

HERE I STAND

By Richard Jordan

Most of you know that in recent days several charges have been leveled at me and our Pastoral Training Class in regard to the King James Bible and prayer. My views on both issues have been so distorted as not to be recognizable and thus I want to take this opportunity to state for you as clearly as I can my own convictions on these matters.

THE BIBLE VERSION ISSUE

The current charges concerning a so-called "KJV inerrancy theory" are in reality little more than a ruse designed to draw attention away from the fact that these brethren do not believe the Bible actually exists today in anything more than what they term a "general sense." In other words, they do not believe the words of Scripture are now available; rather its message is all that now exists. Because I, and scores of others, agree with the Lord Jesus Christ that his "words shall not pass away" (Luke 21:33), I have been denounced as a rabble rouser, a liar and a heretic teaching some "far out doctrine" with "not one verse" to support my claims. Serious matters indeed!

For many years, I have believed that the King James Bible is the Word of God for English-speaking people. I came to Chicago with the clear understanding that I firmly held this conviction. I also understood that the ministry that brought me here was not designed to champion this cause. Since "the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery" has long been the one great passion of my heart, I was willing to place my focus there and let others fight the Bible version battle. I did not and have not changed my conviction, however, about the KJV. I believed then and continue to believe now that the KJV is the Word of God for English-speaking people. On that point, I have never wavered.

Over the past eight-plus years, I have learned much that has broadened both my appreciation for the KJV and my ability to more properly and accurately defend it. Let me state as clearly as I can that I do not believe that the King James translators were inspired nor do I believe that the KJV is somehow not really a translation but a "word-for-word preservation of the original manuscripts." These are simply things invented by the critics: straw dummies, if you will.

The King James Version is just that – the King James Version. Look up the word "version" in a dictionary and you will find it means "a translation." No one denies or questions this. We recognize that to say the KJV is the word of God for English-speaking people *is to say* that it is God's word *translated* into English: Nothing more and nothing less.

Let there be no mistake: I believe the KJV of the Bible is an accurate, reliable, authoritative translation of the providentially preserved Word of God. And this is where all the difficulties begin and end.

You see, the fundamental problem centers in the question of whether the Bible is indeed findable and knowable today in a particular and verbal sense; whether God not only originally write down particular words of His own choosing, but did He also preserve those very words through history to this day? Ask our critics *exactly where* the words God originally wrote down are to be found and they will deny *even the possibility* of finding those words.

My great sin has *not been* to believe that the words of God can only be "found in only one English translation." I have never believed that. No, my great sin has been to believe that the Word of God consists of the "*words*" referred to in passages like Luke 21:33; Matt. 5:18; Isa. 30:8; 29:18, etc., and that God has provided a process whereby those "*words*" can actually be located. Notice,

for example, that the last verse just listed indicates those "words" will be preserved into and locatable by those in the kingdom age! Should they be any less available to us who live before that glorious day?

The bottom line is simply that I believe that the Word of God is knowable and findable in a particular sense and that that sense extends to the very words of the text. Friend, if "words" are not the issue, how then can the doctrine of the verbal (i.e., word-for-word) inspiration of the originals be anything but meaningless?

And don't be diverted by the question of variations in manuscripts. It is the path of faith to accept the Scriptures teaching as true even if we cannot confirm it all with our own finite experiences and senses at the moment. To deny the divine viewpoint because of limited human viewpoint is disastrous!

Furthermore: If it is the Scripture *itself* that is the inspired Word of God, wouldn't an accurate translation also be legitimately called the inspired Word of God? Isn't this the very basis for at least one of our critics often writing, "God's inspired Word says" and then referring to or quoting the NIV?

As to the reliability of KJV as a translation, I have often used the words of another: "We have in our hands, in the *Authorized Version*, a Bible so remarkably free from error that we can say of even this *translation*, 'This is the Bible.'"

I believe the KJV should *not* be changed or altered simply on the basis of private viewpoint – yours and mine not excepted. It should be honored for what it is, studied diligently by using all the study tools available (concordances, dictionaries, reference works, etc.) and taught with confidence so that the authority of God's Word does God's work.

Those who attend Bible conferences listen to tapes and read the writings of prominent "grace preachers" can judge for themselves if there is an effort to discredit the KJV. For myself, I can only say that it troubles me to hear or read someone who themselves *cannot* translate, telling us how a verse should better be translated or pointing out supposed "mistakes" and "patent errors" in KJV. Too often they are just plain *wrong* because they assumed someone else they have read after is right or that their own research was adequate.

Remember: It is a serious matter to charge the Bible – in *any* language – with having a mistake in it. Before you follow someone who tells you your Bible has mistakes in it, you better find out if he has one that doesn't – and *where it is!*

My support for KJV does not come from some supposed extremist view, but rather from an appreciation for the text from which it is translated and a recognition that as a *translation* it is the fruit of a long and arduous process in the Protestant Church to produce an authoritative English translation – one that is clearly the result of the historic application of the process of providential preservation as taught in Scripture. Thus I say again, in the words of another: "We have in our hands, in the *Authorized Version*, a Bible so remarkably free from error that we can say of even this *translation*, 'This is the Bible'".

THE QUESTION OF PAULINE PRAYER

Prayer is an inter-dispensational principle in that all men in all ages are exhorted and privileged to pray. It is, however, also a dispensational issue, in that they do not all pray for the same reasons nor have cause to expect the same results. All men in all dispensations pray *but* they do so in accordance with the instructions given *to them* for their particular dispensation.

Once again, speaking for myself, I do *not* believe that in the present dispensation the believer is to "pray only for spiritual things." In point of fact, I am not even sure what that is supposed to mean.

To the contrary: Paul's epistles clearly show that in the age of grace God Himself is vitally interested in every detail of our lives and invites us to bring them all to Him and leave them there, knowing that He will do His best of us – because He has already done His best for us: in Christ

Jesus! Thus even our problems become productive and actually "*work for us*," as 2 Cor. 4:16-18 says.

In line with the nature of what God is doing today (i.e., forming a spiritual body of believers called the Body of Christ), Pauline Prayer naturally *focuses* on spiritual issues – but it *never* "overlooks" physical circumstances, situations and/or needs. Rather it provides the empowerment for the believer to properly respond to these "felt needs" and handle every detail of life for the glory of God. Romans 8:26-27 is clear that the indwelling Holy Spirit motivates and energizes by His power an effective prayer ministry that penetrates the deepest levels of human need.

There are definite "results" – spiritual, emotional *and* physical, which come as a response to this wonderful divine operating asset of "praying in the Spirit." Thus the writer feels that anyone who tells you that you cannot pray for everything that is on your heart is short-changing you just as surely as the one who tells you that God will give you anything you pray for is holding out false hopes and expectation to you.

The following from the pen of Sir Robert Anderson expresses our view of prayer so fully we simply reproduce it here with our hearty "Amen" attached:

"It is a solemn thing to make unconditioned demands upon God. To the record of such prayers may often be added the solemn words: 'He gave them their request, but sent leanness unto their soul.' Hezekiah prayed in this way. He claimed a prolongation of his life and God granted his petition; and the added years gave him his son Manasseh, and the consequences of Manasseh's sin (that God 'would not pardon') still rest as a blight and a curse upon that nation!"

Such a prayer, I make bold to say, is unfitting to the Christian. How different the teaching of the Divine Spirit! It may be the life of husband or wife, or parent or child that is in the balance: what then shall be the believer's attitude? To claim it, as Hezekiah did, and chance the awful risks which the answer may entail? Or, 'by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving,' to leave the request with God; and having thus left it all with Him, to trust His love and wisdom with the issue? It was thus the apostle prayed when he sought relief from that mysterious hindrance to his ministry; and the denial of his request, instead of bringing bitterness of soul, only served to teach him more of 'the power of Christ.'

"The prayer of the Pentecostal ages was like drawing cheques to be paid in coin over the counter. The prayer of the Christian dispensation – that of the life of faith-is to make known our requests to God and to be at peace." (*The Silence of God*, pp. 207-208)

Concerning the healing of the sick: If God does heal a sick one, does He do so because we or they pray – or does He do so because it is *His* will to do so in the outworking of *His* purposes? It seems to me that in light of Phil. 4:6-7, the fundamental purpose of Pauline Prayer is not simply to make life easier for the believer but rather to set us at peace with *His* will, whatever it may be. This is the "something *far better*" with which our heavenly Father has replaced the healing program of former days.