

Three Editorial Errors in Our King James Version Bibles

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As informed by Ellen G. White wielding the pen of Inspiration, the Spirit of Prophecy provides three examples in which errors were introduced by translators and copyists in connection with the publication of the King James Version. Before we cite them, however, let us quote the same author to see how she viewed the matter in general.

Some look to us gravely and say, “Don’t you think there might have been some mistake in the copyist or in the translators?” This is all probable, and the mind that is so narrow that it will hesitate and stumble over this possibility or probability would be just as ready to stumble over the mysteries of the Inspired Word, because their feeble minds cannot see through the purposes of God. Yes, they would just as easily stumble over plain facts that the common mind will accept, and discern the Divine, and to which God’s utterance is plain and beautiful, full of marrow and fatness. All the mistakes will not cause trouble to one soul, or cause any feet to stumble, that would not manufacture difficulties from the plainest revealed truth.—Ms 16, 10/1/1888, in 1SM 16.

Example #1, The insertion of an extra word in Daniel 8:12.

I saw in relation to the “daily” (Dan. 8:12) that the word “sacrifice” was supplied by man’s wisdom and does not belong to the text, and that the Lord gave the correct view of it to those who gave the Judgment hour cry. When union existed, before 1844, nearly all were united on the correct view of the “daily”; but in the confusion since 1844, other views have been embraced, and darkness and confusion have followed. Time has not been a test since 1844, and it will never again be a test.—EW 74, 75.

Yet this error persisted even with the publication of the New King James Version, a full 65 years subsequent to the death of Ellen White.

Example #2, The misplaced comma in Luke 23:43.

[NOT] Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today thou shalt be with Me in Paradise.

[BUT] Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee today, Shalt thou [var. of Thou shalt] be with Me in Paradise.

Ellen White explains:

Jesus did not promise the penitent thief that he should go with Him, upon the day of their crucifixion, to Paradise; for He Himself did not ascend to His Father until three days afterward. See John 20:17. But He declared unto him, “I say unto thee *today*”—meaning to impress the fact upon his mind, that at *that time*, while enduring ignominy and persecution, He had the power to save sinners. . . . it was His divine right to promise *that day* to the repentant, believing malefactor, “Thou shalt be with Me in Paradise.”—3SP 157, 158, with an editorial footnote on p. 157 reading: “By placing the comma after the word *today*, instead of after the

word *thee*, as in the common versions, the true meaning of the text is more apparent.”¹

A good example of a “common version” in modern times *correctly* rendering this text is George M. Lamsa, *The New Testament According to the Eastern Text* (Philadelphia: A. J. Holman Company, 1940). It reads: “Truly I say to you today, You will be with Me in Paradise.”

Example #3, The mistranslation of John 2:4.

[NOT] Woman, what have I to do with thee?

[BUT] What hast thou to do with Me?

Once again, Ellen White explains: “This answer was not in any sense disrespectful. Christ was ever respectful, kind, and courteous to all, and He was especially so to His mother. But He was engaged in His Father’s work, and He was to follow the dictation of no one but God.”²

¹ Other instances in which the author referred to this punctuation problem, here cited with their Ellen G. White Estate book and periodical codes, include PrT 1/21/1886; DA 750, 751; ST 12/8/1898, 12/14/1904, 4/26/1905, 10/25/1905; COL 264; 2SAT 297, 300; NPU Gleaner 4/6/1910; NI Rec 8/17/1909; RH 1/14/1909, 8/26/1909, 9/9/1909.

² BEcho 8/28/1899; ST 8/30/1899; Ms 16, 2/19/1899, in 10MR 199.