. The way of salvation is therefore a recurring theme through many of the answers given in the book.

The reader who elects to read straight through the book may find there is a certain amount of repetition. This is because each “answer” has been made essentially self-contained. Thus, readers who are looking only for answers to specific questions, or readers who simply like to browse, will find the structure of the book appropriate for this use. At the same time, there is a basic and orderly development of biblical doctrine in the actual sequence of chapters and sections.

Naturally there are numerous Bible quotations and references throughout the book, since it is the Bible (and not the writer of this book) that has the answer! For the most part (and for good reason, as discussed in chapter 1, question 5) the standard King James translation has been used. However, these quotations have occasionally been modified when the original languages actually warrant such changes and when they are helpful in giving the essential thrust of the meaning. Similarly, on many occasions only a part of a verse is quoted rather than a full passage, but care has been taken that the use of a verse in such fashion is not inconsistent with its context. Wherever a biblical reference is given, the reader is by all means encouraged, if he will, to look it up in his Bible and read it in its whole setting.

The writer would be most happy to hear from those who find the book helpful in their own lives, especially from any who may be led to accept Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Savior through reading it. For such people, and for this purpose, the book is written.

Henry M. Morris
February 1971

PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION

In this second edition of *The Bible Has the Answer*, the writer is very pleased to be joined by Dr. Martin Clark as co-author. Dr. Clark has provided answers to many questions not discussed in the first edition, questions from his counseling ministries dealing especially with spiritual needs in human relationships. These new “answers,” 40 altogether, in addition to 10 new questions on Bible-science topics added by the writer, combined with the 100 questions and answers in the first edition, have enlarged the book by 50 percent. Specifically, Dr. Clark has written chapters 11, 13, 15, 17, 18, 20, and 24 (except question 6). All others were written by the undersigned.

We trust that this new, enlarged edition will prove even more useful than the first edition. The writer is thankful that the original book has been so widely used, having gone through seven printings in less than five years, and having brought many testimonies of blessing, testimonies of salvation and of spiritual growth and guidance.

The authors realize that, when dealing with 150 varied questions, many on difficult and controversial topics, there are bound to be varied areas of disagreement among different readers, so that not all of the answers will satisfy everyone. The controversial areas have not been avoided, since it is these very areas that are most troublesome and where answers are most needed. In each case, however, a sincere and diligent attempt has been made to get the real facts and the real teaching of Scripture concerning these issues while, at the same time, trying to treat other viewpoints respectfully and sympathetically. It is hoped that even if a particular reader finds it difficult to agree with certain “answers,” he will still find the book valuable in other areas, as

well as thought-provoking and stimulating even in the areas of disagreement. One should never hesitate to re-examine his own assumptions (which, being interpreted, may mean “biases”) in the searchlight of biblical revelation.

It is the prayer of the authors, however, that readers will find the book helpful and encouraging in their Christian faith and life, rather than controversial. The Bible *does* have the answer to every problem and every need. It has been the authors’ purpose to find and to share these answers.

Henry M. Morris
June 1976

PREFACE TO THIRD EDITION

The Bible Has the Answer was first published in 1971, and this first edition is still in print, having gone through 14 printings to date. A second edition was issued in 1976, enlarged by about 50 percent and with Martin Clark as co-author. This dual-authored edition has gone through 6 printings, and it now seems time for an updated third edition. The book has been, by God's grace, greatly used in the lives of many people these past 16 years, and we trust there are many yet to come. People still have the same needs and the same questions, but there are also many changes in the contexts and settings where they are expressed.

Consequently, we have tried to bring the book up-to-date in the current context, while still emphasizing that the Bible — God's Word — does not change, for it is "for ever . . . settled in heaven" (Psalm 119:89). One new chapter has been added at the end, on "Current Social Problems," seeking to address some of these pressing modern questions (the AIDS epidemic, etc.) in the light of Scripture.

All in all, 155 key questions — questions of the Christian life, doctrinal difficulties, science/Bible problems, questions related to the current scene and the prophetic future, and all sorts of questions for which people need biblical answers — are treated as carefully, logically, considerately and (above all) scripturally, as we know how, after much study, thought, and prayer.

Henry M. Morris
August 1987

Chapter 1

THE WORD OF GOD

1. Question: “How do we know the Bible is true?”

Answer: There have been hundreds of books written on the subject of the evidences of the divine inspiration of the Bible, and these evidences are many and varied. Most people today, unfortunately, have not read any of these books. In fact, few have even read the Bible itself! Thus, many people tend to go along with the popular delusion that the Bible is full of mistakes and is no longer relevant to our modern world.

Nevertheless, the Bible writers claimed repeatedly that they were transmitting the very Word of God, infallible and authoritative in the highest degree. This is an amazing thing for any writer to say, and if the 40 or so men who wrote the Scriptures were wrong in these claims, then they must have been lying, or insane, or both. But, on the other hand, if the greatest and most influential book of the ages, containing the most beautiful literature and the most perfect moral code ever devised, was written by deceiving fanatics, then it is hopeless to look elsewhere for meaning and purpose in this world!

If one will seriously investigate these biblical evidences, he will find that their claims of divine inspiration (stated over 3,000 times, in various ways) were amply justified. The remarkable evidence of fulfilled prophecy is just one case in point. Hundreds of Bible prophecies have been fulfilled, specifically and meticulously, often long after the prophetic writer passed away.

For example, Daniel the prophet predicted in about 538 B.C.¹ (Daniel 9:24–27) that Christ would come as Israel’s promised

1. Even those “liberal” scholars who reject the traditional authorship of the Book of Daniel accept its composition at no later than about 300 B.C.

Savior and Prince 483 years after the Persian emperor would give the Jews authority to rebuild Jerusalem,² which was then in ruins. This was clearly and definitely fulfilled, hundreds of years later.

Another group of prophecies (Ezekiel 37:22; Isaiah 11:11; Luke 21:24, and many others) predict the restoration of the Jews to the land of Israel as a true nation in the latter days. For almost 1,500 years this seemed utterly impossible, and yet we have now seen it fulfilled in our own generation!

There are extensive prophecies dealing with individual nations and cities and with the course of history in general, all of which have been literally fulfilled. More than 300 prophecies were fulfilled by Christ Himself at His first coming. Other prophecies deal with the spread of Christianity, as well as various false religions, and many other subjects.

There is no other book, ancient or modern, like this. The vague, and usually erroneous, prophecies of people like Jeane Dixon, Nostradamus, Edgar Cayce, and others like them are not in the same category at all, and neither are other religious books such as the Koran, the Confucian analects, and similar religious writings. Only the Bible manifests this remarkable prophetic evidence, and it does so on such a tremendous scale as to render completely absurd any explanation other than divine revelation.

The historical accuracy of the Scriptures is likewise in a class by itself, far superior to the written records of Egypt, Assyria, and other early nations. Archeological confirmations of the biblical record have been almost innumerable in the last century. Dr. Nelson Glueck, probably the greatest modern authority on Israeli archeology, has said: "No archeological discovery has ever controverted a biblical reference. Scores of archeological findings have been made which confirm in clear outline or in exact detail historical statements in the Bible. And, by the same token, proper evaluation of biblical descriptions has often led to amazing discoveries."³

2. See chapter 3, question 2.

3. Nelson Glueck, *Rivers in the Desert* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, 1959), p. 31.

Another striking evidence of divine inspiration is found in the fact that many of the principles of modern science were recorded as facts of nature in the Bible long before scientists confirmed them experimentally. A sampling of these would include the roundness of the earth (Isaiah 40:22), the almost infinite extent of the sidereal universe (Isaiah 55:9), the law of conservation of mass and energy (2 Peter 3:7), the hydrologic cycle (Ecclesiastes 1:7), the vast number of stars (Jeremiah 33:22) the equivalence of matter and energy (Hebrews 1:3), the law of increasing entropy (Psalm 102:25–27), the paramount importance of blood in life processes (Leviticus 17:11), the atmospheric circulation (Ecclesiastes 1:6), the gravitational field (Job 26:7), and many others. These are not stated in the technical jargon of modern science, of course, but in terms of the basic world of man's everyday experience; nevertheless, they are completely in accord with the most modern scientific facts.

It is significant also that no real mistake has ever been demonstrated in the Bible, in science,⁴ in history, or in any other subject. Many have been claimed, of course, but conservative Bible scholars have always been able to work out reasonable solutions to all such problems.

The remarkable structure of the Bible should also be stressed. Although it is a collection of 66 books, written by 40 or more different men over a period of 2,000 years, it is clearly one Book, with perfect unity and consistency throughout. The individual writers, at the time of writing, had no idea that their message was eventually to be incorporated into such a Book, but each nevertheless fits perfectly into place and serves its own unique purpose as a component of the whole. Anyone who diligently studies the Bible will continually find remarkable structural and mathematical patterns woven throughout its fabric, with an intricacy and symmetry incapable of explanation by chance or collusion. The one consistent theme of the Bible, developing in grandeur from Genesis to Revelation, is God's great work in the creation and redemption of all things, through His only Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

4. Certain alleged scientific errors in the Bible, especially associated with the early chapters of Genesis, are discussed in chapters 7 and 8.

The Bible is unique also in terms of its effect on individual men and on the history of nations. It is the all-time best seller, appealing both to hearts and minds, beloved by at least some in every race or nation or tribe to which it has gone, rich or poor, scholar or simple, king or commoner, men of literally every background and walk of life. No other book has ever held such universal appeal nor produced such lasting effects.

Those nations that have honored the Scriptures in their national life, God has honored and blessed. This has been true in particular of the British Empire and the United States, from which have gone out most of the world's stock of Bibles and most missionaries and preachers of the Word in modern times. Tragically, England's rapid decline in recent years has followed her descent into the morass of apostasy and unbelief in the past several decades, and our nation is now quickly traversing the same route.

One final evidence⁵ that the Bible is true is found in the testimony of those who have believed it. Multitudes of people, past and present, have found from personal experience that its promises are true, its counsel is sound, its commands and restrictions are wise, and its wonderful message of salvation meets every need for both time and eternity.

2. Question: "In what sense and to what extent is the Bible the inspired Word of God?"

Answer: The men who wrote the Bible claimed that their writings were supernaturally inspired by God. The Bible, especially the Old Testament, abounds with statements such as "Thus saith the Lord," "The Word of the Lord came unto me, saying," and similar assertions.

In the prophetic books (Isaiah, Jeremiah, et al.), statements of this sort occur more than 1,300 times! In the historical books (Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, etc.), there are over 400 such statements. In the Mosaic writings (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus,

5. For a more thorough treatment of the many evidences for the truth of Christianity and the plenary inspiration of the Bible, see the author's textbook on Christian evidences, *Many Infallible Proofs* (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 1974), 381 p.

Numbers, Deuteronomy), there are almost 700. Almost half of the entire Book of Exodus consists of statements and instructions given as direct quotations from the voice of God Himself! Altogether there are more than 2,600 such direct claims of inspiration found in the Old Testament.

The Jewish people at the time of Christ were in full agreement on the divine inspiration of the Old Testament Scriptures, and this was basic in all their thinking. They accepted exactly the same books that we have now in the Old Testament, and no others, as inspired and authoritative.

The writers of the New Testament make this fact very clear, quoting directly from the Old Testament more than 320 times and making hundreds of additional allusions to it. There are more than 60 quotations from the Book of Genesis alone. Always these quotations are assumed to be of absolute divine authority, settling every question with which they deal.

It is of particular importance that the Lord Jesus Christ likewise shared this high evaluation of the Scriptures. He said, in fact, that “the scripture cannot be broken” (John 10:35). He quoted from many parts of the Bible, including especially many that have been ridiculed by modern skeptics. Thus, He accepted as true the account of man’s creation, quoting from Genesis 1 and Genesis 2, in Matthew 19:4. He referred to the great Flood, accepting it as worldwide (Matthew 24:37–39). He cited the destruction of Sodom (Luke 17:26–32) and the miracles of Elijah (Luke 4:25–27).

He believed in the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch (John 5:46–47; Luke 20:37–38) and also that Isaiah wrote both parts of the Book of Isaiah (Matthew 4:14–16; 12:17), seemingly unimpressed by the fact that 20th century critics would later deny these claims. He accepted the writings of Daniel as true prophecies (Matthew 24:15).

With respect to the nature of inspiration, we are told that “God . . . in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets” (Hebrews 1:1). Sometimes (as when He gave the Ten Commandments), God used the method of direct dictation to His prophet. Often He spoke through visions or dreams. More commonly, He used the prophet’s own

background, training, experience, and research as the vehicle through which to have His Word recorded. It is not the method, but the result, of inspiration which is important. Though God may have used various methods and may often have used the particular scribe's own style and abilities. He nevertheless so guided the whole process that the final result was perfectly and infallibly the Word of God. As Peter says, "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter 1:21).

It is certain, furthermore, that Christ and the Apostles believed that inspiration extended to the very words of Scripture. Paul, for example, in Galatians 3:16, proves his argument merely by showing that the passage he is quoting has a certain word in the singular rather than in the plural ("seed" instead of "seeds"). Similarly, the Lord Jesus in Matthew 22:32 draws a tremendous conclusion about the Resurrection from a single word in an Old Testament passage ("as" instead of "was"). Scores of similar examples could be cited. The Lord Jesus in fact said, "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot [the smallest Hebrew letter] or one tittle [the tail that distinguishes one Hebrew letter from another] shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (Matthew. 5:18). Those modern-day preachers and professors of religion who seem to take delight in finding supposed mistakes in the Bible are thus, in effect, calling God a liar!

As far as the New Testament Scriptures are concerned, Christ promised that His Apostles would be guided by the Holy Spirit when the time came for them to write their respective books (John 14:26, 16:13-14). They also make frequent claims of their own divine guidance. Paul, for example, said, "I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Galatians 1:11-12).

The final portion of God's Word to be transcribed was to be the wonderful Book of the Revelation, sent by Christ Himself (Revelation 1:1) through the last of the Apostles, John. When this was completed, the Lord said, "I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things [as do the modern cultists and false

prophets who profess to receive new revelations and words from God], God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book” (Revelation 22:18).

Even more ominously, He then said: “If any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy [as do the liberal and modernistic preachers and seminary teachers of the present day, not to mention the multitudes of intellectual unbelievers everywhere], God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book” (Revelation 22:19). These are solemn words and ought certainly to be heeded.

The true doctrine of biblical inspiration is summarized in the classic passage of the Apostle Paul, 2 Timothy 3:16: “All scripture is given by inspiration of god.” That is, not just a part, but all, of Scripture is inspired. Similarly, not just the thoughts, but the “Scriptures” — that is, the “writings,” the actual words written down, are inspired. Finally, the Scriptures were not derived from men who were inspired, but rather were “given by inspiration of god” (that is, literally, “God-breathed”). As such, the Bible, the Holy Scriptures, is both the necessary and sufficient guide for all faith and life.

3. Questions: “Is the Bible authoritative when it deals with facts of history and science, or only in matters of religion?”

Answer: A widely held opinion today suggests that the Bible is indeed a great book of faith and religious insights, but that it is encased within a framework of fallible human writings, which often contains errors. Thus many say that the Bible may have valid meaning and authority when it serves as a vehicle of “existential encounter” with God, but its historical narratives and descriptions of natural phenomena are not to be taken very seriously.

This temporizing approach to the Bible has been advocated by liberal and “neo-orthodox” theologians and preachers for the past two generations or more and now largely dominates the Sunday school literature, as well as the seminaries, of most of the large denominations. Likewise, public school curricula and textbooks,

though usually careful to avoid open advocacy of atheism, completely reject the authority of the Bible in matters of historical fact, while “damning it with faint praise” as a book of religion — which, ergo, has no place in a public school!

But, as Jesus said, “If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?” (John 3:12). That is, if we cannot rely on God’s Word when it records matters of science and history (which, presumably, we can verify through our own observations and experience), then how can we possibly trust it when it deals with matters of salvation, heaven, the spiritual world, and eternal life, which are entirely beyond the reach of scientific observation and experimentation?

This is the underlying reason why most young people have rejected not only the scientific authority of the Bible but also its religious and moral authority, and along with that the authority of the Church, the school, the home, and everything. Each person has become, in effect, his own god, with his own self-determined standards of truth and morality.

Nevertheless, each person is still keenly aware of his own personal inadequacy and his desperate need for some frame of reference and authority. So he desperately casts about for some bedrock of infallibility to which he can give his life. He may try to find this in “science” or “communism” or “humanism” or whatever. But he soon finds that scientists are biased, fallible, selfish, sinful human beings just like everyone else, and so are Communists and Humanists. Neither the scientific method nor Marxist philosophy has been given to man by divine revelation, and all man-made systems are bound to be inadequate and self-contradictory.

As a matter of fact, everything in this world (physical systems, biological organisms, sociological units, and even individual souls) is in what the Bible calls “the bondage of corruption” (Romans 8:21). This principle has been formalized scientifically as the law of increasing entropy (that is, “in-turning,” or self-destructing) but, more fundamentally, is the historical result of the Curse placed on man’s entire dominion because of his sin. The world and its individual souls are in desperate need of redemption, and

none of man's own philosophical or scientific inventions can ever accomplish it.

The only real solution is a return to that faith in the absolute integrity of the Word of God which characterized the Apostles and, indeed, most of our American forefathers. "Science" has never disproved any statement of the Bible — rather, most scientists have simply repudiated it because of their own unwillingness to submit to God's authority as Creator and coming Judge.

It should be obvious that the Bible cannot be divided up into two sets of verses — those which are considered basic to faith and those which are expendable. There are certainly no objective criteria available for any selective discrimination of this sort. The Bible itself makes no such distinctions — it presents itself as a unified whole, every portion of it completely trustworthy and infallibly inspired, absolutely authoritative in faith and practice.

As far as man's judgment is concerned, his opinions are notoriously subjective and changeable. One man, for example, may decide that the virgin birth of Christ is a biological impossibility and irrelevant to the spiritual value of the example and teachings of Christ. Another may decide (quite properly) that miracles are surely possible with God, and that the virgin birth is an inescapable corollary of both the deity and the sinless humanity of Jesus Christ. What one judges to be of no relevance religiously, another believes to be absolutely essential to his faith.

Similarly, someone may say that the first chapter of Genesis does not try to tell us about the actual events of creation, but only that God is Creator. But another may reply that the very first verse of Genesis gives us that information, and the rest of the chapter becomes a mere appendage of irrelevant and misleading information if such is the case. Furthermore, he says, the later biblical writers, and even Jesus Christ Himself, accepted Genesis as true and factual history, and, if they were wrong about this foundational revelation, how can we trust them about anything else?

If the Word of God is thus to be reduced to a miscellaneous aggregation of existential insights and relativistic irrelevancies, we should be honest enough to discard it altogether! How much better, however, to return in repentant faith to the God of our

fathers, believing in the absolute integrity and perspicuity of His written Word. Not one statement has ever been disproved by any real facts of science or history, and God will surely honor and bless the faith and witness of anyone who fully believes and obeys His Word.

4. Question: “How can a person know how to interpret the Bible?”

Answer: *The proper way to interpret the Bible is not to interpret it at all!* It was written to be understood and obeyed and should therefore be read like any other book of information and instruction. If God is truly the Author of the Bible, as Christians have always believed, then it is certainly reasonable to assume that He could say what He means!

The Bible was written as God’s revelation (not as a mystery book, in some secret code), to all men, of all times and places. It is therefore meant to be understood by all people. He used ordinary men from many backgrounds (soldiers, shepherds, fishermen, doctors, tax collectors — as well as kings and priests) to write different books of the Bible. Just so, it is significant that people of all backgrounds — rich and poor, educated and uneducated, old and young, of every race and nationality — have read and loved, believed, and understood the Bible — more so than for any other book ever written.

This does not mean, of course, that the Bible does not use figures of speech and poetic language on occasions. There are parables and allegories, visions and symbols, all through the Bible. This is likewise true of other books, but this does not keep us from understanding these books — assuming they were intended to be understood. Authors use such figures as devices of emphasis and illustration, not of confusion.

Whenever a biblical writer uses figurative or poetic language, he makes this evident in the context, and the truth intended to be conveyed by the figure is likewise evident in the context. When symbols are used, they also are defined and explained, either in the immediate context or in related passages in other parts of the Bible. The best rule to follow is to take

the Bible literally unless the context clearly requires a symbolic meaning; if the latter is true, then the meaning is to be found in the Scriptures themselves — not from modern science, or from one's own imagination, or from specially gifted "interpreters," or from any other source.

The above discussion is not intended to suggest that a thorough understanding of the Bible can be obtained by a quick and superficial scanning of its pages. As the unique and infallible Word of God, it is inexhaustible — an endless mine of rich truth and perfect counsel which no one can ever completely explore. Although the basic message of any passage can be comprehended by anyone who will study and believe it, that same passage will continue to yield new treasures of blessing and guidance over and over again.

It is true, of course, that many people do seem to find the Bible hard to understand. There are three prerequisites to a good understanding of the Bible: (1) faith, (2) obedience, and (3) study.

One must first of all approach the Bible as the very Word of God, if he would really understand it. It is not his prerogative to pass judgment on its validity and veracity. The Bible is to judge him, not he the Bible! "Without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Hebrews 11:6). There is an abundance of evidence for the divine inspiration of the Bible, more than enough to satisfy anyone of open heart and willing mind, if he is interested enough to investigate it. But before he can really understand and receive the message of the Bible, he must be at least willing to believe it. Otherwise, though he read it through a thousand times, it will remain a closed book to him. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Corinthians 2:14).

Secondly, one must obey those parts of the Bible which he does understand, before he can expect to gain further understanding. "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves" (James 1:22). The first and most important command to obey, of course, is to turn in repentance and faith

to the Lord Jesus Christ, receiving Him as one's Savior and Lord. "Search the scriptures," He said, "for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life" (John 5:39–40).

Finally, one must begin to study the whole Bible, and continue daily, year after year, all his life. "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15). The more he studies (and, of course, believes and obeys) the more he will understand, and the more precious and certain the Bible will continue to grow. "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, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Timothy 3:16–17). The Bible is a marvelous unity in all its diversity, perfectly divine in all its common humanity. Every part throws light on every other part, so that all must be understood in some measure if any would be understood in full measure. Thus there is no end to study for complete understanding, yet every moment of sincere Bible study will bring some understanding, and is time profitably invested, with eternal dividends.

5. Question: "With many modern translations of the Bible now available, should we abandon the King James Version?"

Answer: One indication that the Bible is still very much alive, even in these days when so many strident voices are denying its authority in the modern world, is the continuing demand for new translations, not only in modern English but also in other languages. Parts or all of the Bible are now available in more than 1,500 different languages (twice as many as in 1920), and this number is increasing steadily. The Wycliffe Bible Translators, for example, now have a staff of missionary linguists working in almost 800 different tribes, reducing their previously unwritten languages to written form in order to be able to give them the Bible in their own languages.

As far as the English language is concerned, at least 25 important translations and paraphrases received wide usage in the 20th century, all in so-called "modern" English, instead of the supposedly archaic 16th-century English of the King James Authorized Version. The need for so many different modern-speech versions, however, is not at all evident (except possibly the need for new profits for the promoters!). Yet still more translations in English are being produced nearly every year.

A modern-speech version does have certain advantages, of course. The Scriptures as originally given were in the common language of the people and were certainly intended by God to be understood and used by ordinary people, not just by priests and scholars. It is equally important today that all men should have access to the Bible in a language that is meaningful to them. There is no doubt that one or another of the modern translations, has been of help to many a person who, for some reason, was not reached by the King James Version.

Nevertheless, there is good reason for continuing to regard the latter as our basic English version, with the others used whenever appropriate for supplementary reading and study. In the first place, no modern translation has yet met the test of universal acceptability, as has the King James for more than 350 years. On the contrary, the very number of new translations is confusing, each with its own advocates and its own peculiar claims and character.

The once-honored, and very valuable, practice of Scripture memorization is now almost a forgotten discipline, and one reason for this must be the confusion over which version to memorize. After all, why should one commit to memory a particular verse of Scripture if even the authorities do not agree on what the verse says?

Furthermore, many of the translators of these modern versions have been men who were not themselves committed to a faith in the full verbal inspiration of the Bible. No matter how thorough their knowledge of the original languages and of the biblical manuscripts may have been, their low view of scriptural infallibility and perspicuity is bound to be reflected in a certain looseness and subjectivity of translation, which will inevitably

corrupt the divinely intended revelation. The translators of the King James Version, on the other hand, were not only scholars of equal caliber to any in the modern era, but also men who regarded the Scriptures as profoundly sacred, with every word placed in the original text exactly as intended by God. This reverence for the text is obvious in the high degree of faithfulness to the original Greek and Hebrew which is characteristic of the King James. It is also reflected in the use of italics in the translation wherever words were added in the English which were not specifically present in the Greek or Hebrew, a practice regrettably not followed in modern versions.

In addition, the English of the King James is not nearly so archaic or difficult to follow as its critics allege. In fact, it is in general written in a much simpler vocabulary, with a higher percentage of one- and two-syllable words, than almost any of the modern translations. Most of the truly archaic expressions were modernized in a late 18th-century revision, so that the language as found in the King James actually is quite characteristic of the vocabulary of the late colonial period, while still retaining the beauty and power of expression of the English of the Elizabethan era.

The King James Version is almost universally acknowledged as the greatest of all masterpieces of English literature. To a considerable extent it has formed the English language as we know it, because of its wide reading and usage by almost all English-speaking people for more than a dozen generations. Its beauty and majesty are without parallel in our literary heritage, and its phrases abound even in our every-day speech and writing today.

Even its so-called archaic words and forms are instructive. The "th" ending on certain verbs, the pronouns "thee" and "thou," and similar usages all were employed for valid reasons in the Shakespearean English of the day, permitting much finer distinctions as to person, tense, and other grammatical niceties than does the decadent English of our modern speech.

Finally, the King James New Testament, alone among all the English translations, is based on a Greek text known as the Textus Receptus, which is the Greek New Testament used during the

spiritual awakenings of the Reformation period. Before the invention of printing, the Scriptures were transmitted by hand copying and circulation. The generally acknowledged and accepted manuscripts were widely used and so wore out fairly quickly and had to be continuously re-copied on fresh papers or parchments. Great numbers were always current, however, and there was thus a continual self-checking process going on, securing the text against any significant accumulation of copyists' errors. It was from this source that the Greek New Testament known as the *Textus Receptus* ("Received Text") was compiled. The great majority of the surviving manuscripts agree with this so-called "Byzantine" text, as preserved through the early centuries of Christianity by the Greek-speaking churches themselves.

When a manuscript was prepared which, either through carelessness or deliberate intent, contained significant errors or alterations, it naturally would tend to be discarded when its character was discovered. Unless it was deliberately destroyed, however, it would tend to survive longer than others, for the very reason that it was not being used. This is probably the case with the so-called Sinaitic and Vatican manuscripts, as well as certain others which were discovered in the 19th century and which were older than any of the still-preserved manuscripts of the Received Text.

These manuscripts contain an amazing number of obvious and careless mistakes and probably even some deliberate alterations. Nevertheless, because of their antiquity, they were accepted by the scholars Westcott, Hort, Nestle, and others as the basis for their Greek New Testaments, which were published in the 19th century and which have in turn served as the basis for most of the subsequent modern-English translations.

Thus, there is good reason to believe that the King James Version is still the most accurate and reliable translation we have. In view of the other considerations noted above, there is certainly as yet no good reason to replace it with some ephemeral modern translation.