

Forever Infallible & Inerrant

Remembering God's Extraordinary Providence
in Preserving His Inspired Words through
the Traditional & Reformation Texts
Underlying the King James Bible

Forever Infallible & Inerrant

Remembering God's Extraordinary Providence
in Preserving His Inspired Words through
the Traditional & Reformation Texts
Underlying the King James Bible

Forever Infallible and Inerrant

*Remembering God's Extraordinary Providence
in Preserving His Inspired Words through
the Traditional and Reformation Texts
Underlying the King James Bible*

Edited by
Jeffrey Khoo



Far Eastern Bible College Press
2011

Title: Forever Infallible and Inerrant: Remembering God's Extraordinary Providence in Preserving His Inspired Words through the Traditional and Reformation Texts Underlying the King James Bible

Year Published: 2011

Publisher: Far Eastern Bible College Press

Address: 9A Gilstead Road Singapore 309063

Website: www.febc.edu.sg

Editor: Jeffrey Khoo

IT Manager: Murray Ong

Typesetter: Wendy Teng

Cover Design: Eric Lim

Sponsor: True Life Bible-Presbyterian Church

ISBN: 978-981-07-0109-3

The Hebraica font used to publish this work is available from Linguist's Software, Inc., PO Box 580, Edmonds, WA 98020-0580 USA tel (425) 775-1130 www.linguistsoftware.com.

DEDICATION

To the

Rev Dr Timothy Tow (1920-2009)

*Founding Father of the Bible-Presbyterian Church Movement in
Singapore and South East Asia, and
Founding Principal of Far Eastern Bible College
this volume is affectionately dedicated*

CONTENTS

Preface	xvi
Contributors	xviii

PART I Prologia

1 Commemorating 400 Years of the King James Bible	2
<i>Jeffrey Khoo</i>	
2 Earnestly Contend for the Faith	5
<i>Timothy Tow</i>	
3 Revisionism Ancient and Modern	9
<i>S H Tow</i>	
4 God's Word for the End Time	11
<i>S H Tow</i>	
5 A 21 st Century Reformation Movement for the Verbal and Plenary Preservation of the Holy Scriptures	15
<i>Jeffrey Khoo</i>	

6	Is the Preservation of Scripture a Doctrine Worth Dying For?	20
	<i>Michael Koech</i>	

7	FEBC Faculty United on Verbal Plenary Preservation (VPP)	26
---	--	----

PART II Theologia

8	“My Glory Will I Not Give to Another” (Isaiah 42:8)	32
	<i>Timothy Tow</i>	

9	Three Heaven and Earth Moving Statements from God’s Mouth Settle the Question Whether His Words are Preserved	34
	<i>Timothy Tow</i>	

10	God’s Special Providential Care of the Text of Scripture	35
	<i>Timothy Tow</i>	

11	The Providence of God	38
	<i>Jeffrey Khoo</i>	

12	Seven Biblical Axioms in Ascertaining the Authentic and Authoritative Texts of the Holy Scriptures	43
	<i>Jeffrey Khoo</i>	

- 13 Inspiration, Preservation, and Translations: In
Search of the Biblical Identity of the
Bible-Presbyterian Church 65
Jeffrey Khoo
- 14 Canon, Texts, and Words: Lost and Found or
Preserved and Identified? 86
Jeffrey Khoo
- 15 The Holy Spirit and the Word of God 117
Nguyen Gia Hien
- 16 A Child of God Looks at the Doctrine of Verbal
Plenary Preservation 126
Carol Lee
- 17 Biblical Presuppositions in Approaching the
Textual Debate 138
Paul Ferguson
- 18 Why We Should Regard the Bible as
Authoritative 142
Prabhudas Koshy
- 19 If We Reject the Doctrine of the Perfect
Preservation of the Bible 147
Prabhudas Koshy

20	<i>Sola Autographa or Sola Apographa? A Case for the Present Perfection and Authority of the Holy Scriptures</i>	149
	<i>Jeffrey Khoo</i>	
21	Attacks on the Authority of Scripture by Apostates	166
	<i>Paul Ferguson</i>	
22	The Deadly Sin of Attacking the Bible	170
	<i>Timothy Tow</i>	
23	The Dean Burgon Oath	175
	<i>Jeffrey Khoo</i>	

PART III Biblia

24	John Owen on the Perfect Bible	180
	<i>Jeffrey Khoo</i>	
25	Did God Promise to Preserve His Words? Interpreting Psalm 12:6-7	192
	<i>Quek Suan Yew</i>	
26	Jesus' View of the Holy Scripture: An Exposition of Matthew 5:17-19	195
	<i>Prabhudas Koshy</i>	

Contents

27	Did Jesus and the Apostles Rely on the Corrupt Septuagint?	202
	<i>Prabhudas Koshy</i>	
28	Lost Words in our Bible?	205
	<i>Jeffrey Khoo</i>	
29	Mistakes in the Bible?	211
	<i>Jeffrey Khoo</i>	
30	God’s Word Is Settled For Ever (Psalm 119:89) ...	216
	<i>George Skariah</i>	
31	Undermining God’s Word by Subtle Study Bibles	221
	<i>Jeffrey Khoo</i>	
32	Judges 18:30: Moses or Manasseh?	231
	<i>Quek Suan Yew</i>	
33	The Numbers in Ezra 2 and Nehemiah 7: A Solution in Favour of the Inerrancy of the Verbally and Plenarily Preserved Text	237
	<i>Nelson Were</i>	
34	NIV Turns “Land of Sinim” into “Region of Aswan” by a Twist of the Ball-Pen!	242
	<i>Timothy Tow</i>	

- 35 Are the Last Twelve Verses of Mark Really
Mark's? 245
Jeffrey Khoo
- 36 The Woman Taken in Adultery (John 7:53-8:11):
An Inspired Account of John's Gospel Proving
Jesus Christ as Light of the World 247
Jeffrey Khoo
- 37 A Preliminary Examination of the Antiquity and
Authenticity of the Johannine Comma: Does a
Clear, Biblical Proof Text Exist for the
Doctrine of the Trinity? 250
Jeffrey Khoo
- 38 The Word of God for All Nations 253
Phil Stringer

PART IV Apologia

- 39 A Plea for a Perfect Bible 323
Jeffrey Khoo
- 40 My Reply to James D Price's Review of
"A Plea for a Perfect Bible" 337
Jeffrey Khoo
- 41 Non-Ruckmanite Answers to Anti-KJV
Questions 343
Jeffrey Khoo

- 42 Can Verbal Plenary Inspiration Do Without
Verbal Plenary Preservation? The Achilles’
Heel of Princeton Bibliology 367
Jeffrey Khoo
- 43 Inspired Textual Criticism? 386
Jeffrey Khoo
- 44 Bruce Metzger and the Curse of Textual
Criticism 393
Jeffrey Khoo
- 45 The Blasphemy and Deception of *The Da Vinci
Code* 398
Jeffrey Khoo and Quek Suan Yew
- 46 Bob Jones University and the KJV: A Critique
of *From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man* 409
Jeffrey Khoo
- 47 The Emergence of Neo-Fundamentalism:
One Bible Only? or “Yea Hath God Said?” 442
Jeffrey Khoo
- 48 Bob Jones University, Neo-Fundamentalism,
and Biblical Preservation: A Critique of
*God’s Word in Our Hands: The Bible
Preserved for Us* 488
Jeffrey Khoo

- 49 Multiversions Onlyism: A Critique of
King James Onlyism: A New Sect 504
Jeffrey Khoo
- 50 Preservation of the Bible: Providential or
Miraculous? A Response to Jon Rehurek
of The Master’s Seminary 510
Paul Ferguson
- 51 Errors in the King James Version? A Response
to William W Combs of Detroit Baptist
Seminary 544
Jeffrey Khoo
- 52 A Public Response to Mr Lim Seng Hoo’s Open
Letter and Paper against the Verbal Plenary
Preservation of Scripture 572
Jeffrey Khoo
- 53 Contending in Truth, and Truth Affirms the VPP
of Scripture: A Loving Response to Rev ____’s
Paper “Contending in Truth and in Love” 599
Jeffrey Khoo
- 54 In Defence of the Far Eastern Bible College, the
Reformed Faith, and the Reformation Bible 617
Jeffrey Khoo
- 55 Bearing True Witness: A Response to “Bearing
False Witness” by Charles Seet 632
Jeffrey Khoo

Contents

- 56 Biblical Authority: A Response to Sermons by
Colin Wong and Charles Seet against Verbal
Plenary Preservation 642
Jeffrey Khoo
- 57 Did God Write Only One Bible? 648
Jeffrey Khoo
- 58 Making the Word of God of None Effect: An
Examination of the Paper, “Mark Them
Which Cause Divisions,” by Life
Bible-Presbyterian Church 651
Jeffrey Khoo
- 59 A Review of Jack Sin’s Article, “A Grave Matter:
Verity, Sagacity and Clarity in the Textual
Debate” 659
Biak Lawm Thang

PART V Historia

- 60 The Story of the English Bible: A Comparison
between Faithful Bibles of the Protestant
Reformation and Corrupt Versions of
Modern-Day Deformation 666
Jeffrey Khoo
- 61 The Reformation Bible 681
Jeffrey Khoo

- 62 The International Council of Christian Churches
(ICCC) and the King James Bible 685
Jeffrey Khoo
- 63 Kicking Against the Pricks: The SCCC
Contradicts the ICCC on VPP 688
Jeffrey Khoo
- 64 The Resolutions of the ICCC and SCCC on
Bible Versions 692
Paul Ferguson
- 65 Trinitarian Bible Society, Verbal Plenary
Preservation, and the Texts Underlying
the Authorised Version 732
Paul Ferguson
- 66 A Brief History, Purposes, and Goals of
the Dean Burgon Society 747
D A Waite

PART VI Homilia

- 67 Why Only KJV? 761
Jeffrey Khoo
- 68 No Perfectly Preserved Word of God Today? 765
Tan Kian Sing

69	The Unfinished Commission (Matt 28:18-20)	768
	<i>Timothy Tow</i>	
70	Will Our B-P Sons Defend the Faith?	776
	<i>Jeffrey Khoo</i>	

PART VII Testimonia

71	A History of My Defence of the King James Version	781
	<i>Edward F Hills</i>	
72	From the Gnostic Critical Greek Text to the Traditional Received New Testament Text	787
	<i>D A Waite</i>	
73	From RSV to KJV	790
	<i>Jeffrey Khoo</i>	
74	Textual Reception or Textual Criticism? Testimonies from Students Who Took the DVBC Course on “The Bible Stands” at FEBC from April 28 to May 3, 2008	794
	Recommended Sources	800

PREFACE

The battle for the Bible rages on! The old serpent continues to hiss, “*Yea, hath God said?*” (Gen 3:1). The attacks on the authenticity and authority of Bible by Dan Brown and his bestseller, *The Da Vinci Code*, and Bart Ehrman and his bestseller *Misquoting Jesus*, and Beacham & Bauder’s *One Bible Only?* require all who believe in the 100% inspiration and 100% preservation of the Holy Scriptures to mount a stout defence of God’s forever infallible and inerrant Words. Jesus for emphasis said three times, “*Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.*” (Matt 24:35, Mark 13:31, Luke 21:33).

In thanksgiving to God for the 400th anniversary of the King James Bible on Reformation Sunday, 30 October 2011, the choirs of Berean, Calvary Pandan, Calvary Tengah, Gethsemane, True Life and Truth Bible-Presbyterian Churches, and the Far Eastern Bible College with one mind and heart rendered to God a worshipful evening of praise, singing to the theme of “God’s Word, Protected, Proclaimed, Practised” at the Sunset Gospel Hour of Calvary Pandan Bible-Presbyterian Church. The Rev Dr Quek Suan Yew was the Lord’s messenger.

In commemoration of this great event, the Far Eastern Bible College has published this book (in pdf) entitled, *Forever Infallible and Inerrant: Remembering God’s Extraordinary Providence in Preserving His Inspired Words through the Traditional and Reformation Texts Underlying the King James Bible*. It is the result of a decade or two of research and writing in defence of the total infallibility and inerrancy, and absolute authority of the inspired and preserved Words of God in the original languages, and the trustworthiness and accuracy of the Authorised, King James Version of the Holy Bible. Packaged as a Bible Resource DVD, this digital library contains over 80 articles, books, audio and video lectures by the faculty and alumni of Far Eastern Bible College, and other pastors and theologians from USA and UK.

This Bible Resource DVD is produced with the Pauline injunction in mind, “*If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou*

Preface

shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained.” (1 Tim 4:6). True Life Bible-Presbyterian Church is the kind sponsor of this Bible Resource. It is hoped that its contents would encourage all Bible believers and students to obey this Pauline command, “Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.” (1 Tim 4:16).

Remember these words of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, *“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. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt 5:18, 19).* May we never forget these words of promise and of warning especially in these last days of unbelief and apostasy.

*Rev Dr Jeffrey Khoo
Pastor, True Life Bible-Presbyterian Church
Principal, Far Eastern Bible College*

CONTRIBUTORS

Biak Lawm Thang (BTh, MDiv, ThM) is Pastor of First Bible-Presbyterian Church of Yangon.

Paul **Ferguson** (BSc, LLB, MRE, DRE) is Pastor of Calvary Tengah Bible-Presbyterian Church. He hails from Northern Ireland, and is a graduate of Foundations Bible College, USA.

Edward F **Hills** (BTh, ThM, ThD) was Harvard scholar and author of *The King James Version Defended*.

Jeffrey **Khoo** (BTh, MDiv, STM, PhD) is Pastor of True Life Bible-Presbyterian Church and Principal of Far Eastern Bible College.

Michael **Koech** (BTh, MDiv, ThM) is Pastor of Africa Gospel Unity Church, and Principal of Bomet Bible Institute, Kenya.

Prabhudas **Koshy** (BSc, BTh, MDiv, ThM, ThD) is Pastor of Gethsemane Bible-Presbyterian Church, and Lecturer in Old Testament and Biblical Hebrew at Far Eastern Bible College.

Carol **Lee** (BBA, PGDE, MEd, MDiv) is Lecturer in Christian Education at Far Eastern Bible College and a full-time worker of Truth Bible-Presbyterian Church.

Nguyen Gia Hien (BA, MDiv, ThM) is Pastor of Brisbane Bible-Presbyterian Church, Australia.

Quek Suan Yew (BArch, BTh, MDiv, STM, ThD) is Pastor of Calvary Pandan Bible-Presbyterian Church, and Lectuer in Old Testament and Contemporary Theology at Far Eastern Bible College.

Contributors

George **Skariah** (BA, BTh, MA, MDiv, ThM, ThD) is Pastor of Covenant Bible-Presbyterian Church, Bangalore, India.

Phil **Stringer** (BSc, MA, PhD, DRE) is Pastor of Ravenswood Baptist Church in Chicago, and President of the William Carey Bible Society.

Tan Kian Sing (BEng, GDBA, MDiv) is Pastor of Berean Bible-Presbyterian Church, and Lecturer in New Testament at Far Eastern Bible College

S H **Tow** (MD, DD) is Senior Pastor of Calvary Pandan Bible-Presbyterian Church, author of *Beyond Versions*, and contributing editor of *The Defined King James Bible*.

Timothy **Tow** (MDiv, STM, DD) was Founding Pastor of Life Bible-Presbyterian Church (1950-2003) and True Life Bible-Presbyterian Church (2003-2009). He was also Founder and First Principal of Far Eastern Bible College.

D A **Waite** (BA, MA, ThM, ThD, PhD) is Pastor of Bible for Today Baptist Church, and President of the Dean Burgon Society.

Nelson **Were** (BTh, MDiv, ThM) is a lecturer at Faith College of the Bible, Eldoret, Kenya.

PART I

Prologia

1

COMMEMORATING 400 YEARS OF THE KING JAMES BIBLE

Jeffrey Khoo



The year 2011 is the 400th anniversary of the Authorised Version or King James Version (KJV) of the Bible. It is no accident that the KJV should outlast and outstrip all other English versions to be the bestselling and best loved Bible of all time. The challenge of the many modern English versions notwithstanding, the KJV remains popular and highly ranked on the Bible bestsellers' list. The KJV is especially well loved by those who sincerely believe in the preservation of the inspired Scriptures by extraordinary providence. It is defended particularly by those who earnestly contend for the faith, especially the old-time faith of our

Reformation fathers. While many mainline denominations have departed from the historic Christian Faith, there are still remnant Baptist, Episcopal, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian and Reformed churches which continue to stand firm on the good old Protestant Faith, uphold the Traditional Hebrew and Greek Texts underlying the Reformation Bibles best represented by the KJV, and practise separation from all forms of unbelief and apostasy.

The Far Eastern Bible College (FEBC) stoutly affirms the twin doctrines of the Verbal Plenary Inspiration (VPI) and Verbal Plenary Preservation (VPP) of the Holy Scriptures in the original languages. In keeping with the Reformation Faith and Reformed Theology, we uphold the traditional Hebrew Masoretic Text and the Greek Textus Receptus on which the KJV is based. The battle for the divine inspiration of the Bible

against the modernists and neo-evangelicals was fought and won in the 20th Century. The battle for the Bible continues into the 21st Century, this time for its jot-and-tittle preservation against the textual critics and neo-deists. We cannot but “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3), and for the *present infallibility and inerrancy* of the Holy Scriptures as the *sole, supreme, and final authority* of Christian faith and life (Matt 5:18, 2 Tim 3:16, 17).

What does VPP mean? “Verbal” means “every word to the jot and tittle” (Ps 12:6-7, Matt 5:18). “Plenary” means “the Scripture as a whole with all the words intact” (Matt 24:35, 1 Pet 1:25). So VPP means **the whole of Scripture with all its words even to the jot and tittle is perfectly preserved by God without any loss of the original words, prophecies, promises, commandments, doctrines, and truths, not only in the words of salvation, but also the words of history, geography and science. Every book, every chapter, every verse, every word, every syllable, every letter is infallibly preserved by God Himself to the last iota.**

What and where are the preserved words of God today? They are the inspired OT Hebrew words and NT Greek words the prophets, the apostles, the church fathers, the reformers used which are today found in the long and continuously abiding and preserved words underlying the Reformation Bibles best represented by the time-tested and time-honoured KJV, and **not** in the corrupt Alexandrian manuscripts and critical Westcott-Hort texts underlying most of the modern English versions which share the corruptions found in those manuscripts.

Historically speaking, VPP is:

(1) **As old as the Bible itself** since God had promised to preserve His inspired words in Psalm 12:6-7, Matthew 5:18, 24:35 etc “by His singular care and providence.” The Lord is true and faithful to His promises and cannot fail.

(2) **As old as the Westminster Confession of Faith** (WCF) and its Catechisms (1643-8) which is subscribed to by all Bible-Presbyterian Churches and also the Far Eastern Bible College. The original language Scriptures that the WCF upheld as authoritative and authentic (1.8) must necessarily be the traditional Hebrew Masoretic Text and Greek Textus Receptus, ie the very Scriptures underlying the KJV (1611) which they used and quoted from, and not the corrupt Westcott and Hort Text (1881)

which became the underlying Text of the new and modern English versions today.

(3) **As old as the Bible-Presbyterian (BP) Church and the Far Eastern Bible College (FEBC)** since the KJV was the English Bible of both institutions from the beginning (1950/1962). The KJV was upheld as the Word of God. VPP simply underscores the infallibility and inerrancy of the original language Scriptures underlying the KJV. VPP is both logical and consistent with the KJV as used and highly regarded by the BP denomination and FEBC.

FEBC was founded to defend the Bible. The Three-Man Committee comprising Rev Dr Timothy Tow, Dr Tow Siang Hwa and Rev Quek Kiok Chiang in a 1960 statement said, **“A Bible College that is to be called a Bible College is called to defend the Bible! May the proposed Far Eastern Bible College neglect not this part of the holy ministry that is committed to her charge.”** May the Lord use FEBC to defend the good old Book and the good old Faith. “Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein” (Jer 6:16). May FEBC not become like the many today who attack VPI and/or VPP, spurning the good old Book and the good old Faith, and say without shame, “We will not walk therein.”

EARNESTLY CONTEND FOR THE FAITH

Timothy Tow

“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3).

The title of my message is “Earnestly Contend for the Faith.” The apostle Jude was writing to the believers and at first his idea was to talk of the common salvation. That of course will edify our hearts. But the apostle Jude says, “When I desired to do this thing, it was needful for me to exhort you.” He was constrained by the Holy Spirit that this one thing was very important: that you should earnestly contend for the faith. The whole epistle is devoted to this one theme—earnestly contend for the faith. And who are the examples of those whom we must oppose? Three people are mentioned—Cain, Balaam and Core. These are rebels who do not obey the faith, who resist the Lord.

Why should we earnestly contend for the faith? We need to contend for the faith because there are so many who are against the Lord, and they are mentioned as follows—false Christs, false prophets, false apostles, false teachers, false spirits, false witnesses and false brethren. And we have three synoptic gospels—Matthew, Mark and Luke—warning against false prophets and false Christs, from the mouth of our Lord Himself, and three epistles, namely, Jude that we have just read, and 2 Peter and 1 John. But the fact is that the whole life of Jesus in His ministry of 3½ years was a constant battle against “this wicked generation.”

What is the wicked generation? They are the scribes, the Jewish theologians, and the Pharisees, the high churchmen. They were constantly against Jesus, against His claim to be one with the Father, He is the Son of God, He is equal to the Father and that He can forgive sins. Who can forgive sins but God? But Jesus countered right away, “That you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins, ‘Rise up

and walk.” He said this to the paralytic that was brought by four men. And he arose and took up his bedding and he walked away praising the Lord. Our Lord Jesus Christ, when He preached the gospel to the multitudes had also to constantly expose the false prophets in the church. This is the wicked generation. Now we ask ourselves: Is there such a wicked generation—false Christs, false prophets, false teachers, in high places today? Exactly the same as in the Jewish Church, so it is in the Christian church.

Why has the Lord blessed the Bible-Presbyterian (B-P) Movement? I will tell you my own testimony. I went to study in America in January 1948. One wintry morning there came a very distinguished gentleman. He was none other than Dr Carl McIntire who has just been received into glory and his funeral was held on March 26, 2002. He told us about the great danger in the church because they were going to form the World Council of Churches to extend their influence, which is the Ecumenical Movement. By now I believe you know what is ecumenical. One inhabited world, one roof under which all denominations must unite and all the Protestant denominations will return to Rome. That is the meaning of the Ecumenical Movement. Dr McIntire called for young men like us to join a counter movement called the 20th Century Reformation Movement. It is to carry on the 16th Century Reformation Movement of Martin Luther and to separate from the Ecumenical Movement. Well, when I went to seminary I had some idea of Martin Luther. I knew that he was a reformer. My heart was set on fire. My heart was knit to his heart, like David and Jonathan. I took such a keen interest in the Reformation Movement that I have been helped by the grace of God to stand firm to this day. I have taken part in many oppositions raised by the ICCC (International Council of Christian Churches) to speak against Romanism, Ecumenism, Neo-evangelicalism, Charismaticism.

But now the battle is centred on the Bible. Because you suddenly realise that the market is flooded with well over one hundred new versions during the last 50 years. These new Bibles so-called depart a great deal from the Received Text upon which the King James Bible, the Bible that we use, is founded. The Bible is two and two are four. The Bible has only one answer. The Bible has only one teaching. That is the reason why we founded the Far Eastern Bible College (FEBC) to stand against those who are false prophets and false teachers. The battle must

continue because if FEBC does not take a strong stand against the erosion of faith we will be toppled.

In 1947 there was founded in Los Angeles the Fuller Seminary. It was founded by Charles Fuller, the preacher of the old-fashioned revival hour. And he had five faculty members that were true to the Word. But in no time liberalism entered it and through one man the whole seminary was toppled. Today, Fuller Seminary is one that appears to be evangelical, but is most diabolical.

Now the battle today is mainly on the Bible. As I told you there are well over one hundred versions. The first version that came in to take the place of the King James Bible which has been reigning supreme for the last 400 years, was the translation of the Revised Standard Version (RSV) in 1952. The ICCB at once went to battle and exposed this Bible to be a poisonous one. It translates "Behold a virgin shall conceive" into "Behold a young woman shall conceive." What young woman cannot conceive? Our council took a strong stand against the RSV and its sale was restricted. But in 1978 there arrived the NIV. It is now sweeping the Christian world. I am very sure you know what the NIV is, the New International Version. The NIV is not based on the Textus Receptus on which the King James Bible is based but is based on the corrupt text of Westcott and Hort. Who are these two men? They are two Cambridge professors of Greek who spent many years to manoeuvre the Anglican Church. The Anglican Church agreed with them that they needed a new translation and so they produced in 1881 the Revised Version.

When I was a boy, I bought a Revised Version but the Revised Version attacked point after point our old Bible. Over 9,900 words are altered, deleted. Out of the Bible, the equivalent of eight chapters, First and Second Peter, are scissored. Let me ask you, suppose you have one page torn from your Bible, can you use it? I will not use that Bible. But when you have torn away 8 chapters and deleted and changed 9,900 words, all the more you will not have it. As a result, it died a diseased death. After some years it went out of publication because the people, true Christians, would not buy a poisonous Bible.

But now, just as poisonous as the Revised Version is the NIV. To prove to you the NIV is a very corrupt Bible, it has "taken out" the passage of the woman taken in adultery. But I tell you that the story of the woman taken in adultery is the most magnanimous account of Jesus' life.

The Jews tried to trap Jesus. To put Him in a place where they say since she is guilty of adultery she must be stoned to death. But any good lawyer could challenge them, “If she is taken in adultery what happens to the adulterer, the man? Why don’t you bring him here?” Jesus is the Son of God. He is God. Can puny man try to outwit God? Jesus retorted, “Who is without sin, let him cast the first stone.” Dr John Sung has a very humorous way of illustrating the situation. From 70 downwards to 15 one by one slunk away like a beaten dog. When Jesus looked around everyone was gone. Then Jesus forgave the woman, “Go and sin no more.” Is not that most expressive of the marvellous grace of God? It strikes at us. Who can say I am pure? A glance of the eye will cause us to commit adultery in the heart. But NIV “takes out” the precious Word.

The last 12 verses of Mark are also “missing” and 1 John 5:7. In the King James Bible, we have three in heaven who are witnesses—the Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost. It is a most definite statement on the Holy Trinity. Today, the great battle is on the Bible. “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”

I want to apply to a very excellent magazine—the *Bible Witness*. Truly it is full of spiritual food. But I must tell you, the church is very sick. Just like this time I got sick. I have never been sick for so long. It is terrible. Now I can sympathise with those that are in trouble. And we must realise that we are in trouble. In the B-P Church today we are the very few who are standing for the faith. So I told the Rev Das Koshy, “Today I am going to challenge you. First of all, that when the next *Bible Witness* comes out, it will have one special section on defending the faith.” And so I pray that the Lord will give His Church much power by taking a stand for His cause.

Remember Satan has the ability to change himself 72 times like the monkey god. Knowing his tactics, let us continue to earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. Amen.

REVISIONISM ANCIENT AND MODERN

S H Tow

God had spoken: His Word standeth sure, forever settled, inerrant, infallible, perfect. Who dare doubt or question it but the father of lies and enemy of truth. His master stroke “*Yea, hath God said?*” stumbled our first parents and plunged the race into sorrow and curse.

That was revisionism of the spoken word at the dawn of history.

In time God gave the Written Word: holy men of God wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. That Word was denied to God’s people by unfaithful custodians, until God sent the Reformation and the Bible of the Reformation—the King James Version (KJV)—to lift the darkness of a thousand years.

Lovers and defenders of the KJV affirm with Dean Burgon of Oxford that

The Bible is none other than the voice of Him that sitteth upon the throne. Every book of it, every chapter of it, every verse of it, every syllable of it, every letter of it, is direct utterance of the Most High. The Bible is none other than the Word of God, not some part of it more, some part of it less, but all alike the utterance of Him that sitteth upon the throne, faultless, unerring, supreme.

Through three centuries, the KJV reigned supreme, the unchallenged and unrivalled Word of God. But the enemy of truth, with diabolical cunning and subtlety, schemed its overthrow through a “Committee of Revision” headed by Westcott and Hort, masterminds of subversion and champions of corrupted and doctored texts.

Their “Revised Version” of 1881, a masterpiece of intrigue, and “secret weapon” of the Counter-Reformation, breached the dike of Holy Scripture, and a hundred corrupt “Modern English Versions” poured through the floodgate of Revisionism. In the century following, corrupt versions had *all but* replaced the King James Bible.

Thank God, it was *all but*: He has yet a valiant remnant who stand against the tide of corrupt English Versions, like the faithful *seven thousand in Israel* (1 Kgs 19:18), their knees have not bowed before the Baal of Modern Revisionism.

This Twenty-first Century “Battle of the Versions” intensifies as the father of lies uses every wily stratagem to overthrow the citadel of Biblical fundamentalism, hurling false accusations against the beloved translation and the underlying texts.

But we affirm our unshakable faith in the KJV as the very Word of God—the best, most faithful, most accurate, most beautiful translation of the Bible in the English language that is based on God’s infallible, inerrant, inspired and preserved texts.

May all who love the Word of God affirm with the Scripture, that “*the law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple*” (Ps 19:7), and that “*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 Tim 3:16,17).

Let God be true but every man a liar. God’s Word is truth. Only the KJV and its underlying texts preserve that truth perfectly.

GOD'S WORD FOR THE END TIME

S H Tow

The King James Bible (KJB) is God's instrument for communicating the Gospel to all nations. It is the trustworthy Word written in the language which reaches to the greatest number: not German or French or any other language, but English. Why? In this century English has become the undisputed global medium of communication, accelerated by the computer revolution with its instantaneous communications breakthrough. No country can afford not to use English—the “computer language.” By means of English the Gospel message reaches to every nation on earth.

With this the adversary is not pleased. Not surprising, then, that the KJB is the target of his venomous attack.

In the closing moments of the second millennium AD, momentous happenings signal: history has entered its final hour. The Lord of history is coming! Are you ready? Our Lord Jesus, the Word of God, shall return as Judge,

and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. . . . And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS (Rev 19:11-16).

The conflict of the ages builds to a climax. Our risen and ever living Lord comes to judge the nations. Today, confusion and uncertainty reign. Questions are asked: which version? But no authoritative answers are forthcoming.

Until the first half of this century there was one unchallenged authoritative Bible, KJB or AV. Today a bewildering assortment of one hundred new versions confronts the church, with more clamouring to be born. What is happening? Why this profusion of versions?

When I was saved in 1935 through the ministry of Dr John Sung, China's "Flame of God" and greatest evangelist, I bought my first Bible, the KJB, precious Word of God. Ever since, this version has been my constant and treasured companion, and shall be till I reach journey's end.

When my elder brother—Timothy Tow—graduate of Faith Theological Seminary, Wilmington, Delaware, founded the Bible-Presbyterian Church in 1950, the Constitution (Article 4.2.1) read:

We believe in the divine, verbal and plenary inspiration of the Scriptures in the original languages, their consequent inerrancy and infallibility, and as the Word of God, the supreme authority in faith and life.

That is a sound and solid article of faith concerning the "Scriptures" and the "Word of God," but there was no mention of version. The need did not seem to have arisen then, 60 years ago. Today we have added a qualifying article:

We believe that the KJV (King James Version or Authorised Version, not the New King James Version) is the most faithful and accurate translation of God's Word, and is to be used exclusively at all gatherings of the Church.

Time changes things and circumstances, and that makes it necessary to have safeguards.

At the Far Eastern Bible College (founded in 1962) the Principal requires Faculty and Board to publicly take the "Dean Burgon oath" at its annual Convocation:

I swear in the Name of the Triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, that I believe "the Bible is none other than the voice of Him that sitteth upon the throne. Every book of it, every chapter of it, every verse of it, every syllable of it, every letter of it, is direct utterance of the Most High. The Bible is none other than the Word of God, not some part of it more, some part of it less, but all alike the utterance of Him that sitteth upon the throne, faultless, unerring, supreme." So help me God. Amen.

God preserve our Bible College. Institutions everywhere are falling to the adversary's wiles: he is smarter than we think. He deceives many to deceive others.

A young man from Singapore went to Bob Jones University, a KJB proponent. Four years later, he returned with his Masters degree, a KJB opponent. "Every version of the Bible is good!" With brilliant but misguided scholarship he critiqued Dr Waite's *Defending the King James Bible* to shreds.

Deception, deception, deception! This is a cardinal sign of our Lord's soon return. Read Matthew 24 and be warned. The end time is marked by the worldwide upsurge of false prophets, false preachers, false doctrines, and false Bibles.

Satan is the master deceiver. He perverts the Word, changes the message: he adds to it, diminishes from it, manipulates it. This has been his strategy from first to last. He injects doubt: "Yea, hath God said?" He causes disaffection, engenders rebellion, promotes confusion with a mixed multitude of Bibles.

The days are numbered wherein we may freely worship God "in spirit and in truth" and freely possess and use the KJB. "Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught" (2 Thess 2:15), "holding forth the word of life" (Phil 2:16), and "holding fast the faithful word" (Titus 1:9).

Thank God for keeping us in Singapore faithful to His Book, the KJB. We heartily affirm that it is God's best gift just as precious to God's people today as it was in 1611.

The KJB, unsullied by the pollution of modernism stands apart from a hundred new English versions. It is without peer the most faithful repository of God's inspired Word, the bulwark of Protestantism, the impregnable defence against ecumenical forces, proud banner of the Sixteenth Century Reformation, the *only* Bible untainted by revisionist poison.

We are keenly aware that the days wherein we may openly defend the KJB are numbered. The adversary and enemy of the Word is about to bring in the One World Church. The "Head of the Church" and self-styled "successor" to the Apostle Peter has issued the order (*Twelfth Encyclical*, May 1995): all churches are to return to "mother church." The Bishop of Rome, with power and authority, exercises "primacy," i.e., supremacy, over the "handing down of the Word, the celebration of the liturgy . . . , the Church's mission, discipline and the Christian life." He will not look with favour on our continued use of the KJB. A new "Common Bible" will shortly appear, bearing the Pope's "*imprimatur*."

The present situation calls for courage and resolve to take a stand "for the word of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Rev 1:9). The fearless contender for the truth—T T Shields—has timely words for us today:

Forever Infallible and Inerrant

I believe that there is nothing left to us but to declare war on modernism everywhere. For myself, I have resigned from the diplomatic service and joined the army in the field.

We are in danger of suffering great loss from the neutral attitude of many who ought to be openly on the side of orthodoxy. There is no place for neutrality in this war. He that is not for Christ is against Him.

Today, more than ever before, we need to be sure what God's Word says. Read 2 Peter 1:19-21,

We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

Heed the warning of Holy Scripture: To Israel, about to enter the Land, God said, "Now therefore hearken, O Israel, . . . Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it" (Deut 4:1, 2). "For ever, O LORD, they word is settled in heaven" (Ps 119:89). Let no man attempt to unsettle it! "Every word of God is pure" (Prov 30:5). Let no man contaminate it!

My heritage is a high and holy regard for God's Word, and beyond a shadow of doubt, that Word is given to us in the KJB.

A 21ST CENTURY REFORMATION MOVEMENT FOR THE VERBAL AND PLENARY PRESERVATION OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

Jeffrey Khoo

The Far Eastern Bible College (FEBC) remains a Bible-believing and Bible-defending institution. *The Burning Bush* since 1997 has defended the biblical doctrine of the verbal and plenary preservation of Scripture from assaults made by anti-reformed and neo-fundamental textual critics. As a confessional school, FEBC affirms its faith on a forever infallible and inerrant Scriptures not just in the Autographs but also the Apographs as spelt out in the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, “The Old Testament in Hebrew ... and the New Testament in Greek ... being immediately inspired by God, and, by his singular care and providence, kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentical.”

The College Board and Faculty affirm the 100% inspiration and 100% preservation of the Holy Scriptures (2 Tim 3:16, 2 Pet 1:20-21, Ps 12:6-7, Matt 5:18, 24:35), and take this solemn oath in all sincerity believing that “the Bible is none other than the voice of Him that sitteth upon the throne. Every book of it, every chapter of it, every verse of it, every word of it, every syllable of it, every letter of it, is direct utterance of the Most High. The Bible is none other than the Word of God, not some part of it more, some part of it less, but all alike the utterance of Him that sitteth upon the throne, faultless, unerring, supreme.”

FEBC stands against modern textual criticism and the modern perversions of the Scriptures that are based on the corrupt Westcott and Hort Text by declaring univocally that the traditional Hebrew Masoretic Text and Greek Textus Receptus underlying the King James Bible to be the totally inspired and entirely preserved Word of God.

FEBC champions the International Council of Christian Churches’ (ICCC) resolution on the preservation of Scripture passed at its 16th

World Congress in Jerusalem in the year 2000. The ICCC statement #11 affirmed, “Believing the OT has been preserved in the Masoretic text and the NT in the Textus Receptus, combined they gave us the complete Word of God.”

In an effort to undermine the Reformation doctrine of the verbal and plenary preservation of Scripture, anti-preservationists and anti-KJVists have concocted lies to cause confusion. What are these lies? Lie #1: that the KJV is as or more inspired than the original language Scriptures. Lie #2: that believers who do not use the KJV are condemned to hell. Let it be known that FEBC holds to no such absurd views; never had, never will! Propagators of such lies ought to cease and desist from transgressing any further the 9th commandment.

Persecution came. The college was ordered to stop teaching the truth of God’s 100% preservation of His Word and words. No one is to defend it, not even to breathe a word about it; it is merely personal conviction not dogma. But we respond in the spirit of Luther, “If I profess with the loudest voice and clearest exposition every portion of the truth of God except precisely that little point that the world and the devil are at the moment attacking, I am not confessing Christ, however boldly I may be professing Christ. Where the battle rages is where the loyalty of the soldier is proved, and to be steady on all the battlefield besides is merely flight and disgrace if he flinches at that point.”

Some say it is “foolish faith” to believe that God has indeed preserved His Word to the jot and tittle, that we do certainly have all of His words today. In reply, let me quote Luther, “Unless you prove to me by Scripture and plain reason that I am wrong, I cannot and will not recant. My conscience is captive to the Word of God. To go against conscience is neither right nor safe [it endangers the soul]. Here I stand. There is nothing else I can do. God help me. Amen.” This is the logic of faith (Heb 11:3, 6). “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear” (Matt 11:15).

FEBC stands by her Statement of Faith as written in her Constitution, Article #4.

4. Statement of Faith

- 1.1 The Statement of Faith of the College shall be in accordance with that system commonly called “the Reformed Faith” as expressed in the Confession of Faith as set forth by the historic Westminster Assembly together with the Larger and Shorter Catechisms.

- 1.2 In abbreviated form, the chief tenets of the doctrine of the College, apart from the Doctrinal Position Statement of the College, shall be as follows:
 - 1.2.1 We believe in the divine, Verbal Plenary Inspiration (Autographs) and Verbal Plenary Preservation (Apographs) of the Scriptures in the original languages, their consequent inerrancy and infallibility, and as the perfect Word of God, the supreme and final authority in faith and life (2 Tim 3:16, 2 Pet 1:20-21, Ps 12:6-7, Matt 5:18, 24:35).
 - 1.2.1.1 We believe the Hebrew Old Testament and the Greek New Testament underlying the Authorised (King James) Version to be the very Word of God, infallible and inerrant.
 - 1.2.1.2 We uphold the Authorised (King James) Version to be the Word of God—the best, most faithful, most accurate, most beautiful translation of the Bible in the English language, and do employ it alone as our primary scriptural text in the public reading, preaching, and teaching of the English Bible.
 - 1.2.1.3 The Board of Directors and Faculty shall affirm their allegiance to the Word of God by taking the Dean Burgon Oath at every annual convocation: “I swear in the Name of the Triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit that I believe “the Bible is none other than the voice of Him that sitteth upon the throne. Every book of it, every chapter of it, every verse of it, every word of it, every syllable of it, every letter of it, is direct utterance of the Most High. The Bible is none other than the Word of God, not some part of it more, some part of it less, but all alike the utterance of Him that sitteth upon the throne, faultless, unerring, supreme.”
 - 1.2.2 We believe in one God existing in three co-equal and co-eternal Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Deut 6:4, 1 John 5:7).
 - 1.2.3 We believe that Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, and is true God and true man in complete and direct fulfilment of Isaiah 7:14 (Matt 1:20-23, John 1:1, 14, Col 2:9).
 - 1.2.4 We believe God created the whole universe *ex nihilo* (out of nothing) by the Word of His mouth, and all very good, in the space of six literal or natural days (Gen 1:1, Exod 20:11, Ps 148:5, John 1:3, Col 1:16, Heb 11:3).

- 1.2.5 We believe that man was created in the image of God, but sinned through the fall of Adam, thereby incurring not only physical death but also spiritual death, which is separation from God and that all human beings are born with a sinful nature and become sinners in thought, word and deed (Gen 1:26-27, Rom 3:19-20, 5:12, 6:23).
- 1.2.6 We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died a propitiatory and expiatory death as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice, and that all who repent of their sins and believe in Him are justified before God on the grounds of His shed blood (Rom 5:8-11, 1 John 2:2, 1 Pet 1:18-19).
- 1.2.7 We believe in the bodily resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His ascension into Heaven, and in His exaltation at the right hand of God, where He intercedes for us as our High Priest and Advocate (1 Cor 15:1-4, 15-19, Phil 2:9-11, Heb 3:1, 4:14-16).
- 1.2.8 We believe in the personal, visible and premillennial return of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ to judge this world, restore His chosen nation Israel to greatness, and bring peace to the nations as King of kings and Lord of lords (Jer 3:17, Zech 14:9, Acts 1:6, Rom 11:26, Rev 20:1-7).
- 1.2.9 We believe that salvation is by grace through faith alone, not by works, and that all who repent and receive the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour are born again by the Holy Spirit and thereby become the children of God (Rom 5:1, 8:14-16, Eph 2:8-10, 1 Tim 2:5, Tit 3:5).
- 1.2.10 We believe that the ministry of the Holy Spirit is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ and to convict and regenerate the sinner, and indwell, guide, instruct and empower the believer for godly living and service (John 16:7-14, Rom 8:1-2).
- 1.2.11 We believe that Christ instituted the Sacrament of Baptism for believers and their children and the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, which sacraments shall be observed by His Church till He comes (Matt 28:19, 1 Cor 11:23-26).
- 1.2.12 We believe in the eternal security, bodily resurrection and eternal blessedness of the saved, and in the bodily resurrection and eternal conscious punishment of the lost (John 10:27-29, 1 Cor 15:51-53, 1 Thess 4:13-18, Rev 20:11-15).

- 1.2.13 We believe in the real, spiritual unity in Christ of all redeemed by His precious blood and the necessity of faithfully maintaining the purity of the Church in doctrine and life according to the Word of God, and the principle and practice of biblical separation from the apostasy of the day being spearheaded by the ecumenical movement, charismatic movement and other false movements that contradict the Holy Scriptures and the Historic Christian Faith (2 Cor 6:14-7:1, Jude 3, Rev 18:4).

By the grace of God, FEBC will remain true to its fundamentalist ethos, “earnestly contending for the faith once delivered unto the saints,” to the glory of God until Christ returns. Amen.

6

IS THE PRESERVATION OF SCRIPTURE A DOCTRINE WORTH DYING FOR?

Michael Koech

Faith and the Bible

Jesus said, “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life” (Rev 2:10).¹

The Christian Faith is founded upon the Holy Scriptures. God gave the Church a library of 66 books as His Sacred Word. The Holy Bible comprising the Old and New Testaments was written by more than 40 authors over a period of 1,500 years in three different languages. Christ is the preeminent person in the Bible. His name occurs no less than 770 times. Christians live by this Book. When believers are baptised and are received into church membership, they are expected to believe that the Bible is the very Word of God and the words therein are perfect and true.

Inspiration and Preservation

Since the Lord has given us these Scriptures by divine inspiration (2 Tim 3:16), it follows that they must be divinely preserved if they are to accomplish their intended purpose throughout the ages. The Lord Jesus Christ made a promise to this effect, “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). This is the classic text on the preservation of the Bible for it extends to the minute details of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. He also said, “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away” (Matt 24:35, Mark 13:31, Luke 21:33). These and other references show us that the doctrine of preservation has been there since the Bible was written. Unfortunately it is absent in modern theological books. Nevertheless, there are sufficient evidences to show that Protestant and Reformed theology has always believed in the special providential preservation of the Bible.

Thomas Watson in his book—*A Body of Divinity*—first published in 1672, said this about Biblical preservation:

We may know the Scripture to be the Word of God by its miraculous preservation in all ages. The holy Scriptures are the richest jewel that Christ has left us; and the church of God has so kept these public records of heaven, that they have not been lost. The Word of God has never wanted enemies to oppose, and, if possible, to extirpate it. They have given out a law concerning Scripture, as Pharaoh did the midwives, concerning the Hebrew women's children, to strangle it in the birth; but God has preserved this blessed Book inviolable to this day. The devil and his agents have been blowing at Scripture light, but could never blow it out; a clear sign that it was lighted from heaven. Nor has the church of God, in all revolutions and changes, kept the Scripture that it should not be lost only, but that it should not be depraved. The letter of Scripture has been preserved, without any corruption, in the original tongue. The Scriptures were not corrupted before Christ's time, for then Christ would not have sent the Jews to them. He said, 'Search the Scriptures.' He knew these sacred springs were not muddied with human fancies.²

It is noted that in this paragraph, Watson used the word “preserve” or “preservation” three times. The inerrancy of the Bible is commonly held by true believers, and it must be added that the Bible is inerrant precisely because it has been preserved. As it exists today in many human languages it was divinely inspired in the original autographs, and then divinely preserved in the apographs or copies in the original languages. For centuries these were copied by hand until the invention of the printing press, which coincided with the global movement of the Protestant Reformation. By God's special providence the Scriptures have been supernaturally preserved and passed down from generation to generation in the copies.

Translations

When the church was revived after the darkness of the Middle Ages, Christians began to see the need for translating the Bible into different languages so that all could read the Bible for themselves. This was the position taken by the Westminster Confession of Faith. So while the drafters of the Confession believed in divine inspiration and God's particular care and providence to keep the inspired words pure, they also believed that translations could convey the truth of the original. When they penned the statement they did not foresee the controversy that would

arise many years later. But as truth does not change, their words are relevant today as they were when they were first written. A modern author has added his voice to this doctrine with these words,

God gave His word ... in Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic. God preserved the Bible down through the centuries through dedicated copyists who meticulously copied it by hand. God's Word was preserved both in manuscript form and in the early commentaries on the Bible. Further, the Bible was preserved through its translation into the languages of the common people. Thus today people over much of the globe have the wonderful privilege of reading with understanding God's Word to mankind.³

Declaring and Defending Preservation

As the controversy over the doctrine of special providential preservation of the Scriptures has resurfaced in theological circles, it is worth noting the latest developments, and where necessary, make adjustments and corrections to past shortcomings and oversights. It has also been observed that the voluminous works of many recent theological heavyweights say little or nothing at all about the doctrine of Bible preservation. It is therefore a task for the present generation to state with clarity the biblical position of this doctrine and defend it for the benefit of the Church present and future. Taking the lead, the principal of the Far Eastern Bible College (FEBC) has made this statement of faith,

We believe the preservation of Holy Scripture and its Divine inspiration stand in the same position as providence and creation. If Deism teaches a Creator who goes to sleep after creating the world is absurd, to hold to the doctrine of inspiration without preservation is equally illogical. ... Without preservation, all inspiration, God-breathing into scripture would be lost. But we have a Bible so pure and powerful in every word and it is so because God preserved it down through the ages.⁴

FEBC's stand on the 100% perfect preservation of Scripture is beginning to yield fruits.

This discovery is a challenge to the present generation as the discovery of the doctrine of justification by faith alone was to Luther and his contemporaries. The doctrine has always been there but has been kept on the shelves. It has to be publicised and taught to everyone. When Hilkiah the priest found the book of the Law in the Lord's house he gave it to Shaphan the scribe who in turn took it and read it before King Josiah (2 Chron 34:15-18). This marked the beginning of Josiah's reforms that

brought great spiritual revival to Judah in days of apostasy. In the same manner, proclaiming and publishing the doctrine of the preservation of the Bible may be the beginning of greater things for the church in the days to come.

Truth Determines Scholarship

The doctrine of Bible preservation may not go down well with many scholars who deny that there is such a doctrine. There is also a tendency of citing big names in theological circles, and making them the final authority instead of the Bible. But if the Bible teaches the special providential preservation of the Scriptures, no human being can destroy it. Biblical truth does not depend on historical treatment by men but by what God says about it in His forever infallible and inerrant Word. Defenders of God's Truth may suffer persecution, but there must be no surrender by way of compromise or retraction of what is biblically true. Since the doctrine of biblical preservation has much to do with faith, it may be ridiculed as unscholarly especially by those who wish to indulge in textual criticism. But it must be remembered that it is not scholarship that determines Truth, but Truth determines scholarship.

Opposition and Persecution

Christian doctrines or dogma are those principles of faith that constitute what is believed and practised by the Christian Church. They come from an authoritative source, namely, the Bible. There is much we can learn about a Christian's commitment to dogma from the Apostle Paul who was persecuted for preaching Christ as the Son of God and the Messiah, and the doctrine of the resurrection from the dead (Acts 23:6). He is an example in the believer's commitment to doctrine. He went through great suffering and was subsequently martyred for the defence of the faith. Tradition tells us that the rest of the Apostles likewise died a martyr's death. They stood firm in their faith in Christ despite great opposition and persecution.

In Church history we have the example of Polycarp who stood firm for his Lord. When he was compelled to deny Christ and to worship Caesar as God, he refused and paid for it with his life. Here is his story:

The usual test applied to Christians was that they must call Caesar, the emperor, 'Lord', as if he were a divine person. Refusal to do so meant the death sentence. Taken before the Roman consul, Polycarp was required to

say, on oath, that he venerated Caesar in this way. But he was firm in his refusal. 'I have wild beasts' said the consul; 'if you refuse I will throw you to them'. 'Send for them' replied Polycarp. 'If you despise the wild beasts I will send you to the fire', said the consul; 'swear and I will release you: curse the Christ'. 'Eighty and six years have I served Christ' replied Polycarp, 'and he has done me no wrong; how then can I blaspheme my King who has saved me? You threaten the fire that burns for an hour and then is quenched; but you know not of the fire of the judgment to come, and the fire of the eternal punishment. Bring what you will'. The consul was astonished and sent a herald to announce to the people that Polycarp had confessed himself to be a Christian. When the torch was applied to the wood, and smoke and flames encircled him, again he prayed: 'Lord God, Father of our blessed Saviour, I thank thee that I have been deemed worthy to receive the crown of martyrdom, and that I may die for thee and for thy cause'. It is recorded that all the multitude 'marvelled at the great difference between the unbelievers and the elect'. They saw what Christian obedience meant, for Jesus had said, 'Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life' (Rev 2:10).⁵

Polycarp was a disciple of the Apostle John, and was a pastor of the church in Smyrna. He believed that his faith in Christ was worth dying for even when all people were against it. He had the determination to stand alone for Christ. He met his death in AD 150. Countless other Christians through history have suffered the same fate, but they knew that what they believed was worth dying for. This is illustrated by the above testimony of Polycarp when he showed that the fire he was about to face was nothing compared to eternal fire of God's punishment that all unbelievers would one day face.

No Compromise

As the early Christians stood and died for what they believed, such a stand is still needful today. Today, there are Christian martyrs in countries that are antagonistic to Christianity. Christians are holding on to their faith despite the persecution they face for it is a faith worth dying for. A believer's commitment to His Lord and His Word cannot be compromised for anything. The doctrine of Bible preservation is a fundamental doctrine of the Bible, a foundational truth that we cannot deny. It is a doctrine worth dying for!

Notes

¹ Not in the sense of terrorism, for terrorism is evil and criminal, and must be condemned.

² Thomas Watson, *A Body of Divinity* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth and Trust, reprint 1965), 27.

³ Michael C Bere, *Bible Doctrines for Today* (Pensacola: A Beka Book, 1996), 75.

⁴ Timothy Tow and Jeffrey Khoo, *A Theology for Every Christian: Knowing God and His Word* (Singapore: Far Eastern Bible College Press, 1998), 47.

⁵ S M Houghton, *Sketches from Church History* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1980), 18.

FEBC FACULTY UNITED ON VERBAL PLENARY PRESERVATION (VPP)

The original statement of the Bible-Presbyterian (BP) Church on the Holy Scriptures as stated in the constitution of many BP churches today reads, “*We believe in the divine, verbal and plenary inspiration of the Scriptures in the original languages, their consequent inerrancy and infallibility, and as the Word of God, the Supreme and final authority in faith and life*” (Article 4.2.1). Article 4.2.1 does not explicitly state or identify the Holy Scriptures in which we regard as the inspired, infallible and inerrant Word of God except that it is “the Scriptures in the original languages.” This was because when the BP Church in Singapore was founded in 1950, the humble, God-fearing leaders of the Church generally understood the Reformed and Protestant doctrine of Holy Scripture, and there was no need to express more than that which is contained in the wording of the Constitution. It ought also to be noted that the attack on Scripture in those days concerned the Scripture’s inspiration and not preservation. However, in this modern age of confusion over the nature and identity of the Holy Scriptures, the FEBC found it necessary to state in no uncertain terms what it believes to be the Holy Scriptures, 100% inspired and 100% preserved to the jot and tittle (Matt 5:18).

On February 27, 2007, the lecturers and tutors of the Far Eastern Bible College (FEBC) reaffirmed unanimously their commitment to the Statement of Faith drafted and approved by the Board of Directors and the Theological Faculty in 2003. Articles 4.2.1, and 4.2.1.1/2/3 of the Statement of Faith as contained in the FEBC Constitution read:

4.2.1 We believe in the divine, Verbal Plenary Inspiration (Autographs) and Verbal Plenary Preservation (Apographs) of the Scriptures in the original languages, their consequent inerrancy and infallibility, and as the perfect Word of God, the supreme and final authority in faith and life (2 Tim 3:16, 2 Pet 1:20-21, Ps 12:6-7, Matt 5:18, 24:35).

- 4.2.1.1 *We believe the Hebrew Old Testament and the Greek New Testament underlying the Authorised (King James) Version to be the very Word of God, infallible and inerrant.*
- 4.2.1.2 *We uphold the Authorised (King James) Version to be the Word of God—the best, most faithful, most accurate, most beautiful translation of the Bible in the English language, and do employ it alone as our primary scriptural text in the public reading, preaching, and teaching of the English Bible.*
- 4.2.1.3 *The Board of Directors and Faculty shall affirm their allegiance to the Word of God by taking the Dean Burgon Oath at every annual convocation: “I swear in the Name of the Triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit that I believe “the Bible is none other than the voice of Him that sitteth upon the throne. Every book of it, every chapter of it, every verse of it, every word of it, every syllable of it, every letter of it, is direct utterance of the Most High. The Bible is none other than the Word of God, not some part of it more, some part of it less, but all alike the utterance of Him that sitteth upon the throne, faultless, unerring, supreme.”*

Not only the FEBC, but the International Council of Christian Churches (ICCC) in 1998 and 2000, the Trinitarian Bible Society (TBS) in 2005, and the Dean Burgon Society (DBS) have all found it necessary to state clearly the nature and identity of the Holy Scriptures that we have in our hands today.¹ FEBC stands with them in their affirmation of the present infallibility and inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures, and the identification of the divinely preserved texts to be the Hebrew Masoretic Text and the Greek Textus Receptus.

We hereby beseech all Bible-believing Christians to affirm and defend the Biblical doctrines of the Verbal Plenary Inspiration (VPI) and Verbal Plenary Preservation (VPP) of the Holy Scriptures in the Traditional Hebrew Masoretic Text and the Greek Textus Receptus on which the Reformation Bible, the King James Bible, is based.

FEBC Constitution Article 4: Statement of Faith

- 4.1 The Statement of Faith of the College shall be in accordance with that system commonly called “the Reformed Faith” as expressed in the Confession of Faith as set forth by the historic Westminster Assembly together with the Larger and Shorter Catechisms.

Forever Infallible and Inerrant

- 4.2 In abbreviated form, the chief tenets of the doctrine of the College, apart from the Doctrinal Position Statement of the College, shall be as follows:
 - 4.2.1 We believe in the divine, Verbal Plenary Inspiration (Autographs) and Verbal Plenary Preservation (Apographs) of the Scriptures in the original languages, their consequent inerrancy and infallibility, and as the perfect Word of God, the supreme and final authority in faith and life (2 Tim 3:16, 2 Pet 1:20-21, Ps 12:6-7, Matt 5:18, 24:35).
 - 4.2.1.1 We believe the Hebrew Old Testament and the Greek New Testament underlying the Authorised (King James) Version to be the very Word of God, infallible and inerrant.
 - 4.2.1.2 We uphold the Authorised (King James) Version to be the Word of God—the best, most faithful, most accurate, most beautiful translation of the Bible in the English language, and do employ it alone as our primary scriptural text in the public reading, preaching, and teaching of the English Bible.
 - 4.2.1.3 The Board of Directors and Faculty shall affirm their allegiance to the Word of God by taking the Dean Burgon Oath at every annual convocation: “I swear in the Name of the Triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit that I believe “the Bible is none other than the voice of Him that sitteth upon the throne. Every book of it, every chapter of it, every verse of it, every word of it, every syllable of it, every letter of it, is direct utterance of the Most High. The Bible is none other than the Word of God, not some part of it more, some part of it less, but all alike the utterance of Him that sitteth upon the throne, faultless, unerring, supreme.”
 - 4.2.2 We believe in one God existing in three co-equal and co-eternal Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Deut 6:4, 1 John 5:7).
 - 4.2.3 We believe that Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, and is true God and true man in complete and direct fulfilment of Isaiah 7:14 (Matt 1:20-23, John 1:1, 14, Col 2:9).
 - 4.2.4 We believe God created the whole universe *ex nihilo* (out of nothing) by the Word of His mouth, and all very good, in the space of six literal or natural days (Gen 1:1, Exod 20:11, Ps 148:5, John 1:3, Col 1:16, Heb 11:3).

- 4.2.5 We believe that man was created in the image of God, but sinned through the fall of Adam, thereby incurring not only physical death but also spiritual death, which is separation from God and that all human beings are born with a sinful nature and become sinners in thought, word and deed (Gen 1:26-27, Rom 3:19-20, 5:12, 6:23).
- 4.2.6 We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died a propitiatory and expiatory death as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice, and that all who repent of their sins and believe in Him are justified before God on the grounds of His shed blood (Rom 5:8-11, 1 John 2:2, 1 Pet 1:18-19).
- 4.2.7 We believe in the bodily resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His ascension into Heaven, and in His exaltation at the right hand of God, where He intercedes for us as our High Priest and Advocate (1 Cor 15:1-4, 15-19, Phil 2:9-11, Heb 3:1, 4:14-16).
- 4.2.8 We believe in the personal, visible and premillennial return of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ to judge this world, restore His chosen nation Israel to greatness, and bring peace to the nations as King of kings and Lord of lords (Jer 3:17, Zech 14:9, Acts 1:6, Rom 11:26, Rev 20:1-7).
- 4.2.9 We believe that salvation is by grace through faith alone, not by works, and that all who repent and receive the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour are born again by the Holy Spirit and thereby become the children of God (Rom 5:1, 8:14-16, Eph 2:8-10, 1 Tim 2:5, Tit 3:5).
- 4.2.10 We believe that the ministry of the Holy Spirit is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ and to convict and regenerate the sinner, and indwell, guide, instruct and empower the believer for godly living and service (John 16:7-14, Rom 8:1-2).
- 4.2.11 We believe that Christ instituted the Sacrament of Baptism for believers and their children and the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, which sacraments shall be observed by His Church till He comes (Matt 28:19, 1 Cor 11:23-26).
- 4.2.12 We believe in the eternal security, bodily resurrection and eternal blessedness of the saved, and in the bodily resurrection and eternal conscious punishment of the lost (John 10:27-29, 1 Cor 15:51-53, 1 Thess 4:13-18, Rev 20:11-15).

- 4.2.13 We believe in the real, spiritual unity in Christ of all redeemed by His precious blood and the necessity of faithfully maintaining the purity of the Church in doctrine and life according to the Word of God, and the principle and practice of biblical separation from the apostasy of the day being spearheaded by the ecumenical movement, charismatic movement and other false movements that contradict the Holy Scriptures and the Historic Christian Faith (2 Cor 6:14-7:1, Jude 3, Rev 18:4).

Notes

¹ See ICCC, TBS, and DBS statements as published in *The Burning Bush* (July 2006): 72-73, and *The Burning Bush* (January 2007): 36-39.

PART II

Theologia

**“MY GLORY WILL I NOT GIVE TO ANOTHER”
(ISAIAH 42:8)**

Timothy Tow

The Lord God Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, declares, “I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another” (Isa 42:8). “Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD” (Jer 9:23-24).

All glory belongs to Him who created us. Let it be said again, “I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another.” Let the creature be humbled to the dust and whatsoever he speaks of the Creator, let Him receive all the power and the glory.

“He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him” (John 7:18). This is what our Lord Jesus, the Son of God, observes in puny man who exalts himself above his Creator, but the Son always glorifies the Father.

David, “a man after His own heart,” was so zealous for God’s glory that he swore to the limit of his strength to fight God’s enemy, “Do not I hate them, O LORD, that hate thee? and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? I hate them with a perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies” (Ps 139:21-22). David was “a man after His own heart.” He is one that loved His God with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his mind (Matt 22:37). Are you one who loves his God like King David? You will consequently hate with a holy hatred all that His enemy plots against Him.

There is one hidden hatred of puny man against his Creator when he speaks against His Word that it is not perfect. In so doing, puny man is

asserting himself and seeking glory for himself over his God. That is Jesus' observation in John 7:18 against the scholastic scribes and Pharisees, his sworn enemies. But by faith, yes by faith, for "without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is (God), and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him (in His Word)" (Heb 11:6). We have upheld the unchanging faith that God's Word is 100% perfect without any mistake from the time it was given to this day.

Does puny man know that:

- (1) "Thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name" (Ps 138:2);
- (2) "Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgements endureth for ever" (Ps 119:160);
- (3) "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matt 24:35, Mark 13:31, Luke 21:33);
- (4) "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);
- (5) "The scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35);
- (6) "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 Tim 3:16-17);
- (7) "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" (Ps 12:6-7)?

9

**THREE HEAVEN AND EARTH MOVING STATEMENTS
FROM GOD’S MOUTH SETTLE THE QUESTION
WHETHER HIS WORDS ARE PRESERVED**

Timothy Tow

Our Lord Jesus Christ declared three times in Matthew 24:35, Mark 13:31 and Luke 21:33 the same words, “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.” This settles the question whether His Words are preserved or not. Scholars who miss this statement but argue from other angles are missing the woods for the trees. If Jesus guarantees that His Words will remain longer than heaven and earth which He has created, its preservation will last longer than the creation.

Two instances in the Bible will illustrate our point. After God had written the Ten Commandments on two tablets of stone, Moses broke them in anger when he came down from the Mount and saw the children of Israel worshipping instead a golden calf they had made. Then God said to Moses, “Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first: and I will write upon these tables the words that were in the first tables, which thou brakest” (Exod 34:1).

The second instance is recorded in Jeremiah Chapter 36. God told Jeremiah to write in a book words that He had spoken to him against Israel and Judah and all nations. Then Jeremiah called Baruch, his secretary, to write in a book Jeremiah’s words from the Lord and read them to King Jehoiakim and all in the LORD’s house. When the king heard it, he cut up the book with a pen knife and burnt it. But God’s Words came to Jeremiah after all the words that were in the first roll had been burnt by King Jehoiakim. Then took Jeremiah another roll, and gave it to Baruch who wrote therein from the mouth of Jeremiah “all the former words that were in the first roll,” which Jehoiakim, king of Judah, had burned in the fire; and there were added besides unto them many like words. God’s Words cannot be broken (John 10:35) but only be preserved.

GOD'S SPECIAL PROVIDENTIAL CARE OF THE TEXT OF SCRIPTURE

Timothy Tow

There are two accounts recorded by Moses on the giving of the Ten Commandments. The first is in Exodus 19:16-21:26; 31:18-32:28; 34:1-4. The second is recorded in Deuteronomy 5:1-29; 9:10-21; 10:1-5. Deuteronomy means second giving of the Law. Deuteronomy is Moses' instruction to the children of Israel at the end of his life and of what greater importance is the giving of the Ten Commandments? For brevity, I have chosen to discuss from Deuteronomy and not Exodus.

The delivery of the Ten Commandments was made on the top of Mount Sinai, over 7,000 feet above sea level. The whole process took forty days and forty nights, amidst thunder and lightning, fire and smoke, the blowing of trumpet and the voice of Almighty God speaking to men. Then God wrote the sentences of the Ten Commandments with His own finger over the two tablets, front and back. In the climax of the forty days and nights, rebellion to God's promulgation of the Ten Commandments arose from the ground. The people had made a golden calf to substitute for Jehovah saying this was their god, whereupon Moses' wrath was kindled. When he was confronted by this golden calf, he became so angry that he threw the two tablets of law to the ground. Symbolically, God's Commandments were broken. The golden calf the children of Israel had made was ground into fine powder and mixed with water for Israel to drink, which was their punishment. Can puny man rebel against God's Word with impunity?

To re-establish the giving of the Law, God commanded Moses to hew another two tablets of stone and bring them with him back to the mountain top. "And he wrote on the tables, according to the first writing, the ten commandments, which the LORD spake unto you in the mount out of the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly: and the LORD gave them unto me. And I turned myself and came down from the mount,

and put the tables in the ark which I had made; and there they be, as the LORD commanded me” (Deuteronomy 10:4-5).

The Ark of the Covenant is the only holy furniture kept inside the Holy of Holies. God’s sacred commandments, intact and written on both sides of the two tablets so nothing can be added and nothing can be subtracted, were kept secure from any human intrusion. “For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven” (Psalm 119:89).

The restoration of the two tables is to show that heaven and earth shall pass away, but His words shall not pass away. Not one letter or even the cross of a ‘t,’ and the dot of an ‘i.’ “For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law.” Jesus says, “The scripture cannot be broken” (John 10:35).

To doubly confirm that heaven and earth shall pass away but God’s words shall not pass away, we have the record in Jeremiah 36 of how the prophet asked his secretary Baruch to write words of condemnation against the House of Judah and caused them to be read to Judah. When the roll Jeremiah dictated to Baruch was read before Jehoiakim, king of Judah, he cut it up and burned it wholly in the fire. Did God’s Word become ashes? God told Jeremiah to repeat His Words to be written by Baruch again and add more words for the punishment of King Jehoiakim. Can puny man rebel against God’s Word with impunity?

This leads us to the doctrine of God’s special providential care of the text of Scripture. This is affirmed by the Westminster Confession. It states that the Scripture is “kept pure in all ages.” This is doubly attested by David in Psalm 12:6-7, “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.” The doctrine of the special providential care of the text of Scripture, however, is denied by even some fundamentalist scholars. Dr. Carl McIntire has this commentary to make: “What is interesting about all this is that, in talking about the mighty acts of God and trying to make out of our God a great and powerful God, they have produced for us a God who is unable to give us a record that is true! They believe in the infallibility and inerrancy only in the autographs, but not in the subsequent copies.”

We believe the Textus Receptus (Received Text) upon which the KJV is based, is preserved intact for the church so that we can say we have the Word of God in our hands. But those versions that are based on

God's Special Providential Care of the Text of Scripture

Westcott and Hort who supplant with their corrupt text have made changes and deletions in 9,900 places in the New International Version (NIV). The text underlying NIV is not as the Westminster Confession says, "Kept pure in all ages." God has preserved for us a pure Bible as He preserved the Ten Commandments for us to this day. Let me say it again, it is the Textus Receptus on which the KJV is based.

11

THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD

Jeffrey Khoo

God is in control ... because He is still on the throne.

What is Providence? Providence is all about God and His Creation. The Westminster Confession of Faith (5.1), states, “God the great Creator of all things doth uphold, direct, dispose, and govern all creatures, actions, and things, from the greatest even to the least, by His most wise and holy providence, according to His infallible foreknowledge, and the free immutable counsel of His own will, to the praise of the glory of His wisdom, power, justice, goodness, and mercy.”

In other words, providence is God’s care of His creation and control over the affairs of man in high and low places, in small things and big things, so that whatever happens on earth and in history would ultimately fulfil His predetermined plan and glorify His Holy Name.

Providence simply tells us that *God is in control because He is still on the throne*. God is Cosmic Overseer and Supervisor. Nothing escapes Him, nothing happens by chance. There is no such thing as luck. Do not thank your “lucky stars”!

Where do we see God’s providential hand at work? We see it in His providential (1) maintenance of His Creation, (2) protection of His people, and (3) preservation of His words.

God’s Providential Maintenance of His Creation

Deism teaches that God, after He created the universe, got so tired that He took a long nap and never woke up. He is no longer in control or taking care of the universe He had created. Such a philosophy mocks God and is heretical. The Bible teaches an omnipotent God who is still very much alive and awake, and very much in control. The Psalmist wrote, “Let them praise the name of the LORD: for he commanded, and they were created. He hath also stablished them for ever and ever: he hath made a decree which shall not pass” (Ps 148:5-6); “Who covereth the

heaven with clouds, who prepareth rain for the earth, who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains. He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry” (Ps 147:8-9). The God who made the heavens and the earth continues to sustain His creation and His creatures.

Consider the fact that planet earth is hanging on nothing, suspended in thin air, and moving around the sun. Why does it not drop off the sky, or stray off course from its orbit? Is it not amazing that the earth rotates on its axis every 24 hours at a speed of 1,000 miles an hour, revolves around the sun once a year at a speed of 66,660 miles per hour, and yet stays on course? The earth is not like an uncontrolled spinning top. God is in control. He not only causes the earth to spin, but also controls its movement. The earth would either freeze or fry if it were just a fraction off course in relation to its distance from the sun.

We echo the words of Isaac Watts:

*Jesus shall reign where-e'er the sun
Does his successive journeys run,
His kingdom spread from shore to shore
Till moons shall wax and wane no more.*

Is not God’s providential maintenance of His creation perfect?

God’s Providential Protection of His People

As Christians we are the most happy people on earth. This is so because we have a Father in heaven who takes meticulous care of all our needs. “Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him ... Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. *Are ye not much better than they?* Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, *shall he not much more clothe you*, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for *your heavenly Father knoweth*

that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matt 6:8, 25-33).

God assures His people “that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose” (Rom 8:28). God knows the future. God knows what is good for us. Even when evil (illness, accidents, bereavement, retrenchment, failure, etc.) befall us, He knows how to work things out for us. He only asks that we love and trust Him 100%.

Here’s a story of God’s providential caretaking of His servant Charles Haddon Spurgeon:

“C. H. Spurgeon once had a singular experience. He had been out in the country to preach, and, when travelling back to London, suddenly found that he had lost his railway ticket. A gentleman, the only other occupant of the compartment, noticing that he was fumbling about in his pocket, said, ‘I hope you have not lost anything, sir?’ Spurgeon thanked him, and told him that he had lost his ticket, and that by a remarkable coincidence he had neither watch nor money with him. ‘But,’ added Spurgeon, ‘I am not at all troubled, for I have been on my Master’s business, and I am quite sure all will be well. I have had so many interpositions of divine Providence, in small matters as well as great ones that I feel as if, whatever happens to me, I am bound to fall on my feet.’ The gentleman seemed interested, and said that no doubt all would be right. When the ticket collector came to the compartment, he seemingly greeted Spurgeon’s companion with much respect, who simply said to him, ‘All right, William,’ whereupon the ticket collector again greeted him and left. After he had gone, Spurgeon said to the gentleman, ‘It is very strange that the collector did not ask for my ticket.’ ‘No, Mr Spurgeon,’ he replied, addressing him by name for the first time, ‘it is only another illustration of what you told me about the Providence of God watching over you, even in small matters; I am the general manager of the line, and it was no doubt divinely arranged that I should be your companion just when I could be of service to you.’”

Nothing at all can separate us from the love God has for us (Rom 8:38, 39). He will take care of us as He promised. So, why worry?

*Only trust Him, only trust Him, only trust Him now;
He will save you, He will save you, He will save you now.*

God's Providential Preservation of His Words

Jesus quoting Deut 8:3 said, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by *every word* that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matt 4:4). Every word of Holy Writ is vital for godly living. As such, God makes sure that every single one of His words is preserved “by His singular care and providence, kept pure in all ages” as stated in the Westminster Confession of Faith (1.8). This is in keeping with God’s promise to preserve His words even to the jot and tittle, “The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in the furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever” (Ps 12:6-7). “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, Mark 13:31, Luke 21:33).

God’s providential hand in the preservation of His inspired words is seen in the canonisation and transmission of Scripture. All the inspired NT books were completed by the end of the first century when the Apostle John wrote the last book of Revelation, and God warned against adding to or subtracting from His Word in Rev 22:18-19. However, we know that in the first few centuries, there were heretical men who penned spurious writings and passed them off as Scripture. Some of these were the Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Nicodemus, the Epistle of Barnabas, etc. Nevertheless, none of the inspired books of Scripture have been lost or obscured in the canonical process. By the providential guidance of the Holy Spirit, God’s people were led to identify the 27 inspired books of the Biblical Canon, no more, no less. There was a terminus to the canonisation of Scripture at the Council of Carthage in AD 397.

In like manner, the Lord allowed copyist errors to enter into the transmission process through the pen of fallible scribes. Nevertheless, His providential hand kept His inspired words of Scripture from being lost or corrupted. In light of God’s providence that nothing happens by chance and that history is under His sovereign control, in the fullness of time—in the most opportune time of the Reformation—when the true church separated from the false, when the study of the original languages was emphasised, and the printing press invented (which meant that no longer would there be any need to hand-copy the Scriptures thereby

ensuring a uniform text)—God restored from out of a pure stream of preserved Hebrew and Greek manuscripts, the purest of all Hebrew and Greek texts—the texts that underlie our King James Bible—that accurately reflect the original autographs.

The same powerful God who inspired His words to the jot and tittle, is He not powerful enough to preserve His inspired words in like manner? If God's providential keeping of His creation and His people is nothing short of perfect, how then can the providential preservation of His very own words be anything but perfect? “Yea, let God be true, but every man a liar” (Rom 3:4). As God is immutable, so is His Word. “The Law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul” (Ps 19:7). We not only have all the doctrines but also all the words of Holy Scripture.

*The Bible stands like a rock undaunted
'Midst the ranging storms of time;
Its pages burn with the truth eternal,
And they glow with a light sublime.
The Bible stands though the hills may tumble,
It will firmly stand when the earth shall crumble;
I will plant my feet on its firm foundation,
For the Bible stands.*

What a powerful and wonderful God we have! He is in control! He is still on the throne! Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever! Glory to His Name!

SEVEN BIBLICAL AXIOMS IN ASCERTAINING THE AUTHENTIC AND AUTHORITATIVE TEXTS OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

Jeffrey Khoo

Introduction

*Which Bible?*¹ This question raised by Dr David Otis Fuller in 1970 when he published his book by that title remains a pertinent question. There are over a hundred modern versions of the Bible and over 5000 Greek manuscripts today. The scholars are telling us, “No two manuscripts are alike.” We are told that we do not have the inspired originals, the autographs have long perished. What we have today are copies of the copies of the copies ... of the autographs. And the over 5000 copies we have today are full of errors; there are hundreds and thousands of mistakes they say.² Evangelicals today who have embraced such a view of Scripture are telling us that the Bible was only infallible and inerrant in the past—in the beginning, but it is not so infallible and inerrant today. This can be applied to the Bible texts and versions as well. No two are the same. In fact, some read very differently. They have caused a whole lot of confusion in the Church. Where is God’s Word? Which one is God’s Word? Do we have a clear and certain answer? Do we have a “more sure word of prophecy” (2 Pet 1:19)?

Does the answer come from the textual scholars and their rationalistic rules of textual criticism? The answer is no! These critics and their conjectures have only brought us to a dead end of unbelief and uncertainty. I have been schooled by such textual critics and learned their textual critical rules when I was in seminary. I might appear very scholarly when I use them, but ultimately I have found them to be incompatible with biblical faith and doctrine. Instead of building up my faith in God’s Word, they cause me to question and doubt the words of God. Do we really have all the words of God today? I found that I could not affirm the present perfection of God’s words through textual

criticism. It is impossible to identify God's words through such critical methods and rationalistic presuppositions. The true biblical scholar should be "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor 10:5).

What we need are God-given principles and not man-made rules in our identification of the authentic and authoritative Scriptures the Lord had inspired and preserved. Allow me to submit to you seven biblical axioms which would guide us in our thinking and determination of what are precisely the authentic and authoritative source texts of Holy Scripture.

Epangelical Axiom

God has promised many things to His people, and one of the most important promises besides the promise of salvation is the promise of Scripture, that His inspired words once given will be forever preserved. We know this from Psalm 12:6, 7, "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."

Those who deny that the Bible teaches preservation are wont to disagree, saying that verse 7 refers to the preservation of His people, not His words. They say that verse 7 points back to the people of verse 5, but the switch from the first singular pronoun "I" in verse 5 and second singular pronoun "Thou" in verse 7 could indicate a shift in thought, from the preservation of people in verse 5, to the preservation of words in verse 7. We do not doubt at all that God has promised to preserve His people, but I believe by a synonymous parallelism, the author in verse 7 was thinking of the preservation of the words that he had just declared as perfectly pure and purified in verse 6. Note that not just the pronouns for God do not agree, "I" in verse 5 and "Thou" in verse 7, the pronouns used with reference to the objects of preservation also disagree, it is "him" in verse 5 and "them" in verse 7. Now, "him" in verse 5 is in italics, ie the pronoun is supplied and is not in the original. Why did the King James translators not use the pronoun "them" but "him"? It is possible that the King James translators did so to distinguish between the people and the words, to show that verse 7 must naturally follow verse 6 and not verse 5, and that the preservation of "them" refers to the "words"

that were mentioned in the previous verse, God's promise to protect "him" (the poor and the needy in verse 5) notwithstanding.³

It is significant to note that Dr Carl McIntire the founding pastor of the historic Bible Presbyterian Church in Collingswood understood verse 7 to mean the preservation of the divinely inspired words of God. In a sermon he preached in 1992, entitled "Help, LORD!", from Psalm 12, he said,

Now come verse 6, 'The words of the LORD are pure words,' not one of them is mistaken, 'as silver tried in the furnace of earth, purified seven times.' All the dregs are out. Here is a marvelous affirmation and vindication that God's Word is perfect. ... Now, 'The words of the LORD are pure words.' And then verse 7, how I love this: 'Thou shalt keep them O LORD,' that is, keep His words; 'thou shalt preserve them from this generation forever.' No matter what happens, one generation comes and another passes away, God is going to preserve His words ... from one generation to another. The words of God will be preserved throughout all the generations.⁴

Another clear text that proves the doctrine of biblical preservation is Matthew 5:18 where Jesus said, "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." This was the proof text cited by the Westminster theologians when they stated their belief in the extraordinary providence involved in the verbal and plenary preservation of God's Word. The Westminster Confession of Faith (1:8) states, "The Old Testament in Hebrew ... and the New Testament in Greek ... being immediately inspired by God, and, by His singular care and providence, kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentical; so as, in all controversies of religion, the Church is finally to appeal unto them."⁵ The Helvetic Consensus Formula likewise affirmed,

God, the Supreme Judge, not only took care to have His word, which is the "power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Rom. 1:16), committed to writing by Moses, the Prophets, and the Apostles, but has also watched and cherished it with paternal care ever since it was written up to the present time, so that it could not be corrupted by craft of Satan or fraud of man. Therefore the Church justly ascribes it to His singular grace and goodness that she has, and will have to the end of the world, a "sure word of prophecy" and "Holy Scriptures" (2 Tim. 3:15), from which, though heaven and earth perish, "one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass" (Matt. 5:18).⁶

Thus, we believe in God's promise—every word is preserved, no word to the last letter and syllable is lost. We believe God is Truth and truthful. 2 Corinthians 1:20 says, "For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us." We believe God kept His promise to preserve all of His inspired words.

Linguistic Axiom

The inspired words that God has preserved are the original language words of Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek. The divinely inspired (*theopneustos*, 2 Tim 3:16) Scriptures are the Hebrew/Aramaic Old Testament and the Greek New Testament. Strictly speaking, the divinely inspired or breathed-out words are not the translated words but the Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek words originally penned by Moses, the Prophets, and the Apostles. The sole, supreme, and final authority of the Christian Faith rests upon these very words of God in the original languages, not any other foreign language words be they English, Chinese, Spanish, Korean, etc. Although the King James Version is a most blessed translation of the Bible in the English language being very faithful and true to the inspired original language texts, it is not an "inspired" translation, and not superior to its underlying Hebrew and Greek texts.

The Dean Burgon Society is clear in its position as regards the verbal and plenary inspiration and preservation of the Holy Scriptures as found in the Traditional and Reformation texts as spelled out in its Articles of Faith II.A,

II. ARTICLES OF FAITH

Acknowledging the Bible to be the inerrant, infallible, plenary and verbally inspired Word of God, among other equally Biblical truths, we believe and maintain the following:

A. THE BIBLE. We believe in the plenary, verbal, Divine inspiration of the sixty-six canonical books of the Old and the New Testaments (from Genesis to Revelation) in the original languages, and in their consequent infallibility and inerrancy in all matters of which they speak (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 Thessalonians 2:13). The books known as the Apocrypha, however, are not the inspired Word of God in any sense whatsoever. As the Bible uses it, the term "inspiration" refers to the writings, not the writers (2 Timothy 3:16-17); the writers are spoken of as being "holy men of God" who were "moved," "carried" or "borne" along by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21) in such a definite way that their writings were supernaturally,

Seven Biblical Axioms

plenarily, and verbally inspired, free from any error, infallible, and inerrant, as no other writings have ever been or ever will be inspired.

We believe that the Texts which are the closest to the original autographs of the Bible are the Traditional Masoretic Hebrew Text for the Old Testament, and the traditional Greek Text for the New Testament underlying the King James Version (as found in “The Greek Text Underlying The English Authorized Version of 1611”).

We believe that the King James Version (or Authorized Version) of the English Bible is a true, faithful, and accurate translation of these two providentially preserved Texts, which in our time has no equal among all of the other English Translations. The translators did such a fine job in their translation task that we can without apology hold up the Authorized Version of 1611 and say “This is the WORD OF GOD!” while at the same time realizing that, in some verses, we must go back to the underlying original language Texts for complete clarity, and also compare Scripture with Scripture.

We believe that all the verses in the King James Version belong in the Old and the New Testaments because they represent words we believe were in the original texts, although there might be other renderings from the original languages which could also be acceptable to us today. For an exhaustive study of any of the words or verses in the Bible, we urge the student to return directly to the Traditional Masoretic Hebrew Text and the Traditional Received Greek Text rather than to any other translation for help.⁷

Dr Lynn Gray Gordon, a Bible-Presbyterian minister and former General Secretary of the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions (IBPFM), in his book *The World's Greatest Truths*, rightly said, “Although the King James Version is free from error in thought, fact and doctrine, that is not to say this version is the ‘inspired version.’”⁸ We agree. We reject the “inspired version,” “advanced revelation,” and “super superiority” position of Peter Ruckman and Gail Riplinger. Although the King James Version is not an inspired version, we nonetheless uphold it as the Word of God because it is such a faithful, accurate and reliable translation of the originally inspired and providentially preserved words of God, and has blessed many millions of God’s people throughout the 400 years of its existence. This is no fluke, but God’s approval of the work of godly and faithful translators in the time of the Reformation. So, as English readers and speakers, we are wont to stick to the good old version, the King James Version, and its good old underlying texts.

This biblical position on the preservation of the inspired words of God in the Hebrew Masoretic Text and the Greek Textus Receptus, and the goodness and faithfulness of the King James Version was affirmed by the International Council of Christian Churches (ICCC) under the late Dr Carl McIntire back in 1998 and 2000. The ICCC at its 50th anniversary World Congress in Amsterdam in 1998 passed a resolution urging

all Bible-believing churches worldwide to use only the Authorized KING JAMES VERSION in their services and in their teaching ministry, and warn the followers of Christ against these innumerable ‘new’ bibles which are not translations at all, but revisions conforming to the personal bias and views of those who have originated them and who are profiting by commercial sales of such.⁹

In the year 2000 in Jerusalem, the ICCC, in a resolution on the Bible titled, “Forever Infallible and Inerrant”, they rightly declared,

[T]he O.T. has been preserved in the Masoretic text and the N.T. in the Textus Receptus, combined they gave us the complete Word of God. The King James Version in English has been faithfully translated from these God-preserved manuscripts.¹⁰

The Lord calls on all His people to stick to the good old paths, “Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls” (Jer 6:16). The good old Traditional and Reformation Texts underlying the King James Version bear the marks of these old paths that faithful believers in the past had walked in, and we today want to walk in the same way with them.

Temporal Axiom

The authentic Scriptures are the Scriptures that show the marks of continuity, being always available and easily accessible to God’s people. Jesus promised three times, “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.” (Matt 24:35, Mark 13:31, and Luke 21:33). God has promised to preserve every one of His inspired Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek words perfectly to the jot and tittle so that His people in every generation and at all times would possess all of His words and all of His truths in the 66 books of Canonical Scripture which serve as the sole, supreme and final authority of all Christian beliefs and practices.

The Westcott and Hort Text of 1881 and all the critical texts that followed, based primarily on the scandalously corrupt manuscripts like the Codex Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, were not the texts that manifest the marks of continuous and perpetual preservation. They might be old fourth century manuscripts, but they were not the texts that have been continuously and perpetually available and accessible to God's people down through the ages. In fact, God made sure that these manuscripts were kept away from His people precisely because they were corrupted manuscripts. The authentic manuscripts would be the manuscripts that have been faithfully transmitted and passed down from generation to generation, always read, used, and studied by the believers throughout the ages, and held up as the sole, supreme, and final authority of their faith and practice. Those Scriptures were the faithfully and continuously used Traditional Text and not the Westcott and Hort Text which appeared in 1881 and scissored away no less than 9970 words from the Traditional Text.¹¹ If we say that the Westcott and Hort Text is the authentic and authoritative text, then we are saying that God has failed in His work of preservation, for it would mean that the Church for 1800 years have been using the wrong text, and if so, her faith in the Word of God as found in the Traditional Text has been totally misplaced! This surely cannot be, for God is true to His Word and to His saints, and by virtue of His promise, we can see that it is the continuously preserved Traditional Text that bears the marks of an unbroken lineage as promised by our Lord, "the scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35). As such, Dean Burgon was absolutely correct to say,

I am utterly disinclined to believe—so grossly improbable does it seem—that at the end of 1800 years 995 copies out of every thousand, suppose will prove untrustworthy; and that the one, two, three, four or five which remain, whose contents were till yesterday as good as unknown, will be found to have retained the secret of what the Holy Spirit originally inspired. I am utterly unable to believe, in short, that God's promise has so entirely failed, that at the end of 1800 years much of the text of the Gospel has in point of fact to be picked by a German critic out of a waste-paper basket in the convent of St. Catherine; and that the entire text had to be remodeled after the pattern set by a couple of copies which had remained in neglect during fifteen centuries, and had probably owed their survival to that neglect; whilst hundreds of others had been thumbed to pieces, and had bequeathed their witness to copies made from them.¹²

We not only celebrate the 400 years of the King James Version, but more significantly the 4000 years God has preserved His words to the jot and tittle so that in every age, God's people might have His every word to believe and live by.

Ecclesiastical Axiom

The Church that God has called out and is faithful does not critique or criticise His Word but receives it by faith. It is not the rationalistic but the faith approach that pleases God. Romans 1:17 says, "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith." Faith pleases God. Hebrews 11:6 says, "But 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." Faith takes God at His Word—"God says it, that settles it, we believe it." This is not to say that faith is void of reason. Our faith is a very reasonable faith and it is only so because it is based on the Truth. What is Truth? God's Word is Truth (John 17:17).

The spirit of faith causes faithful saints to receive the Word with childlike humility, believing all that it says without any doubt or question. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth and He indwells the saints. The Bible is the Word of Truth and can only be appreciated and understood if we have the Spirit of Truth. That was why Jesus said, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come." (John 16:13). "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But 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 Cor 2:11-14).

Having received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit of God, we are able to discern truth from error, right from wrong. We are able to tell whether it is our Saviour who speaks or Satan, and will follow Christ and not the devil. Jesus said, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and

they follow me” (John 10:27). Consider how the New Testament saints received the Word: They received the Word of God (1) gladly and obediently (Acts 2:41), (2) studiously with a ready mind to know the truth (Acts 17:11), (3) unwaveringly despite great opposition and persecution (1 Thess 1:6), and (4) without doubting that it is 100% perfect without any mistake (1 Thess 2:13).

This certainty that Christians have concerning the Holy Scriptures that God had inspired and preserved, infallible and inerrant is something stated most clearly in the Westminster Confession of Faith (1.5),

We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the Church to an high and reverent esteem of the Holy Scripture. And the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole (which is, to give all glory to God), the full discovery it makes of the only way of man’s salvation, the many other incomparable excellencies, and the entire perfection thereof, are arguments whereby it doth abundantly evidence itself to be the Word of God: yet notwithstanding, our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts.¹³

The Holy Scriptures that the Reformation Church held up as their sole, supreme and final authority were the Hebrew Masoretic Text and the Greek Textus Receptus on which the King James Bible and all other Reformation Bibles were based. They are the authentic and authoritative texts the Church has received down through the ages as the very Word of God, infallible and inerrant. Dean Burgon averred,

The Church, remember, hath been from the beginning the ‘Witness and Keeper of Holy Writ.’ Did not her Divine Author pour out upon her, in largest measure, ‘the SPIRIT of Truth;’ and pledge Himself that it should be that SPIRIT’S special function to ‘guide’ her children ‘into all the Truth’? ... That by a perpetual miracle, Sacred Manuscripts would be protected all down the ages against depraving influences of whatever sort,—was not to have been expected; certainly was never promised. But the Church, in her collective capacity, hath nevertheless—as a matter of fact—been perpetually purging herself of those shamefully depraved copies which once everywhere abounded within her pale.¹⁴

But the apostate spirit of this age seeks to counterfeit and replicate and fake the Christian Faith by means of fallacious methods and false texts. This spirit finds its origins in the apostate periods of increasing unbelief found in liberalism, neo-evangelicalism and postmodernism of

the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries respectively. But one thing is for sure, the Lord knows those who are His. Despite Satan's many attempts to confuse and corrupt the Gospel and the Bible, the Lord will keep His people safe for the Holy Spirit will guide them into all truth. His people will be able to recognise His voice and receive His words and will follow His truth that is found in the inspired and preserved Scriptures.

Evangelistic Axiom

The Great Commission which is Christ's first commandment to His New Testament Church tells us to preach the gospel of salvation in Christ, baptise in the name of the triune God, and teach the whole counsel of God to "all nations" (Matt 28:18-20). To do this, the Holy Scriptures are essential and indispensable. In fulfilment of the Great Commission, God and His chosen instrument—namely His Church—would see to it that the Holy Scriptures would be faithfully copied and carefully translated, multiplied, and made available and accessible to the whole world. In keeping with Jesus' prophetic words to His disciples just before His ascension, the gospel and the Scriptures have truly gone out, not only in Jerusalem, but also Judea and Samaria, even unto the uttermost part of the earth (Acts 1:8). The Gospel can be read in over 2000 languages, and the Bible has been translated into the world's major languages, and more can be done. The Trinitarian Bible Society has been admirable in doing this—translating, publishing, and distributing faithful and trustworthy Bibles which have been translated from the inspired original language Scriptures God has preserved, namely, the Hebrew Masoretic Text and Greek Textus Receptus.¹⁵

By virtue of the Great Commission, we can expect the authentic Scriptures to be those found in the majority of the manuscripts or what has been known as the Byzantine text. It is a fact that the majority of the New Testament Greek manuscripts bear remarkable uniformity and harmony. The scribal errors and corruptions have been minimal. This however was certainly not true of the minority manuscripts of Westcott and Hort. Using the Textus Receptus as the standard, Burgon compared the Westcott and Hort uncials to see how much these manuscripts agree with the Majority Text as represented by the Textus Receptus. This was what he found when he compared the Gospels of the Textus Receptus with those of the five Westcott-Hort codices: "the serious deflections of A from the Textus Receptus amount in all to only 842: whereas in C they

amount to 1798: in B, 2370: in [*aleph*], to 3392: in D, to 4697.”¹⁶ Of the 5255 extant Greek manuscripts (as of 1967), 5217 agree with the Textus Receptus, and only 45 agree with the corrupt Westcott-Hort Text.¹⁷ This shows that these so-called “oldest and most reliable manuscripts” are very different from the Traditional Text used by the Church down through the ages. Burgon was absolutely correct to conclude, “With regret we record our conviction, that these accomplished scholars [ie, Westcott and Hort] have succeeded in producing a Text [ie, Minority Text] vastly more remote from the inspired autographs of the Evangelists than any which has appeared since the invention of printing [ie, the Textus Receptus]”.¹⁸

It is necessary to add that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is seriously undermined in the Alexandrian manuscripts and the Westcott-Hort Text. Two examples are enough to prove the point. In John 1:18, the original and traditional reading as found in the Textus Receptus is “the only begotten Son,” but the Westcott-Hort Text reads, “the only begotten God”. The latter reading is clearly heretical, a reading favoured by the Gnostics and Arians. Dean Burgon had traced this corruption of the Holy Scriptures to the heresiarch Valentinus who denied that Jesus Christ was the *Logos* (“Word”) of John 1:1 and 14, and declared that the *Logos* and the Son were actually two distinct beings and hence not the same. It is thus no surprise that Arius whose heresy is today held by the Jehovah’s Witnesses, favoured the corrupt reading “the only begotten God” over against the original and traditional reading.¹⁹ If Jesus was in any way less than God as Valentinus and Arius would have it, then He could not be our God and Saviour and we would still be in our sins and of all people most miserable.

The second example is 1 Timothy 3:16. The Textus Receptus reads correctly as “God was manifest in the flesh”, but the Alexandrian text has it as, “who was manifest in the flesh.” According to Dr E F Hills, the original reading, “God was manifest in the flesh,”

was altered by the Gnostics into the Western reading, *which was manifest in the flesh*, in order to emphasize their favorite idea of mystery. Then this Western reading was later changed into the meaningless Alexandrian reading, *who was manifest in the flesh*.²⁰

The translators of the New International Version (NIV) have adopted the corrupt reading and by so doing have undermined (1) the deity of Christ by removing “God” and replacing it with just “He,” and (2) the humanity of Christ by replacing “the flesh” with “a body” (a body

may not be necessarily be of “flesh and blood”). The word in the original is *sarx* (“flesh”) and not *soma* (“body”). The corrupt reading of the Westcott-Hort Text and modern versions like the NIV seriously undermine the doctrine of Christ—His perfect deity and perfect humanity—and this is invariably detrimental to the Gospel of Christ.

Therefore, we are moved by the Gospel of Jesus Christ to go with the Byzantine manuscripts and the Textus Receptus that consistently bear the marks of Christological-evangelistic orthodoxy.

Doxological Axiom

Every biblical scholar must study the Holy Scriptures with the glory of God foremost in his heart and mind. This is in keeping with how God Himself regards His Word. Such a doxological spirit was found in David when he said, “I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name” (Ps 138:2). It was also the attitude of John the Baptist, “He must increase, but I must decrease.” (John 3:30). This doxological spirit was also seen in our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, for when He was on earth He sought only to glorify His Father in all His words and deeds (John 17:4). As such, it behoves the biblical scholar to promote truth and orthodoxy in his interpretation of Scripture. Any interpretation that leads to a glorification and exaltation and the very highest view of God and His Truth must be accepted, and any that results in a diminished or lesser view of God and His Truth rejected. “Yea, let God be true, but every man a liar” (Rom 3:4).

By virtue of this axiom, the textual critical approach to the Scriptures must necessarily be rejected for it denies the doctrine of the verbal and plenary preservation of the Scriptures, and rejects the theological or theocentric approach in identifying and ascertaining the inspired and authentic texts. The modern textual critics say that the theological approach is non-scientific and unintelligent and therefore invalid. They denounce as obscurantists and even heretics those who employ the logic of faith to the whole matter of determining the autographic text of Scripture by way of receiving the very apographs of Scripture that God has supernaturally preserved down through the ages which leads to a certain and tangible fixed text and not an arbitrary and intangible fluid or evolving text. It is thus no surprise that evangelical scholars who have abandoned the theological approach and embraced the

rationalistic approach of textual criticism have also abandoned the inerrancy of Scripture and advocate an inerrancy that is confined only to a Scripture that they aver no longer exists (ie, the autographs). Hence to them the Bible today is not 100% infallible and inerrant—the Bible was only infallible and inerrant in the past, but it is no longer as infallible and inerrant today. Such a view takes away the glory of God and reduces the Bible to a mere human book stripped of all its divine and absolute authority as the Word of God. The textual critic and his rules become the authority and it is he who has the know-how and is the know-all on what the Church is to believe or not believe about God's words. Who is glorified in the whole textual critical exercise? Not God but man.

Has the Church at large become more godly and Christ-honouring with the introduction of textual criticism since the 19th century? No, in fact it has become more deadly. Many churches after a century of textual criticism have already died, and become synagogues of Satan. The only way the Church is going to be revived is to reform the Church and teach her to think and act doxologically—the glory of God must always be first and foremost in the thinking and conduct of the Christian and of the Church—"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matt 6:33). Isaiah 42:8 says, "I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another."

Let us pay heed to the Apostle Paul's admonition in 1 Corinthians 1:18-31,

For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of

the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

Dr E F Hills was absolutely correct to say, “We must make God and Jesus Christ His Son the starting point of all our thinking.”²¹ But there is great resistance even rebellion today in many a Bible college and seminary which instead of teaching students to begin with God and His Word, they teach their students to begin with the thoughts and methods of men, many of whom are unbelievers. In the field of textual criticism, I was told by my college and seminary professors, “Go to Metzger, go to Aland, Westcott and Hort are good and godly.” But I discovered that these men were unbelievers and apostates. According to Hills, the unqualified recommendation of unregenerate scholars and their scholarship is destructive.

Hills offered the only approach which is God-honouring and soul-saving. “If we are Christians, then we must begin our thinking not with the assertions of unbelieving scholars, and their naturalistic human logic, but with Christ and the logic of faith.”²² He explained how the theological-doxological approach works.

For example, how do we know that the Textus Receptus is the true New Testament text? We know this through the logic of faith. Because the Gospel is true, the Bible which contains this Gospel was infallibly inspired by the Holy Spirit. And because the Bible was infallibly inspired, it has been preserved by God’s special providence. Moreover, this providential preservation was not done privately in secret holes and caves but publicly in the usage of God’s Church. Hence the true New Testament text is found in the majority of the New Testament manuscripts. And this providential preservation did not cease with the invention of printing. Hence the formation of the Textus Receptus was God-guided.

And how do we know that the King James Version is a faithful translation of the true New Testament text? We know this also through the logic of faith. Since the formation of the Textus Receptus was God-guided, the translation of it was God-guided also. For as the Textus Receptus was being formed, it was also being translated. The two processes were simultaneous. Hence the early Protestant versions, such as Luther’s, Tyndale’s, the Geneva, and the King James, were actually varieties of the Textus Receptus.

And this was necessarily so according to the principles of God's preserving providence. For the *Textus Receptus* had to be translated in order that the universal priesthood of believers, the rank and file, might give it their God-guided approval.

In biblical studies, ... and in every other learned field we must begin with Christ and then work out our basic principles according to the logic of faith. This procedure will show us how to utilize the learning of non-Christian scholars in such a way as to profit by their instruction. Undeniably these unbelievers know a great many facts by virtue of God's common grace. They misinterpret these facts, however, because they ignore and deny God's revelation of Himself in and through the facts. Hence our task is to point out the inconsistencies and absurdities of unbelieving thought and then to take the facts which learned unbelievers have assembled and place them in their proper framework of biblical truth.

For example, if we begin with Christ, then we will understand what language is, namely the medium in which God reveals the facts unto men and also Himself in and through the facts. And if we adopt this basic position, then the study of Greek grammar, and especially the history of it, will prove immensely profitable to us and will strengthen our faith, for then we will see how God in His providence has preserved the knowledge of Greek grammar from the days of the ancient Alexandrian grammarians down to the time of Erasmus and the Protestant Reformers and even up until now. Such a survey certainly increases our confidence in the King James translators. Judged even by modern standards, their knowledge of the biblical languages was second to none.

Begin with Christ and the Gospel and follow the logic of faith. This is the principle that must guide us in our graduate studies, especially in the biblical field. If we adhere to it, then everything we learn will fit beautifully into its place in the Christian thought-system. But if we ignore Christ and adopt a neutral approach to knowledge, we will soon lose ourselves in a wilderness of details and grow more and more chaotic in our thinking.²³

Historical Axiom

The God of the Bible is not a God who is absent. He is very much present and at work, controlling and directing all the events of the world and in the Church to fulfil His predetermined and perfect plan of salvation. His plan of salvation is fully revealed in His Written Word—the Holy Scriptures. In them, we find many prophecies and promises, and we see them being fulfilled and kept by God to the last detail. The only way whereby God's people may know His mind and will is through His Book of prophecies and promises, and these prophecies and promises

inscribed in Scripture must necessarily be preserved intact and without amendments or corruptions, or else we would be left very unsure and confused about the intent and contents of God's prophecies and promises, whether they are actually the original prophecies and promises or whether they have been altered or changed along the way. Unless God did exactly what He promised to do, that is to preserve His words infallibly so that every word, syllable and letter would be precisely what He had originally given, we would be thrown into all kinds of confusion and uncertainty with regard to what God has bequeathed to His people in the two Testaments of Holy Scripture.

In history, God proved that He has always been mindful to preserve and keep His words pure and uncorrupted. There are at least two biblical precedents of God's preservation of His words. The Rev Dr Timothy Tow ably explained this in his article, "God's Special Providential Care of the Text of Scripture",

There are two accounts recorded by Moses on the giving of the Ten Commandments. The first is in Exodus 19:16-21:26; 31:18-32:28; 34:1-4. The second is recorded in Deuteronomy 5:1-29; 9:10-21; 10:1-5. Deuteronomy means second giving of the Law. Deuteronomy is Moses' instruction to the children of Israel at the end of his life and of what greater importance is the giving of the Ten Commandments? For brevity, I have chosen to discuss from Deuteronomy and not Exodus.

The delivery of the Ten Commandments was made on the top of Mount Sinai, over 7,000 feet above sea level. The whole process took forty days and forty nights, amidst thunder and lightning, fire and smoke, the blowing of trumpet and the voice of Almighty God speaking to men. Then God wrote the sentences of the Ten Commandments with His own finger over the two tablets, front and back. In the climax of the forty days and nights, rebellion to God's promulgation of the Ten Commandments arose from the ground. The people had made a golden calf to substitute for Jehovah saying this was their god, whereupon Moses' wrath was kindled. When he was confronted by this golden calf, he became so angry that he threw the two tablets of law to the ground. Symbolically, God's Commandments were broken. The golden calf the children of Israel had made was ground into fine powder and mixed with water for Israel to drink, which was their punishment. Can puny man rebel against God's Word with impunity?

To re-establish the giving of the Law, God commanded Moses to hew another two tablets of stone and bring them with him back to the mountain top. "And he wrote on the tables, according to the first writing, the ten commandments, which the LORD spake unto you in the mount out of the

midst of the fire in the day of the assembly: and the LORD gave them unto me. And I turned myself and came down from the mount, and put the tables in the ark which I had made; and there they be, as the LORD commanded me” (Deuteronomy 10:4-5).

The Ark of the Covenant is the only holy furniture kept inside the Holy of Holies. God’s sacred commandments, intact and written on both sides of the two tablets so nothing can be added and nothing can be subtracted, were kept secure from any human intrusion. “For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven” (Psalm 119:89).

The restoration of the two tables is to show that heaven and earth shall pass away, but His words shall not pass away. Not one letter or even the cross of a ‘t,’ and the dot of an ‘i.’ “For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law.” Jesus says, “The scripture cannot be broken” (John 10:35).

To doubly confirm that heaven and earth shall pass away but God’s words shall not pass away, we have the record in Jeremiah 36 of how the prophet asked his secretary Baruch to write words of condemnation against the House of Judah and caused them to be read to Judah. When the roll Jeremiah dictated to Baruch was read before Jehoiakim, king of Judah, he cut it up and burned it wholly in the fire. Did God’s Word become ashes? God told Jeremiah to repeat His Words to be written by Baruch again and add more words for the punishment of King Jehoiakim. Can puny man rebel against God’s Word with impunity?

This leads us to the doctrine of God’s special providential care of the text of Scripture. This is affirmed by the Westminster Confession. It states that the Scripture is “kept pure in all ages.” This is doubly attested by David in Psalm 12:6-7, “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.” The doctrine of the special providential care of the text of Scripture, however, is denied by even some fundamentalist scholars. Dr. Carl McIntire has this commentary to make: “What is interesting about all this is that, in talking about the mighty acts of God and trying to make out of our God a great and powerful God, they have produced for us a God who is unable to give us a record that is true! They believe in the infallibility and inerrancy only in the autographs, but not in the subsequent copies.”

We believe the Textus Receptus (Received Text) upon which the KJV is based, is preserved intact for the church so that we can say we have the Word of God in our hands. But those versions that are based on Westcott and Hort who supplant with their corrupt text have made changes and deletions in 9,900 places in the New International Version (NIV). The text

underlying NIV is not as the Westminster Confession says, “kept pure in all ages.” God has preserved for us a pure Bible as He preserved the Ten Commandments for us to this day. Let me say it again, it is the Textus Receptus on which the KJV is based.²⁴

It ought to be noted that God’s providential preservation of His Scripture is not ordinary but extraordinary, not a hands off but a hands on preservation of His words. The deistic heresy that God inspired His Word but did nothing to preserve it must be rejected. Dr Timothy Tow rightly said,

If Deism teaches a Creator who goes to sleep after creating the world is absurd, to hold to the doctrine of inspiration without preservation is equally illogical ... inspiration and preservation are linked one to another. Without preservation, all the inspiration, God-breathing into the Scriptures, would be lost. But we have a Bible so pure and powerful in every word and it is so because God has preserved it down through the ages.²⁵

I believe God providentially guided the King James translators to produce the purest Textus Receptus of all. The earlier editions were individual efforts, but the Textus Receptus underlying the King James Version is a corporate effort of 54 of the most outstanding biblical-theological, and more importantly, Bible-believing scholars of their day. And as the Scripture says, “in a multitude of counsellors there is safety” (Prov 11:14). The King James translators had all the various editions of the Textus Receptus to refer to, and they made their decisions with the help of the Holy Spirit. I believe the Lord providentially guided the King James translators to make the right textual decisions. As such, I do not believe we need to improve on the Textus Receptus underlying the King James Version. No one should play textual critic, and be a judge of God’s Word today. God is His own Textual Critic. I accept God’s special providential work in history during the great 16th Century Protestant Reformation.

Now the question remains: Why the Textus Receptus underlying the King James Version and not Luther’s German Bible, or the Spanish Reina Valera, or the Polish Biblia Gdanska, or the French Martin Bible, or some other language Bible? Now we do not deny there are faithful and reliable versions that are accurately translated and based on the Textus Receptus, nor do we discount the need for foreign language Bibles, but here is Dr Hills’s reply to the question:

God in His providence has abundantly justified this confidence of the King James translators. The course of history has made English a world-wide

language which is now the native tongue of at least 300 million people and the second language of many millions more. For this reason the King James Version is known the world over and is more widely read than any other translation of the holy Scriptures. Not only so, but the King James Version has been used by many missionaries as a basis and guide for their own translation work and in this way has extended its influence even to converts who know no English. For more than 350 years therefore the reverent diction of the King James Version has been used by the Holy Spirit to bring the Word of life to millions upon millions of perishing souls. Surely this is a God-guided translation on which God, working providentially, has placed the stamp of His approval.²⁶

This is in keeping with Jesus' words, "Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit ... Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matt 7:17-20).

I believe the purity of God's Word has been faithfully maintained throughout the whole transmission of the Traditional/Byzantine/Majority/Received Text, and is fully represented in the Apographs of the Hebrew Masoretic Text for the Old Testament and the Greek Textus Receptus for the New Testament underlying the King James Version. E F Hills rightly concluded, "We are guided by the common faith. Hence we favour that form of the Textus Receptus upon which more than any other, God working providentially, has placed the stamp of His approval, namely, the King James Version, or, more precisely, the Greek Text underlying the King James Version."²⁷ I also agree with Hills who warned, "We must be very cautious therefore about finding errors in the text of the King James Version, and the same holds true also in the realm of translation. Whenever the renderings of the King James Version are called in question, it is usually the accuser that finds himself in the wrong."²⁸

As regards the Traditional Text being a "virtual photocopy" of the original, G I Williamson did write to this effect in his commentary on the Westminster Confession concerning preservation,

This brings us to the matter of God's 'singular care and providence' by which He has 'kept pure in all ages' this original text, so that we now actually possess it in 'authentic' form. And let us begin by giving an illustration from modern life to show that an original document may be destroyed, without the text of that document being lost. Suppose you were to write a will. Then suppose you were to have a photographic copy of that will made. If the original were then destroyed, the photographic copy would still preserve the text of that will exactly the same as the original itself. The

text of the copy would differ in no way whatever from the original, and so it would possess exactly the same ‘truth’ and meaning as the original. Now of course photography was not invented until long after the original copy ... had been worn out or lost. How then could the original text of the Word of God be preserved? The answer is that God preserved it by His own remarkable care and providence.²⁹

Concerning what the Westminster theologians meant when they declared that the Hebrew Old Testament and the Greek New Testament “being immediately inspired of God, and by His singular care and providence kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentical,” we have another commentary from Prof William F Orr of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary who wrote,

this affirms that the Hebrew text of the Old Testament and the Greek of the New which was known to the Westminster divines was immediately inspired by God because it was identical with the first text that God had kept pure in all the ages. The idea that there are mistakes in the Hebrew Masoretic texts or in the Textus Receptus of the New Testament was unknown to the authors of the Confession of Faith.³⁰

Is there a historical precedent that tells us that God’s special providential work can involve a closure, a terminus? The answer is yes. All the inspired New Testament books were completed by AD 100 when the Apostle John wrote the last book of Revelation, and God warned against adding to or subtracting from His Word in Revelation 22:18-19. However, we know that in the first few centuries, there were heretical men who penned spurious gospels and epistles, and passed them off as Scripture. Some of these were the Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Nicodemus, the Epistle of Barnabas, etc. Nevertheless, none of the inspired books of Scripture have been lost or obscured in the canonical process. By the special providential guidance of the Holy Spirit, God’s people were led to identify the 27 books to become our New Testament Canon, no more, no less. There was a terminus to the canonisation of Scripture at the Council of Carthage in 397.

In like manner, the Lord allowed copyist errors to enter into the transmission process through the pen of fallible scribes. Nevertheless, His providential hand kept His inspired words of Scripture from being lost or corrupted. In light of God’s providence, that nothing happens by chance, and that history is under His sovereign control, I believe that in the fulness of time—in the most opportune time of the Reformation when

the true church separated from the false, when the study of the original languages was emphasised, and the printing press invented (which meant that no longer would there be any need to handcopy the Scriptures thereby ensuring a uniform text)—God restored from out of a pure stream of preserved Hebrew and Greek manuscripts, the purest Hebrew and Greek Text of all—the Text that underlies our King James Version—that accurately reflects the original Scriptures.

Conclusion

The seven biblical axioms (viz, epangelical, linguistic, temporal, ecclesiastical, evangelistic, doxological, and historical) above have helped and guided me to know for sure which is, what is, and where is the inspired Bible that God has preserved. It has freed me from the shackles of uncertainty and unbelief. It gives me full confidence in God's totally inspired and forever preserved infallible and inerrant words which are my sole, supreme and final authority of faith and practice. Jesus promised, "*And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*" (John 8:32). Paul said, "*For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth.*" (2 Cor 13:8). Truth never fails, it always prevails! To God be the glory great things He has done!

Notes

¹ David Otis Fuller, ed, *Which Bible?* (Grand Rapids: Institute for Biblical Textual Studies, 1970).

² Bart D Ehrman, *Misquoting Jesus* (New York: HarperCollins, 2005), 10, 11.

³ Suan Yew Quek, "Did God Promise to Preserve His Words? Interpreting Psalm 12:6-7." *The Burning Bush* 10 (2004): 96-98.

⁴ Hear his sermon entitled, "'Help, LORD!' (Psalm 12)", preached on January 11, 1992, accessible from www.sermonaudio.com.

⁵ *The Constitution of the Bible Presbyterian Church: The Confession of Faith, the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, the Form of Government, the Book of Discipline* (np: General Synod of the Bible Presbyterian Church, 1989), 3.

⁶ Martin I Klauber, trans, "The Formula Consensus Helvetica (1675)," *Trinity Journal* 11 (1990): 103.

⁷ "Articles of Faith, Operation and Organization," as adopted at the Organizational Meeting of the Dean Burgon Society, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, November 3-4, 1978.

⁸ Lynn Gray Gordon, *The World's Greatest Truths*, vol 1 (Singapore: Far Eastern Bible College Press, 1999), 26.

⁹ Jeffrey Khoo, *Kept Pure in All Ages: Recapturing the Authorised Version and the Doctrine of Providential Preservation* (Singapore: Far Eastern Bible College Press, 2001), 128.

¹⁰ Ibid, 126.

¹¹ D A Waite, *Defending the King James Bible*, 3rd rev ed (Collingswood: Bible for Today, 2006), xii.

¹² J W Burgon, *The Causes of Corruption of the Traditional Text of the Holy Gospels* (Collingswood: Dean Burgon Society Press, 1998 reprint), 11, 12.

¹³ *The Constitution of the Bible Presbyterian Church*, 2.

¹⁴ J W Burgon, *The Revision Revised: A Refutation of Westcott and Hort's False Greek Text and Theory* (Collingswood: Dean Burgon Society Press, 2000 reprint), 334, 335.

¹⁵ Trinitarian Bible Society, "Statement of Doctrine of Holy Scripture," *Quarterly Record* 571 (April-June 2005): 6-15.

¹⁶ Burgon, *The Revision Revised*, 14.

¹⁷ D A Waite, *Defending the King James Bible*, 52, 53

¹⁸ Burgon, *The Revision Revised*, 25, 26

¹⁹ Burgon, *The Causes of Corruption of the Traditional Text of the Holy Gospels*, 215-218.

²⁰ E F Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, 4th ed (Des Moines: Christian Research Press, 1984), 137, 138.

²¹ Ibid, 113.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid, 113, 114.

²⁴ Timothy Tow, "God's Special Providential Care of the Text of Scripture," *Bible Witness* (October - December 2002): 3, 4.

²⁵ Timothy Tow and Jeffrey Khoo, *Theology for Every Christian* (Singapore: Far Eastern Bible College Press, 2007), 89.

²⁶ Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, 216.

²⁷ Ibid, 223.

²⁸ E F Hills, *Believing Bible Study* (Des Moines: Christian Research Press, 1977), 83.

²⁹ G I Williamson, *The Westminster Confession of Faith for Study Classes* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1964), 15.

³⁰ William F Orr, "The Authority of the Bible as Reflected in the proposed Confession of 1967," as quoted by Theodore Letis, ed, *The Majority Text* (Philadelphia: Institute for Renaissance and Reformation Biblical Studies, 1987), 174.

INSPIRATION, PRESERVATION, AND TRANSLATIONS

In Search of the Biblical Identity of the Bible-Presbyterian Church

Jeffrey Khoo

THESIS

- (1) The Holy Scriptures are verbally and plenary *inspired* (VPI) by God in the original languages of Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek.
- (2) These VPI words in the original languages are verbally and plenary *preserved* (VPP) by God throughout the ages, and found in the Hebrew Masoretic Text of the Old Testament and the Greek Textus Receptus of the New Testament.
- (3) The King James or Authorised Version is a most faithful and reliable translation of these VPI and VPP Hebrew/Aramaic Old Testament and Greek New Testament words which are totally infallible and inerrant and hence supremely authoritative in all matters of faith and practice.

INSPIRATION

The Bible-Presbyterian (B-P) Constitution—Article 4.2.1—states, We believe in the divine, verbal and plenary inspiration of the Scriptures in the original languages, their consequent inerrancy and infallibility, and as the Word of God, the Supreme and final authority in faith and life.

Definitions

Let us now define the important terms found in the above statement of faith.

The term, “divine, verbal and plenary inspiration” (VPI) means that the Holy Scriptures are a product of God’s very own breath (2 Tim 3:16,

theopneustos, literally “Godspiration” or “Godspired,” and accurately rendered as “inspired of God” in the KJV) whereby God as Author supernaturally ensures that His inspired words as a whole (plenary) and in their parts to the last iota (verbal, cf Matt 4:4, 5:18) are not at all the words of sinful and fallible men but indeed the very words of the thrice holy and infallible God and thus entirely truthful and absolutely perfect, without any mistake or error (Ps 12:6, 19:7).

The divine VPI words are in the “original languages.” What are the “original languages”? They are the Hebrew and Aramaic words of the Old Testament Scripture, and the Greek words of the New Testament Scripture.

The words “inerrancy and infallibility” tell us that the Holy Scriptures by virtue of its very nature as God’s VPI words are without any mistake or error (inerrant), and incapable of error (infallible). The Bible is totally infallible and inerrant not only in matters of salvation, but also in matters of history, geography, and science.

The VPI Scripture being the very Word of God, infallible and inerrant, serves as the “Supreme and final authority” on all Christian beliefs and practices. In other words, what the Bible says rules and overrules all human theories and methods. God is always right, and man is wrong every time he disagrees with God (Rom 3:4). Every doctrine and practice of the church must be supported by the Scriptures and the Scriptures *alone* (not Scripture *plus* ...).

As such, Article 4.2.1 of the B-P Constitution is a fine statement of faith, and accurate on the 100% or perfect inspiration of the Bible not only as a whole (plenary inspiration) but down to its words (verbal inspiration) in the original languages of Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. The plain and natural reading of the statement assumes the *present* perfection of the Scriptures, that believers possess a 100% inspired Bible *in their hands* that is totally infallible and inerrant without any mistake and their sole and supreme authority of faith and practice.

Autographs Only or Apographs Also?

But in the present Bibliological crisis in the Singapore B-P Church, VPI as spelled out in Article 4.2.1 is interpreted by 11 pastors from 7 B-P churches (Galilee, Grace, Life, Nazareth, Olivet, Shalom, and Zion) to be applicable to the original “autographs” (ie, the very first scripts written

by God Himself, or His prophets, or His apostles) without including the apographs (manuscript copies). They wrote saying, “*We ... wholeheartedly believe and affirm that the inspired Word of God has absolutely no error in the Original Autographs. However we reject ... Verbal Plenary Preservation.*”¹

This “Autographs Only” view of infallibility and inerrancy is also held by the Board of Elders of Calvary B-P Church (Jurong) who in their paper on their “Non-VPP Stand” made their position very clear that “Only the original autographs of the OT and NT are the inspired, infallible and inerrant Word.”² Now it must be said that both evangelicals and fundamentalists affirm the VPI of the original autographs. There is therefore no issue here. This is also acknowledged in the Life B-P Church Sunday School paper of December 1, 2002 entitled, “Preserving Our Godly Path.” In that paper it is clearly stated, “The debate concerning the “Perfect Bible” is NOT about the original writings (or the autographs) of the biblical writers (such as Moses, Peter or Paul).” We VPP advocates do not dispute the VPI of the autographs. The truth is VPP cannot stand without VPI and vice versa. Those who wish to preserve “godly paths” ought to realise that there will be no godly paths to preserve if God did not preserve His perfect words. *Perfect Bible first before godly paths* is theologically correct.

So what is the issue all about if it is not about VPI? The issue is all about this: Is the Word of God infallible and inerrant in the autographs and the *autographs only*, or is the Word of God infallible and inerrant in the *apographs also*? Simply asked: Is the Word of God perfect only in the past but no longer perfect today? Is the Bible of today a lost and broken relic or is it a precise and exact representation of the Original that God gave in the beginning by virtue of His perfect preservation of every jot and tittle of His inspired words in the Original?

Anti-VPPists argue from Article 4.2.1 of the B-P Constitution that the infallible and inerrant Scriptures are *only in the autographs*. But where does it say so? Nowhere! It must be underscored that it stands precisely written in Article 4.2.1 that the inspired Scriptures the B-P Church believes to be infallible and inerrant are the Scriptures in the “*original languages*” and not simply and only the autographs. Why do the 11 pastors alter the sense of the Constitution by interpreting the word “languages” to mean “autographs” if not to exclude what they consider as

“theory” but what we see as “doctrine” that the Bible is *presently* infallible and inerrant?

Now if what the anti-VPPists say is true that the perfect and authoritative Scriptures can refer only to the autographs, then *where are the autographs?* Do they not agree that the autographs have already perished and are no more? And if so where are the fully inspired, totally inerrant, and absolutely authoritative Scriptures that Bible believers can use confidently and declare, “Thus saith the Lord”? If we only believe that God has only inspired but did not preserve His words, we will not be able to say we have God’s totally infallible, inerrant and supremely authoritative Word *today*.

Now, if we do indeed have the inspired words of God today, then where are they? This brings us to the divine and special providential preservation of the Holy Scriptures.

PRESERVATION

Do we have the inspired words of God today in the *original languages* (Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek)? If we do, then where are they? That is the key question which the “autographs alone” advocates cannot answer. They confess that the autographs are long gone and no more. As such, how can a non-existent authority serve as our final authority? An authority must be existent, tangible, available right now, at this time, or else it can be no authority at all. It goes without saying that an appeal to the non-existent autographs as the Church’s supreme and final authority is both illogical and untenable.

The veracity and validity of the Biblical Covenant is undermined when the 11 pastors affirm VPI but not VPP. They confidently affirm the total infallibility and inerrancy of the non-existent autographs (which they do not have and cannot produce), but cannot believe in a verbally and plenary preserved and hence presently existing infallible and inerrant Scripture in the original languages (which they pejoratively call a “theory” and a “new doctrine”). They wrote dismissively, “we reject the theory of Verbal Plenary Preservation ... that the Greek and Hebrew copies immediately underlying the King James Version are an exact replica of the Original Autographs.” Note that they have no biblical basis whatsoever for their non-VPP position. It is purely their opinion, or may I also say only a “theory”? But by the logic of faith, we VPP believers

declare that we indeed have God's infallible and inerrant Word in our hands today, and identify the inspired Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek words behind the King James Bible to be precisely the words God has perfectly preserved.

Imperfect Hebrew and Greek Texts?

In a Life B-P Church "Statement of Clarification," issued on January 19, 2003, the majority of the session (2 assistant pastors, 4 elders, and 12 deacons) and three preachers opposed their founding pastor—Rev Dr Timothy Tow—who affirmed the Bible to be "100% perfect without any mistake." In their "Statement of Clarification" they wrote, "While agreeing wholeheartedly to the KJV Bible being the very Word of God and fully reliable, **the contributors of 'Preserving Our Godly Path' paper do not believe that the Hebrew and Greek texts that underlie the KJB are perfect**" (emphasis in the original). Question: How can they endorse the KJV as "the very (ie, complete, absolute, utter) Word of God and fully reliable" and yet "not believe that the Hebrew and Greek texts that underlie the KJB are perfect" (ie, complete, flawless, exact)? How can the KJV—a translation—be 100% without its source texts—the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures—being 100%? This is highly illogical and unnatural. As Jesus said, "For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit" (Luke 6:43).

Unlike non-VPP KJV users who say yes to the KJV but no to the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek words underlying the KJV, VPP advocates say yes to the KJV and yes also to the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek words behind the KJV. We believe the KJV to be the Word of God precisely because the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek words underlying it are the very words God has inspired and preserved, and therefore 100% perfect, without any mistake. We say yes to the KJV, and a double yes to the original language Scriptures behind the KJV. Is this not biblically logical and consistent? Does it not instill faith and confidence in God and His Word for B-Ps who have always used and trusted the KJV as God's Word?³

Lost Words?

The 11 B-P pastors' rejection of VPP surely contradicts the Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF) to which every Reformed or Presbyterian Church (and certainly the B-P Church) subscribes. It is

significant to note that the WCF speaks of the authenticity of the Scriptures in terms of the *original language* Scriptures, namely the “Old Testament *in Hebrew*” and the “New Testament *in Greek*” (note the absence of the “autographs” in the Confession). Chapter I and paragraph VIII of the WCF states,

The Old Testament in Hebrew (which was the native language of the people of God of old), and the New Testament in Greek (which at the time of the writing of it, was most generally known to the nations), being immediately inspired by God, and, *by His singular care and providence, kept pure in all ages*, are therefore authentical; so as, in all controversies of religion, the Church is finally to appeal unto them.

The affirmation “by His singular care and providence” clearly states that Biblical preservation is *God’s work* and not man’s. That is why this providence is a *special* one. That is why it has to be verbal and not just doctrinal preservation. If God is the One who single-handedly preserves His inspired words and keeps them pure, we can expect Him to do no less than a perfect job—*every word is kept intact and none is lost*. For biblical support, the Westminster theologians cited Matthew 5:18, “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.” Does not the declaration that the Holy Scriptures are truly and presently “authentical” (ie, perfect, genuine, true) because they have been kept pure “by His singular care and providence” mean precisely “the divine, verbal and plenary preservation” of the Scriptures? How can God’s preservation of His inspired words in the Holy Scriptures be less than infallible, entire, total, complete, and full? But anti-VPPists speak of only “essential” (ie, partial) preservation—the doctrines, truths, claims are preserved (ie, conceptual or thought preservation), not the words (ie, verbal preservation) for in their judgement some words of Scripture have been lost and are no more (eg, 1 Sam 13:1, 2 Chron 22:2). They then assure us that in their scholarly opinion, these lost words of Scripture are unnecessary for our faith and will not affect our salvation because they are “redundant” and “insignificant.” Does this “lost Bible” or “lost words” view of preservation not contradict God’s own promise of jot-and-tittle preservation in Matthew 5:18 as cited by the Westminster divines?

Jot-and-Tittle Preservation

This anti-VPP “lost words” view does indeed contradict the promissory words of Jesus. How do anti-VPPists respond? They respond

by saying, “We must reexamine what Jesus said in Matthew 5:18. Perhaps ‘jot and tittle’ does not mean literally ‘jot and tittle’, but is an exaggeration.” Is this what they mean by a “godly path” to God and His Word? In “preserving our godly path” should we not reexamine our ignorant selves and our fallible thoughts instead? Should we not apply the infallible principle of the glory of God in our regard for our Lord and the interpretation of His Word (Isa 42:8, Jer 9:23-24, John 7:18)? Should we not take God’s Word literally unless it is clearly figurative? Surely God says what He means and means what He says. “God says it, that settles it, and we believe it.” This has always been the basic hermeneutical ethos of Biblical fundamentalists and inerrantists. Does not puny man know that the almighty God has magnified His Word above all His Name (Ps 138:2)?

It is crucial to know that the Reformers never thought of the perfection or infallibility of the Scriptures only in terms of the non-existent autographs but always in terms of the ever-existing apographs. According to Richard Muller,

The Protestant scholastics do not press the point made by their nineteenth-century followers that the infallibility of Scripture and the freedom of Scripture from error reside absolutely in the *autographa* and only in a derivative sense in the *apographa*; rather, the scholastics argue positively that the *apographa* preserve intact the true words of the prophets and the apostles and that the God-breathed (*theopneustos*) character of Scripture is manifest in the *apographa* as well as in the *autographa*.⁴

The Westminster divines in 1648 believed their Bible to be totally infallible and inerrant without any mistake. This is observed by William Orr who wrote,

Now this affirms that the Hebrew text of the Old Testament and the Greek of the New which was known to the Westminster divines was immediately inspired by God because it was *identical* with the first text that God has kept pure in all the ages. *The idea that there are mistakes in the Hebrew Masoretic texts or in the Textus Receptus of the New Testament was unknown to the authors of the Confession of Faith*.⁵

Which Hebrew OT text and Greek NT text did the Westminster divines use in their day? Was it not the Hebrew Masoretic Text and the Greek Textus Receptus that underlie the Reformation Bibles as best represented by the KJV? If the Westminster pastors and theologians did not think that the Bible they possessed in their day had any mistake, why

is it so wrong and sinful for us today to also believe that the same Hebrew and Greek Scriptures the Westminster divines used are without any mistake?

VPI Without VPP is Useless

The question however remains: Does Article 4.2.1 deny the biblical doctrine of the 100% preservation of the inspired words in the original languages? It is obvious that the B-P Constitution in keeping to the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Biblical doctrine of the infallibility and inerrancy of Scriptures wrote the words “original languages” and not “Original Autographs” for the Scriptures in the “original languages” apply not only to the autographs but also the apographs without which we have no infallible and inerrant Scriptures today to serve as our final and supreme authority of faith and practice. Although it may be argued that it is inspiration and not preservation of the Scriptures that is mentioned in Article 4.2.1, preservation is surely implied and only logical for why would God want to inspire a perfect Bible in the beginning without wanting to preserve it? Will a person apply hair tonic to his head if he wants to be bald?

Myron Houghton of Faith Baptist Seminary, though not a *Textus Receptus* or KJV man, was nonetheless honest and truthful in this observation of his,

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God” [2 Timothy 3:16]. Another way of saying this would be, “all Scripture is God-breathed,” or “all Scripture comes from the mouth of God.” This means God is directly responsible for causing the Bible writers to put down everything that He wanted written without error and without omission. But what of the Bible I hold in my hand? Is it God’s Word? Can it be trusted? The answer is yes! Both truths—the inspiration and inerrancy of the original manuscripts and the trustworthiness of the Bible in my hand—must be acknowledged. To affirm the inspiration and inerrancy of the original writings while casting doubt on the authority of the Bible that is available to us is just plain silly. Can you really imagine someone seriously saying, “I have good news and I have bad news: the good news is that God wanted to give us a message and therefore caused a book to be written; the bad news is that He didn’t possess the power to preserve it and therefore we don’t know what it said!” A view of inspiration without a corresponding view of preservation is of no value.⁶

Ian Paisley, renowned leader of the World Congress of Fundamentalists and an ardent defender of the KJV and its underlying texts, observed likewise,

The verbal Inspiration of the Scriptures demands the verbal Preservation of the Scriptures. Those who would deny the need for verbal Preservation cannot be accepted as being really committed to verbal Inspiration. If there is no preserved Word of God today then the work of Divine Revelation and Divine Inspiration has perished.⁷

Preservation: The Bridge Between Inspiration and Translation

But it is sad that those who are expected to champion the verbal inspiration of Scripture are so quick to deny its verbal preservation. Such a denial of VPP is seen in a statement issued on October 29, 2005 by the Singapore Council of Christian Churches (SCCC) entitled “The Inspiration and Translations of the Holy Scriptures”:

Recently some brethren in Singapore have been advocating that apart from the verbal plenary inspiration (VPI) and consequent inerrancy and infallibility of The Scriptures in the original languages, the Hebrew Masoretic Text and the Greek Textus Receptus manuscripts immediately underlying the King James Version are also verbally and plenarily preserved being an exact replica of the Original Autographs. This Verbal Plenary Preservation (VPP) theory for the KJV’s underlying texts thus claiming “100% perfection” for the KJV, is without Biblical foundation. This has not been, and is not the position of the ICCC or SCCC or other ICCC-affiliated organizations. The SCCC therefore calls upon its members and all other Bible-believing brethren not to subscribe to this new, Biblically unfounded and unproven theory.⁸

The question I would like to ask is: Why did they not entitle their statement, “The Inspiration, *Preservation*, and Translations of the Holy Scriptures”? Why is there no “Preservation”? Without preservation, what is the use of inspiration? Without preservation how can there be translations? The fallacy of the SCCC statement is precisely due to this “missing link” which is “Preservation.” Notwithstanding the missing link of “Preservation,” the SCCC statement in its published form saw a quick “evolution.” The November-December 2005 issue of the *Far Eastern Beacon* published an “improved” version of its primitive forebear passed on October 29, 2005. Here is a comparison of the old and new statements of the SCCC against VPP:

Recently some brethren in Singapore and elsewhere have been advocating promulgating that apart from the verbal plenary inspiration (VPI) and the consequent inerrancy and infallibility of ~~the~~the Holy Scriptures in the original languages, ~~the Hebrew Masoretic Text and the Greek Textus Receptus manuscripts immediately underlying the King James Version are also verbally and plenary of Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek, “the words of the Received Greek and Masoretic Hebrew texts that underlie the King James Bible are the very words which God has preserved down through the centuries being anthe exact replica words of the Original Autographs originals themselves”.~~ This theory of claiming Verbal Plenary Preservation (VPP) ~~theory~~ for the KJV’s underlying texts ~~thus claiming~~ “100% perfection” for the KJV and their exact identification with the Holy Scriptures in the original languages, is without Biblical foundation. This has not been, and is not the position of the ICCC or SCCC or other ICCC-affiliated organizations. The SCCC therefore calls upon its members and all other Bible-believing brethren not to subscribe to this new, Biblically unfounded and unproven theory.

The revised version continues to deny VPP. Many today believe in inspiration and translation but not preservation. Such a belief begs the question: How could the inspired autographs serve as the basis for any translation if they have not been preserved by God? *Without preservation there is just a great chasm with no bridge to cross from inspiration to translation.* Despite our many attempts to define and clarify what VPP means, and why this doctrine is vital for the protection of the Christian Faith, the safeguarding of the beloved KJV (which the SCCC claims to uphold), and the basis for faithful translations of the Scriptures into other languages, the SCCC remains insistent on denying VPP, even pugnacious in pushing for its rejection.

VPP is Honourable Not Heretical

In Calvary Jurong’s “Non-VPP” paper, it is stated that the “ICCC (SCCC) calls on all Christians not to accept the VPP teaching.”⁹⁹ When did the ICCC pass a resolution against VPP or endorse the SCCC statement against VPP? What the ICCC did do however under Carl McIntire’s presidency was to pass an excellent resolution not only in Amsterdam in 1998 but also in Jerusalem in 2000 affirming the superiority of the KJV over against the modern versions, and the Bible to be “Forever Infallible and Inerrant” with the following fine declaration of faith:

the O.T. has been preserved in the Masoretic text and the N.T. in the Textus Receptus, combined they gave us the complete Word of God. The King James Version in English has been faithfully translated from these God-preserved manuscripts.¹⁰

The ICCC clearly resolved to uphold the “forever infallible and inerrant” Scriptures which is nothing short of VPP, and identified the complete and preserved Scriptures to be the Hebrew Masoretic Text and the Greek Textus Receptus from which the KJV has been faithfully translated. This is precisely the stand taken by FEBC and all VPP advocates. It goes without saying that the SCCC has seriously undermined the credibility of the ICCC by such an act against VPP, and the inspired and preserved Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek words underlying the KJV. It even “calls upon its members and all other Bible-believing brethren not to subscribe to this new, Biblically unfounded and unproven theory.” Is it not strange for the SCCC to call on “Bible-believing” brethren to believe that the Bible they have in their hands today contains mistakes? What kind of “Bible-believing” faith is this? If the SCCC disagrees with but does not discriminate against VPP, that would not be unreasonable, but they intend to ban and silence VPP which is not only unfair but also unjust. Is this not an attempt at schism?

The SCCC (echoing the group of 11 pastors) claims that the “promulgation” of VPP is “schismatic.” Not so. *It is not the promulgation but the prohibition and persecution of VPP that is schismatic.* The anti-VPPists can go ahead to preach and write that the Bible is no longer infallible and inerrant since in their mind it contains some insignificant mistakes (whether God is pleased or grieved by this, and whether His people will accept it or be stumbled, should be left to the convicting work and judgement of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of His saints); but why should they forbid and prevent VPP believers from declaring and defending the Bible they have in their hands today to be truly infallible and inerrant without any mistake?

If anti-VPPists feel that they cannot know whether the inspired words of God are perfectly preserved today, then they should be chagrined, but why cannot they rejoice with those who by faith are certain they have all of God’s inspired words and know exactly where all the inspired words are preserved—in the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Scriptures underlying the KJV? Peter Masters of Spurgeon’s Tabernacle though not in total agreement with our position on VPP was at least

honest enough to acknowledge that our position is an “honourable” one¹¹ unlike those anti-VPPists who maliciously label it “foolish,” “extreme,” “schismatic,” “heretical,” “cultic,” and even “Roman Catholic”!

TRANSLATIONS

Not everyone today can read the Scriptures in the original languages. There is thus a need for the Scriptures to be translated into the common language of the people. The WCF shares this concern for the Bible to be translated,

But, because these original tongues are not known to all the people of God, who have right unto, and interest in the Scriptures, and are commanded, in the fear of God, to read and search them, therefore they are to be translated into the vulgar language of every nation unto which they come, that, the Word of God dwelling plentifully in all, they may worship Him in an acceptable manner; and, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, may have hope (I:VIII).

By the grace of God, the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures have been translated into many languages of the world. Insofar as the English translation is concerned, we are thankful to the Lord for the KJV, the best of all the good old versions of the Protestant Reformation. Today, the KJV is being challenged by the many modern versions that seek to usurp its rightful place as the only English version that can rightly be called “the very Word of God.” D A Waite, President of the Dean Burgon Society, has given four reasons why the KJV is superior to all the other English translations available in the world today. In his ground-breaking book, *Defending the King James Bible: A Fourfold Superiority*, he argued that the KJV is superior in terms of its (1) Texts, (2) Translators, (3) Technique, and (4) Theology.¹² Even non-fundamentalists are hailing the goodness of this grand old version in terms of its translational accuracy and literary beauty.¹³ The KJV was not only a translation that transformed a nation; it was *the* translation that transformed the world *literarily* speaking.¹⁴

Perfectly Flawless Translation?

At this juncture, let me deal with Calvary Jurong’s report on what the Rev Charles Seet wrote concerning my response to Gary Hudson’s “Questions for the KJV-Only Cult.” Calvary Jurong’s report is skewed in such a way as to make me look like (1) I am defending a “perfectly flawless Bible translation” (underlining in the original), and (2) I believe

that there was “no Word of God prior to 1611.”¹⁵ The account totally left out my lengthy answer to Gary Hudson’s question. Without giving the proper context, it thus misleads the reader. Allow me to produce in full my answer so that the reader may judge for himself whether Calvary Jurong has or has not represented me correctly in its “Non-VPP” paper.

(1) Must we possess a perfectly flawless Bible translation in order to call it “the word of God”? If so, how do we know “it” is perfect? If not, why do some limit “the word of God” to only one 17th Century English translation? Where was “the word of God” prior to 1611? [Note: This was Gary Hudson’s question, and not Charles Seet’s questioning of me as painted out in the Calvary Jurong report thereby making me look like a Ruckmanite.]

[Answer] We believe that “the King James Version (or Authorised Version) of the English Bible is a true, faithful, and accurate translation of these two providentially preserved Texts [Traditional Masoretic Hebrew Text and Traditional Greek Text underlying the KJV], which in our time has no equal among all of the other English Translations. The translators did such a fine job in their translation task that we can without apology hold up the Authorised Version and say ‘This is the Word of God!’ while at the same time realising that, in some verses, we must go back to the underlying original language Texts for complete clarity, and also compare Scripture with Scripture.” (*The Dean Burgon Society, “Articles of Faith,” section II.A.*)

Every Bible translation can be legitimately called the Word of God if it is true and faithful to the original and traditional text. We refuse to consider heretical Bibles like the New World Translation of the Jehovah’s Witnesses as “the Word of God.” We also reject as unreliable all Bible versions (eg NIV, TEV, TLB, CEV ...) that are a result of the dynamic equivalence method of translation, and those (eg RSV, NASB, ESV ...) that cast doubt and/or omit verses based on corrupted readings of the Alexandrian or Westcott-Hort Text, and consider them unsafe for use.

Where was the Word of God prior to 1611? Well, the Word of God is found in the divinely inspired and providentially preserved Traditional and Preserved Text of OT and NT Scriptures used and recognised by the Church down through the ages, and in all the faithful and reliable translations that were based on those Texts, viz, Martin Luther’s German Bible (1522), William Tyndale’s Bible (1525), Myles Coverdale’s Bible (1535), The Matthew’s Bible (1537), The Great Bible (1539-41), and The Geneva Bible (1557-60).

It is significant to note that prior to the KJV, the English translations were largely individual efforts. The KJV on the other hand is a corporate work. In the words of the translators, the KJV was not produced “to make a bad one a good one; but to make a good one better, or out of many good ones one principal good one.” For this purpose and with such devotion the KJV translation committee was formed, and they were careful to “assemble together; not too many, lest one should trouble another; and yet many, lest many things haply might escape them.”

The King James Bible is a product of the 16th Century Protestant Reformation. The providential hand of God was clearly at work at the time of the Reformation not only in the separation of the true church from the false church, but also in the invention of the printing press, the renewed interest in the study of the original languages, the publication of the Textus Receptus which finally culminated in the translation of the KJV. These products of the Protestant Reformation bear the divine imprimatur.

God holds His people in every age responsible for using the divinely inspired and preserved original texts and only the faithful and accurate translations of His Word. The KJV-only position (not Ruckmanism) does not limit the Word of God to only one 17th Century English Translation, but advocates that the KJV, being still the most accurate English translation based on the purest texts, should be the only Bible used by English-speaking Christians today. To use other Bibles when the best is clearly available would be to neglect our responsibility.¹⁶

Can the pastor and the elders of Calvary Jurong who object to my defence of the KJV kindly let me know which part of the above answer is not in line with the B-P stand on the KJV? Now the Rev Seet might possibly take issue with the word “purest” (meaning the best, without any mistake) to refer to the underlying texts of the KJV, for he believes that they are only “closest” (since he considers the underlying texts to contain “scribal errors” especially in places where there are absolutely none, eg, 2 Chron 22:2).¹⁷ It needs to be made known that I have no qualms with the word “closest” if it is taken to mean that (1) the Bible is entirely (100%) preserved and not just essentially (99.9%) preserved, (2) the Bible is verbally preserved and not just conceptually preserved, and (3) the Bible is indeed infallible and inerrant not just in the past but also today. But they speak adversely of those who take the Dean Burgon Oath,¹⁸ who believe that the Bible they have in their hands today have (1) no lost words and (2) no mistakes not only in its saving truths, but also in its numbers, names, dates, and places. Insofar as English versions are concerned, ***the KJV is the closest to the purest Bible in the original***

languages that our all-powerful God has supernaturally preserved and His Spirit-indwelt Church has faithfully received throughout the ages.

Perfect in the Original Languages

Since the Rev Seet has allowed his personal correspondence with me to go public,¹⁹ allow me then to share my email of June 27, 2002, written in reply to his concerns about why I switched from addressing a so-called “perfectly flawless translation” (Hudson’s caricature) to a perfectly flawless text in the original languages (ie, the Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek words underlying the KJV):²⁰

[Charles Seet] **“1) I think some may take issue with the wording of the first paragraph,²¹ as it implies that the texts underlying the KJV translation are not only closest to the original (as stated in our positional statement) but they are in fact virtual photocopies of the autographs, since the word ‘flawless’ means ‘without defect’. Actually the first paragraph misses the point of the question, which is about ‘perfectly flawless Bible translation’ (not text).”**

[My Reply] Yes, I am quite aware of this (viz, that the [ie, Hudson’s] question had to do with translation not text). I did not want to be drawn into Hudson’s trap and fallacious reasoning. That is why I redefined the question and redrew the rules of engagement. I wanted to state our understanding of the text at the outset before going on to address the matter of translation which I did in my 2nd paragraph.

You are also correct to conclude that my statement meant that the texts underlying the KJV may be considered “virtual photocopies of the autographs.” The word “closest” as used in our position statement quoting the Dean Burgon Society should not be taken to mean that we only have a 99% pure text (1% error). I believe God has inspired and preserved His Word and words 100%. I can see how some may understand the word “closest” to mean “not perfect or exactly the same,” ie, we may have most of or essentially God’s words, but not all of God’s words in the texts underlying our KJV. I think we need to understand the context in which the statement was phrased. Westcott and Hort puffed up their cut-up Greek text as being “closest to the original” since they based it on the 4th century Alexandrian manuscripts, which manuscripts Dean Burgon has dismissed as “most corrupt.” Our use of the term “closest” seeks to *correct and counteract* Westcott and Hort’s view on the identity of the true text. The term “closest” also distinguishes between the autograph (past and “lost”) and the apograph (present and existing). We do not deny that the autograph and apograph *though distinct are the same*. The paper may be different, but the *contents* are the same.

Would the Rev Seet now kindly let me know in what way was my reply to him in defence of the KJV “heretical”? It was quite clear to him from the outset that I was not addressing a “perfectly flawless translation” but a “perfectly flawless text.” Knowing this, why is he giving people the impression that I am actually talking about a “perfectly flawless translation”? The **LIE** is spread that Jeffrey Khoo believes in “post-canonical inspiration”—that “the KJV was given by inspiration.” Why such deceit?

Another thing that baffles me is why the Rev Seet who claims to be strongly supportive of the KJV against the modern versions would launch such a campaign against VPP which is a precious biblical doctrine that actually protects and preserves the KJV? Why is all this done despite his assurance in 2004 that VPP should not be discriminated against? Why does he call me “extreme” if there should be no discrimination? Why is he and his supporters trying to silence VPP which safeguards the KJV which is the official Bible of the B-P Church since its founding? Why are anti-VPP/KJV men from BJU allowed to speak at his pulpit, but a ban is placed on certain B-P pastors who are VPP/KJV-defenders, even calling them “extreme” and “schismatic”? Why are enemies of the KJV promoted, but friends of the KJV cut down?

INSPIRATION, PRESERVATION, TRANSLATIONS: FOUR VIEWS

Is the B-P Church’s stand on the KJV a matter of “preference” or a matter of “principle or doctrine”? We believe our use of the KJV and our defence of its underlying original language texts (words) is a matter of principle or doctrine. As a matter of principle or doctrine, our KJV defence is not based on convenience but conviction. There are four views on the issue of inspiration, preservation, and translations. Of course, there are different shades of views in between, but which view is the biblically acceptable view?

Which position ought we to take as B-Ps? Biblically and historically, we have taken the fideistic (faith) position which is the Reformed and Fundamentalist position on Biblical inspiration and preservation, and the KJV as the *best* translation of the English Bible: “So then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God” (Rom 10:17). Only the faith position has any biblical basis resting on Psalm 12:6-7, Matthew 5:18, 24:35, John 10:35, 1 Peter 1:25, and many other

passages.²⁷ The various anti- or non-VPP positions have no biblical support whatsoever.

Regardless of the absence of biblical support for their non-VPP stance which is based on non-Scriptural and subjectively interpreted “evidence,” certain ones have accused FEBC of changing the doctrinal stand of the B-P Church on the Bible and the KJV. If a person would take

VIEW QUESTION	Rationalistic ²² (Liberal)	Eclectic ²³ (Neo- Evangelical)	Deistic ²⁴ (Neo- Fundamental)	Fideistic ²⁵ (Reformed & Fundamental)
Inspiration 100%, VPI?	No	Yes & No	Yes	Yes
Preservation 100%, VPP?	No	No	No	Yes
Infallibility & Inerrancy?	Nowhere	Autographs only/partially	Autographs only	Autographs & Apographs
Bible Today?	Imperfect	Imperfect	Imperfect	Perfect
Biblical Basis?	No	No	No	Yes (eg. Matt 5:18)
What Preserved?	Nothing	Doctrines not words	Doctrines not words	Words & doctrines
Words Lost?	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Discrepancies in Bible (eg, 2 Chron 22:2)?	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Westcott & Hort?	For	For	Neither for nor against	Against
English Version?	RSV/NRSV & modernistic versions only	NIV & modern versions mainly	NKJV & NASV mainly	Only KJV ²⁶

a step back and look at the whole controversy objectively, he will see that FEBC is actually strengthening and not changing the original KJV position of the B-P Church. The B-P Church has always used the KJV as the Word of God from the beginning. Our KJV position is strengthened by the doctrine of VPP which argues for the 100% purity of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures underlying the KJV over against the corrupt Westcott and Hort texts behind the modern English versions which are filled with errors.

Who better to speak for the B-P faith than the founder of the Singapore B-P movement and FEBC himself—the Rev Dr Timothy Tow—who believes without equivocation “the special providential preservation of Scripture,” and “a 100% perfect Bible without any mistake”?²⁸ Rev Dr Timothy Tow—the only theologian at the founding of the B-P movement—is supported by Dr S H Tow—founding leader of the B-P Church in Singapore and senior pastor of the Calvary churches—who believes likewise, and has identified for us where precisely this “100% perfect Bible without any mistake” is:

1. Question: Can we identify these texts?
2. Answer: Absolutely. Our great God did not leave Himself without witness, but preserved perfectly a body of MSS: the Masoretic Hebrew Old Testament Text and the Received Greek New Testament Text (Textus Receptus). From these perfectly preserved copies of God’s inspired, inerrant, infallible Scriptures, is derived our KJB.
3. What is “VPP”? “V” is “Verbal,” meaning “word for word” (Websters Dictionary). “P” is “Plenary,” meaning “complete or absolute” (Websters Dictionary). “P” is “Preservation” meaning “kept from corruption or error.”
4. “VPP of Scripture” refers to the supernatural and special providential care of God over the ages (Westminster Confession of Faith Chapter I, VIII; see also Ps 12:6,7; Matt 5:18, 24:35; 1 Pet 1:25), safeguarding the transmission of the MSS by scribes or copyists, so that the body of texts (Masoretic Hebrew OT and Received Greek NT) have been kept pure as the “good tree” giving us the “good fruit,” the KJB.
5. As the attacks on God’s Word increase in intensity, God’s faithful remnant people also increase and intensify in their loyalty to God’s Word without which the Gospel’s entire foundation would collapse.
6. The inspired and preserved Word of God for the Bible-Presbyterian Church is upheld by a “threefold cord” which cannot be broken,

namely: (i) Constitution 4.2.1, (ii) the VPP of God's Word, (iii) the KJB, the Reformation Bible.²⁹

Dr S H Tow went on to issue this pertinent warning:

Mark these words: The present attack on the VPP will lead ultimately to a denial and betrayal of the KJB. This is a prediction worth watching. God bless all readers with spiritual discernment.³⁰

Notes

¹ "A Statement on the Theory of Verbal Plenary Preservation (VPP)," Life Bible-Presbyterian Weekly, September 25, 2005.

² "Explanation of Our Non-VPP Stand," presented on Sunday, November 6, 2005 to the congregation of Calvary Jurong B-P Church by Rev James Chan Lay Seng, Pastor of Calvary Jurong B-P Church.

³ At this juncture, it needs to be made known that prior to putting forth his name as a subscriber to the "Statement of Clarification" in which the subscribers agree that the KJV is the "very Word of God and fully reliable," the Rev Charles Seet in August 2002 wrote an article—"How I Understand the Preservation of the Word of God"—to point out what he considers to be translational errors in certain parts of the English KJV.

⁴ *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms*, sv "autographa" (emphasis mine).

⁵ William F Orr, "The Authority of the Bible as Reflected in the Proposed Confession of 1967," as quoted by Letis, *The Majority Text*, 174 (emphasis mine).

⁶ Myron J Houghton, "The Preservation of Scripture," *Faith Pulpit* (August 1999): 1-2.

⁷ Ian R K Paisley, *My Plea for the Old Sword* (Belfast: Ambassador, 1997), 103.

⁸ "Inspiration and Translations of the Holy Scriptures," a resolution passed by the Singapore Council of Christian Churches (SCCC), at its 49th AGM on October 29, 2005 held at Life B-P Church, Singapore.

⁹ "Explanation of Our Non-VPP Stand," 13.

¹⁰ Jeffrey Khoo, *Kept Pure in All Ages* (Singapore: FEBC Press, 2001), 125-6. The ICCC resolution was originally published in the *Far Eastern Beacon*.

¹¹ It is reported in the October 2, 2005 True Life B-P Church Weekly (ed Timothy Tow) that Dr Peter Masters "did not think our VPP position to be in any way 'heretical,' but indeed 'an honourable one.' He also gave unreserved support and endorsement of FEBC, 'May I say that the ministry of FEBC under Dr Timothy Tow ... is a remarkable manifestation of the blessing of God in maintaining inerrancy, fundamentals, evangelism, sound hermeneutics and biblical separation. Your work is magnificent and encouraging in the highest

degree.’ In another letter, Dr Masters reaffirmed his remarks on the VPP of Scripture that ‘*it is a sincerely held view aimed at safeguarding the Word, and promoting integrity. Its advocates seek to proclaim and adhere to the Gospel and the historic doctrines of the faith. They seek to preserve an excellent translation of the Bible, and to oppose the corrupt W & H based translations ... the position is honourable. It is certainly not base, self-seeking, unfaithful, or heretical in the sense of denying any doctrine of the Christian faith.*”

¹² D A Waite, *Defending the King James Bible*, 2nd ed (Collingswood: Bible For Today, 1996).

¹³ For example, Leland Ryken wrote, “The KJV is the greatest English Bible translation ever produced. Its style combines simplicity and majesty as the original requires, though it inclines toward the exalted. Its rhythms are matchless.” *The Word of God in English* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2002), 51.

¹⁴ See Alister McGrath, *In the Beginning: The Story of the King James Bible* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 2001).

¹⁵ “Explanation of Our Non-VPP Stand,” 2.

¹⁶ “KJV Q&A,” July 31, 2002 draft [words in square brackets not in original]. It is no secret that the Rev Charles Seet together with Rev Colin Wong declared that they could no longer take the Dean Burgon Oath at the FEBC faculty meeting of October 29, 2002. Rev Seet handed in his resignation letter to FEBC on November 15, 2002. In it he requested “not to be represented as a member of the FEBC faculty in any publication that is issued by the college from now on.” I respect his decision, and take full responsibility for all that I have written in defence of the KJV and its underlying texts. Rev Seet has every freedom to disagree with me, but he and his friends have no right to misrepresent and malign me and those at FEBC who defend the KJV and more importantly the Biblical doctrine of VPP and the perfection of the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek words behind the KJV.

¹⁷ Charles Seet, “A Positional Paper on the Doctrine of Inspiration and Preservation of the Holy Scriptures,” <http://web.singnet.com.sg/~sbseet/position.htm>, accessed on February 3, 2006.

¹⁸ The Dean Burgon Oath states, “I swear in the name of the triune God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—that the Bible is none other than the voice of Him that sitteth upon the throne. Every book of it, every chapter of it, every verse of it, every word of it, every syllable of it, every letter of it, is the direct utterance of the Most High. The Bible is none other than the Word of God, not some part of it more, some part of it less, but all alike the utterance of Him that sitteth upon the throne, faultless, unerring, supreme. So help me God. Amen.”

¹⁹ “Explanation of Our Non-VPP Stand,” 2.

²⁰ See Jeffrey Khoo, “Non-Ruckmanite Answers to Anti-KJV Questions,” at <http://www.deanburgonsociety.org/KJBible/answers.htm>.

²¹ In an earlier draft of “KJV-Only Q&A” dated July 18, 2002, I answered Hudson’s question in the following way: “The question is rather mischievous. Let us rephrase it: Can a flawed Bible ever be deemed the ‘Word of God?’ Can a perfect God ever give His people a less than perfect Bible? The answer is obvious. The Bible is God’s Word, and if God is perfect, His Word must be no less perfect. God assures us that His Word is ‘very pure’ (Ps 119:40), ‘perfect’ (Ps 19:7), ‘true and righteous altogether’ (Ps 19:9). All, not some or most, of Scripture is God-breathed (2 Tim 3:16).”

²² B F Westcott and F J A Hort, *Introduction to the New Testament in the Original Greek* (New York: Harper and Brothers, , 1882); Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, *The Text of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987); Bruce Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

²³ D A Carson, *The King James Version Debate* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979); James R White, *The King James Only Controversy* (Minneapolis: Bethany, 1995).

²⁴ James B Williams, ed, *From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man* (Greenville: Ambassador-Emerald, 1999); James B Williams and Randolph Shaylor, eds, *God’s Word in Our Hands* (Greenville: Ambassador-Emerald, 2003); Roy E Beacham and Kevin T Bauder, eds, *One Bible Only?* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2001).

²⁵ Paisley, *My Plea for the Old Sword*; D A Waite, *Defending the King James Bible* (Collingswood: Bible For Today, 1996); Timothy Tow and Jeffrey Khoo, *A Theology for Every Christian: Knowing God and His Word* (Singapore, FEBC Press, 1998).

²⁶ “A Doctrinal Positional Statement of Life B-P Church,” states, “We do employ the KJV alone as our primary scriptural text in the public reading, preaching, and teaching of the English Bible.” *50 Years Building His Kingdom*, Life Bible-Presbyterian Church Golden Jubilee Magazine, 2000, 67.

²⁷ See George Skariah, “The Biblical Doctrine of the Perfect Preservation of the Holy Scriptures,” ThD dissertation, Far Eastern Bible College, 2005.

²⁸ Timothy Tow, “God’s Special Providential Care of the Text of Scripture,” *Bible Witness*, October-December 2002, 3-4.

²⁹ S H Tow, “Gospel Safeguard—VPP,” *Calvary Pandan B-P Church Weekly*, January 1, 2006. See also his book, *Beyond Versions: A Biblical Perspective of Modern English Bibles* (Singapore: King James Productions, 1998).

³⁰ *Ibid.*

14

CANON, TEXTS, AND WORDS

Lost and Found or Preserved and Identified?

Jeffrey Khoo

INTRODUCTION

The Judeo-Christian Bible comprising the Old Testament (OT) and the New Testament (NT) Scriptures is usually discussed in terms of its respective canons, texts, and words in the original languages. As seen in our previous discussion,¹ there is no issue with the divine inspiration of the Scriptures in the original writings or autographs. The issue today involves the transmission of the Scriptures from the time they were originally written until the present day. Since the autographs, the original scripts written by the original writers themselves, no longer exist, having long perished, can Bible-believers today say they have in their possession the very same Scriptures or Words that God had originally given by divine inspiration?

Many modern pastors and scholars deny that there exists such an infallible and inerrant Bible today. Although they may believe in the Verbal Plenary Inspiration (VPI), they do not believe in the Verbal Plenary Preservation (VPP) of the Holy Scriptures. In their minds, the inspiration of the Scripture is a miracle from God, but the preservation of Scripture is man's work without any special superintendence or intervention by God.² Such a view is held nowadays by those who call themselves "Reformed." The "Reformed" pastors and teachers of today actually speak in a Bibliological tongue that is strange to the ears of the Reformed scholars and Reformation saints. This strange understanding of the Bible that is far removed from the Reformed faith concerns looking at the infallibility and inerrancy of the Bible only in terms of (1) its divine inspiration and not divine preservation, and (2) its autographs and not apographs.³

In view of the current fallacious paradigm and ignorant confusion over the nature of the Sacred Scriptures of yesterday and today, it is the intention of this paper to recapture the true Biblical teaching and Reformed thinking of the Scriptures, that (1) the verbally inspired Scriptures are verbally preserved by God and God alone; and (2) the supremely authoritative Scriptures are the extant infallible apographs and not the non-existent autographs. As such (1) the inspired Scriptures were never lost but *always preserved* without any corruption or missing words; (2) the Sacred Scriptures are *always infallible and inerrant*, and *supremely authoritative not only in the days of the Reformation, but also today—Sola Scriptura!*

This paper seeks to identify where and what the infallible and inerrant Scriptures are in terms of their Canon, Texts, and Words.

CANON

The word “canonicity” comes from the Greek *kanon* which means “a straight rod,” or “a measuring rule.” When applied to the Scriptures, it means the standard list of divinely inspired *books*—the Word of God—which serves as the only authoritative basis for the faith and practice of the Church.

Old Testament Canon

By the time of Jesus Christ, the OT Canon was already completed and identified. The Jews regarded the 39 books of the *Tanakh*—the Hebrew OT Canon comprising the *Torah* (Law), the *Nabi'im* (Prophets), and the *Kethubim* (Writings) to be nothing short of the direct utterance of the Most High—absolutely infallible and supremely authoritative. These 39 books were recognised as the divinely inspired books for they came during the period of Biblical revelation—the period between Moses (1450 BC) and Malachi (450 BC).

The identification of the OT Canon is given by the Author of the Canon Himself—the Lord Jesus Christ—in Luke 24:44,

And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the *law* of Moses, and in the *prophets*, and in the *psalms*, concerning me.

The Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms/Writings make up the 39 books of the OT Canon that Jesus regarded as the very Word of God. Note that there is no mention of the Apocrypha—the 14 books⁴

OLD TESTAMENT CANON AND BOOKS		
Canon	Books	Period
<i>Torah</i> (Law)	Genesis	15 th Century BC
	Exodus	
	Leviticus	
	Numbers	
	Deuteronomy	
<i>Nabi'im</i> (Prophets)	Joshua	15 th - 14 th Century BC
	Judges	14 th - 11 th Century BC
	1 Samuel	12 th - 11 th Century BC
	2 Samuel	11 th - 10 th Century BC
	1 Kings	10 th - 9 th Century BC
	2 Kings	9 th - 6 th Century BC
	Isaiah	8 th - 7 th Century BC
	Jeremiah	7 th - 6 th Century BC
	Ezekiel	6 th Century BC
	Hosea	8 th Century BC
	Joel	9 th Century BC
	Amos	8 th Century BC
	Obadiah	9 th Century BC
	Jonah	8 th Century BC
	Micah	8 th Century BC
	Nahum	7 th Century BC

OLD TESTAMENT CANON AND BOOKS		
Canon	Books	Period
<i>Nabi'im</i> (Prophets)	Habakkuk	7 th Century BC
	Zephaniah	7 th Century BC
	Haggai	6 th Century BC
	Zechariah	6 th Century BC
	Malachi	5 th Century BC
<i>Kethubim</i> (Writings)	Psalms	11 th - 10 th Century BC
	Job	20 th - 16 th Century BC
	Proverbs	10 th Century BC
	Ruth	13 th - 12 th Century BC
	Song of Solomon	10 th Century BC
	Ecclesiastes	10 th Century BC
	Lamentations	6 th Century BC
	Esther	5 th Century BC
	Daniel	7 th - 6 th Century BC
	Ezra	6 th - 5 th Century BC
	Nehemiah	5 th Century BC
	1 Chronicles	11 th - 10 th Century BC
	2 Chronicles	10 th - 6 th Century BC

written during the 400 “silent years” of the inter-testamental period when there was no prophetic voice until John the Baptiser came onto the scene. The Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF) acknowledged the traditional and ecclesiastical view that the apocryphal books were not

divinely inspired but merely human books with some historical value, but no spiritual or doctrinal value whatsoever:

The books commonly called Apocrypha, not being of divine inspiration, are no part of the canon of the Scripture, and therefore are of no authority in the Church of God, nor to be any otherwise approved, or made use of, than other human writings (I:III).

It is a Biblical fact that God had intended a fixed number of 39 divinely inspired OT books to serve as the supremely authoritative Standard of faith and life for the Church. If there is such a divinely ordained set of canonical books for the OT, surely a similar set of canonical books can be expected for the NT.

New Testament Canon

The Lord Jesus Christ in fulfilment of the *Tanakh*—the OT Canon—was born of a virgin, lived a sinlessly perfect life, died on the cross for the sins of the world, was buried, and on the third day rose from the dead just as the OT Scriptures had predicted. His life and work on earth marked the beginning of the New Covenant period of a better administration of the Covenant of Grace which called for an NT Canon to regulate the life and faith of New Covenant saints.

At Pentecost, God did not present the Bible to the New Covenant Church as a complete whole. The NT Canon like the OT Canon required a period of time for its inscripturation and completion. This period of divinely inspired inscripturation occurred during the time of the Apostles of Jesus Christ. It began with the Gospel of Matthew in AD 40 and ended with the Revelation of John in AD 90.

Since Jesus gave no explicit word concerning the number of NT books and their specific identities, how did the Church finally arrive at the 27 books? It is a question that needs to be answered today especially when the Church is being attacked by pop-modernism that questions the authenticity and certainty of the 27 books that form our NT Canon. Dan Brown's bestseller—*The Da Vinci Code*—for instance speaks of the newly discovered Gnostic Gospels of Nag Hammadi as the authentic and authoritative NT books. Brown dismissed the Four Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John in the NT Canon today as fabricated accounts of the life of Christ produced in the time of Emperor Constantine (4th century AD). According to him, these Four Gospels should be rejected

and replaced by the Gnostic Gospels.⁵ In other words, the true Gospels were once lost but are now found!

This begs the question of whether the Church has been reading from the wrong Gospels all these centuries. Were the true books about the life of Christ lost very early and now found? Or were the true books the ones that God has preserved from the beginning, and received by the Church from the time they were written until today? By virtue of God's promise of the preservation of His words in Psalm 12:6-7, Matthew 5:18, 24:35, John 10:35, and 1 Peter 1:23-25, we believe the latter to be true—that the all-powerful Author of the Christian Scriptures has supernaturally and continuously preserved His words throughout the ages, and kept them pure and uncorrupted, available and accessible to His Church, so that His people might appeal to them as their supremely authoritative Canon or rule of faith and practice without any doubt or uncertainty.

Nevertheless, Brown's pop-modernistic attack on the Scriptures does great damage to the testimony of the Scriptures and of the Church. Ben Witherington III highlighted the serious implications of Brown's canonical-critical book:

The issue of canon—what books constitute the final authority for Christians—is no small matter. If the critics are correct, then Christianity must indeed be radically reinterpreted, just as they suggest. If they are wrong, traditional Christians have their work cut out for them, because many seekers remain skeptical of claims to biblical authority.⁶

To put it bluntly: No Canon, no Christ; no Canon, no Gospel!

Was the Biblical Canon falsified and the Christian Gospel fabricated? There was in fact no "orthodox" fabrication of the Gospels as posited by Brown but the very opposite. History reveals the unorthodox corruption of the Scriptures by Alexandrian heretics who denied and attacked the full deity of Christ.⁷ It is a fact that shortly after the inspired NT books were completed, spurious books claiming inspiration were also written (eg, Acts of Paul, Revelation of Peter, Epistle of Barnabas, Gospel of Peter, Gospel of Thomas, Acts of Andrew etc).⁸ The contents of these false books do not fit the nature of divinely inspired writ. They are filled with myths and even blasphemous stories of Christ. The born again and Spirit indwelt believer can tell straightaway that these books are not of God (John 16:13, 1 Cor 2:12-14, 1 John 2:27). The early believers had long rejected them as spurious.

So how was the NT Canon arrived at? The Canon was arrived at by the ecclesiastical consensus of God's people who were indwelt and led by the Holy Spirit (John 16:13). The Council of Carthage (AD 397), chaired by the pre-eminent early church father and theologian—Augustine—identified the sacred books by name. There were exactly 27 of them.

NEW TESTAMENT CANON AND BOOKS		
Canon	Books	Date
Gospels	Matthew	AD 40
	Mark	AD 45
	Luke	AD 45-55
	John	AD 70-90
History	Acts	AD 62-64
Epistles	Romans	AD 55
	1 Corinthians	AD 54
	2 Corinthians	AD 55
	Galatians	AD 49
	Ephesians	AD 60
	Philippians	AD 60
	Colossians	AD 60
	1 Thessalonians	AD 50-51
	2 Thessalonians	AD 50-51
	1 Timothy	AD 62
	2 Timothy	AD 63
	Titus	AD 62

NEW TESTAMENT CANON AND BOOKS		
Canon	Books	Date
Epistles	Philemon	AD 60
	Hebrews	AD 60-65
	James	AD 40-44
	1 Peter	AD 63
	2 Peter	AD 63-64
	1 John	AD 80-90
	2 John	AD 80-90
	3 John	AD 80-90
	Jude	AD 60-70
Apocalypse	Revelation	AD 90

The Canon of NT books above was no innovation, but an official statement of what the Church by ecclesiastical consensus had already accepted as inspired Scripture by virtue of its divine origination. The WCF states:

We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the Church to an high and reverent esteem of the Holy Scripture. And the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole (which is, to give all glory to God), the full discovery it makes of the only way of man's salvation, the many other incomparable excellencies, and the entire perfection thereof, are arguments whereby it doth abundantly evidence itself to be the Word of God: yet notwithstanding, our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts (I:V).

The NT Canon is under attack today like never before. Bible-believing Christians ought not to be naïve but to put on the whole armour of God (Eph 6:11-18). We ought to realise that truth is ascertained by

spiritual knowledge, and we need to pray for the Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth (John 16:13).

TEXTS

The texts of the Holy Scriptures refer to the copies of the Scriptures which come either in handwritten or in printed form.

Old Testament Text

The OT Scriptures were first given to Israel—God’s chosen nation. Romans 3:1-2 tells us that God had committed to the Jews the safekeeping and copying of the Holy Scriptures. Knowing well the divine nature of the Scriptures, that the words of the sacred pages were the very words of the Almighty God, they copied the Scriptures with great precision and accuracy employing the following rules:

- (1) The parchment must be made from the skin of clean animals; must be prepared by a Jew only, and the skins must be fastened together by strings taken from clean animals.
- (2) Each column must be no less than 48 and no more than 60 lines. The entire copy must be first lined, and if three words were written in it without the line, the copy was worthless.
- (3) The ink must be of no other color than black, and it must be prepared according to a special recipe.
- (4) No word or letter could be written from memory; the scribe must have an authentic copy before him, and he must read and pronounce aloud each word before writing it.
- (5) He must reverently wipe his pen each time before writing the word for “God,” and must wash his whole body before writing the word “Jehovah,” lest the holy name be contaminated.
- (6) Strict rules were given concerning the forms of the letters, spaces between letters, words, and sections, the use of the pen, the color of the parchment, etc.
- (7) The revision of a roll must be made within 30 days after the work was finished; otherwise it was worthless. One mistake on a sheet condemned the sheet; if three mistakes were found on any page, the entire manuscript was condemned.
- (8) Every word and every letter was counted, and if a letter were omitted, an extra letter inserted, or if one letter touched another, the manuscript was condemned and destroyed at once.⁹

These very strict rules of transcription show how precious the Jews had regarded the inspired words of God, and how precise their copying of these inspired words must have been. Such strict practices in copying “give us strong encouragement to believe that we have the real Old Testament, *the same one* which our Lord had and which was originally given by inspiration of God.”¹⁰

The present confusion in identifying the Hebrew Scriptures is not with the traditional copies which God has kept pure without corruption by His special providence, but with the printed editions of the Hebrew Text which comes in two types: (1) the Hebrew Masoretic Text—Ben Chayyim (1524-25), and (2) the Biblia Hebraica—Kittel (1937) and Stuttgart (1967/77).

The Ben Chayyim Text is the faithful text that follows the traditional and providentially preserved manuscripts. This Hebrew Text underlying the KJV is totally infallible and inerrant. The Ben Chayyim Text is published today by the Trinitarian Bible Society (TBS). TBS considers the Ben Chayyim Masoretic Text to be the definitive Hebrew Text for today.¹¹

The Kittel and Stuttgart texts, on the other hand, display a critical apparatus that is filled with conjectural emendations that come from modern scholarship. These modern critical texts are the texts that underlie the NASV, NIV, and NKJV. The Kittel and Stuttgart texts contain 20,000-30,000 suggested corrections or changes to the OT Scriptures.¹² Many of these recommended corrections are unwarranted because they come from the Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS), or the Samaritan Pentateuch which trace their origins to heretical sects (eg, Essenes and Samaritans, cf John 4:22), and dubious translations like the Septuagint (LXX).¹³ The textual-critical apparatuses found in these critical texts cause the Bible student to doubt God’s Word. They cause him to question whether he has indeed all the words of Scripture and whether the words of Scripture can be trusted as being altogether true—the very words of God—verbally inspired and preserved (Matt 5:18)? From personal experience, having practised the textual-critical methods of modern scholarship at both Bible College and Seminary levels, I can testify that such critical devices in the modern texts not only cast doubt on God’s Word, but also distract from a reverent and faithful study to a prideful and judgmental study of the Holy Scriptures.

In light of the Biblical doctrine of the divine, verbal and plenary preservation of the Scriptures, Bible-believing students would do well to stick to the providentially preserved line of traditional Hebrew manuscripts and text which is the Ben Chayyim Masoretic Text—the Text that underlies the time-tested and time-honoured KJV—over against the new and critical line of modernistic texts that are behind all the modern English versions.

New Testament Text

The NT Scriptures were written by the Apostles of Jesus Christ under divine inspiration (2 Tim 3:16). The NT Scriptures were then committed to the care of the NT Church comprising born again believers who were loyal to both the Living Word and the Written Word. Just like the OT Scripture, the Lord has also promised to preserve the inspired Greek words of the NT Scripture. Three times Jesus said, “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away” (Matt 24:35, Mark 13:31, Luke 21:33).

The NT autographs in time became apographs for they were copied and circulated to all the NT churches for their meditation, application and edification. As the Church grew, the copies multiplied. There are over 5000 extant NT copies today. These 5000 plus manuscripts are classified under two categories: Alexandrian and Byzantine.¹⁴

TWO STREAMS OF TEXTS AND VERSIONS		
Text	Preserved Byzantine/Majority/Received Text Every word preserved	Perverted Alexandrian/Minority/W H Text Many words excised
Thrust	Spirit of the 16 th Century Reformation	Spirit of 19 th -20 th Century Modernism
Translators	Martyrs and Reformers-Wycliffe, Tyndale, Coverdale, and KJV men	Money-Makers, Liberals, Ecumenists, and Neo-Evangelicals
Technique	Verbal Equivalence-word for word translation	Dynamic Equivalence-thought for thought interpretation
Translation	Protestant Reformation Bible-the AV/KJV is the best. Vital doctrines fully preserved	Ecumenical and Modern Versions. Vital doctrines (virgin birth, deity of Christ, blood of Christ, Trinity, ecclesiastical separation) attacked

The Byzantine manuscripts come from the region of Byzantium or Constantinople, the capital of the Eastern or Greek Empire (AD 295-1453). The majority of the 5000 plus extant NT copies are Byzantine manuscripts. These manuscripts were faithfully copied and continuously used by the Church. They reflect uniform readings. Although there were minor variations, these were easily rectified by a simple comparison of the manuscripts.¹⁵ The Lord has certainly kept these manuscripts pure and uncorrupted throughout the centuries. The Church recognised them to be the inspired and preserved manuscripts, and received them as the Holy Scriptures. These handwritten copies were finally put into print in the 15th century upon the invention of the printing press. During the Protestant Reformation, the Lord specially raised up Erasmus, Stephanus, and Beza to prepare the Byzantine manuscripts for print. The printed Greek text eventually became known as the *Textus Receptus*—the Text received by all. This is the Greek text that underlies the KJV and all the other Reformation translations.¹⁶

The Alexandrian manuscripts come from Alexandria, Egypt. These manuscripts are in the minority, and they reveal a corrupt hand.¹⁷ The most notorious of these minority manuscripts are the *Codex Sinaiticus* and the *Codex Vaticanus*. The *Codex Sinaiticus* was discovered by Tischendorf in St Catherine's monastery in Egypt in 1844 while the *Codex Vaticanus* was kept in the Vatican library and found in 1481. Both these manuscripts were dated to about AD 350. Since they were such old manuscripts, and regarded by Westcott and Hort to be closest to the autographs, they were hailed as the best manuscripts in existence. Westcott and Hort then proceeded to revise the *Textus Receptus* based on their textual-critical theory that the older, harder, and shorter readings of the Alexandrian manuscripts were better. In 1881, they published their new but mutilated text which changed the traditional Received Text in nearly 10,000 places.¹⁸

God did not allow such an attack on His preserved words to go unchallenged. He raised up a most worthy scholar in Dean Burgon to expose the corruptions of the Alexandrian manuscripts on which Westcott and Hort built their revised Greek Text. Burgon, by a diligent study of the primary sources and a careful investigation of the facts, rightly judged the Alexandrian manuscripts to be among the

most scandalously corrupt copies extant: exhibit the most shamefully mutilated texts which are anywhere to be met with: have become, by

whatever process (for their history is wholly unknown), the depositories of the largest amount of fabricated readings, ancient blunders, and intentional perversions of Truth, which are discoverable in any known copies of the Word of God.¹⁹

Since 1881, the corrupt Westcott-Hort text has unfortunately become the standard text for modern translations of the Bible.²⁰ Are the Alexandrian manuscripts so reliable? The Alexandrian manuscripts and the Westcott-Hort text that underlie the modern versions of the English Bible are today being questioned by their very editors—Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland—who wrote, “In the twentieth century the papyri have eroded the dominance of the uncials, and a group of minuscules presently under study promises to diminish it further.”²¹ One such papyrus is the Magdalen GR17 or “Jesus Papyrus” which consists of three fragments containing Matthew 26:7-8, 26:10, 14, 15, 22, 23, 31, 32, 33. It is a very early, first century (AD 60) manuscript. The last four words of Matthew 26:22 (*legein auto hekastos auton*) in the GR17 agree with the Textus Receptus over against the Westcott-Hort and modern critical texts (*legein auto heis hekastos*).²² Another evidence of the antiquity and authenticity of the Textus Receptus comes from the Chester Beatty Papyri which are early 3rd century fragments and they agree with the Traditional or Byzantine Text. Papyrus p75 contains the ascension of Christ (Luke 24:51) which was omitted in the Westcott-Hort Text and modern versions like the NASV.²³ Now, the 26th edition of the critical text of Nestle and Aland has put the ascension verse back into the original text bringing it to conformity with the inspired and preserved Textus Receptus underlying the KJV.²⁴ All such findings confirm Dean Burgon’s observation all along—the Alexandrian/Minority/Westcott-Hort texts are the heretically corrupted texts, but the Byzantine/Majority/Received texts are the divinely preserved texts.²⁵

It is tragic that in many Bible Colleges and Seminaries today, the genealogy of the NT apographs follows the textual-critical paradigm invented by Westcott and Hort who had introduced an imaginative transmission history of the NT Text that is vastly different from the Biblical truth of VPP that is taught by the Author of the Scriptures Himself in His forever infallible and inerrant Word (Ps 12:6-7, Matt 5:18, 24:35, John 10:35, 1 Pet 1:23-25). Far Eastern Bible College (FEBC), despite fierce local and foreign opposition to her VPP belief, remains steadfast in its defence of God’s forever infallible and inerrant Word. The

100% inspired Word of God are in the 100% preserved words of the Hebrew Masoretic Text (Ben Chayyim), and the Greek Textus Receptus (Stephanus, Beza, Scrivener) underlying the time-tested and time-honoured King James or Authorised Version.²⁶

WORDS

The words of the Scriptures are important (Deut 8:3, Matt 4:4, Luke 4:4). God uses His words to communicate His Truth so that we might know who and what He is and how we might be saved through Him. The Bible clearly tells us that it is God's written words (*pasa graphe*—"All Scripture") that are inspired (2 Tim 3:16), and from these inspired words come all the doctrines that are sufficient and profitable for the spiritual growth and maturity of the believer (2 Tim 3:17). The Bible also clearly says that God Himself will preserve all His inspired words to the jot and tittle without the loss of any word, letter or syllable (Ps 12:6-7, Matt 5:18, 24:35).

Old Testament Words

Now if we have the inspired, infallible and inerrant words of God today preserved in the traditional and Reformation Scriptures, then how do we explain the differences or discrepancies found in the Bible especially those found in 1 Samuel 13:1, 2 Chronicles 22:2, and many other places. Can these be due to "scribal errors"?

Since God has preserved His inspired words to the last iota and no words are lost but all kept pure and intact in the original language Scriptures, we must categorically deny that our Bible contains any mistake or error (scribal or otherwise). But it is sad that certain evangelicals and fundamentalists would rather choose to deny the present infallibility and inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures by considering the "discrepancies" found in 1 Samuel 13:1 and 2 Chronicles 22:2 and other like passages to be *actual* instead of *apparent* discrepancies, and calling them "scribal errors."

A denial of the verbal preservation of the Scriptures will invariably lead one to believe that some words of God have been lost and remain lost leading to a "scribal error" view of the OT Scriptures. For instance, W Edward Glenny denies that God has perfectly preserved His Word so that no words have been lost. He says, "The evidence from the OT text suggests that such is not the case. *We might have lost a few words ...*"²⁷

Based on his “lost words” view of the Bible, he was quick to point out “obvious discrepancies” in the OT like 2 Chronicles 22:2. He pontificates,

In 1 Chronicles 8:26 [sic], the KJV states that Ahaziah was twenty-two when he began to reign; the parallel in 2 Chronicles 22:2 says that he began to reign at the age of forty-two. ... These *obvious discrepancies* in the KJV and the Hebrew manuscripts on which it is based show that *none of them perfectly preserved the inspired autographa*.²⁸

Now, know that 2 Chronicles 22:2 reads “forty-two” in the KJV and RSV. A number of the modern versions like the NASV, NIV, and ESV read “twenty-two” instead. So which is the original, inspired reading: “forty-two” (in KJV, and RSV), or “twenty-two” (in NASV, NIV, and ESV)? In making such a textual decision, we must have a perfect standard, and that infallible and inerrant standard is the inspired and preserved Hebrew Scripture, and not any translation ancient or modern.

It is significant to note that every single Hebrew manuscript reads “forty-two” (*arebba'im wushetha'im*) in 2 Chronicles 22:2. There is no evidence of lost words—every word to the letter is preserved, and reads precisely as “forty-two” as accurately translated in the KJV and RSV. If every Hebrew manuscript reads “forty-two” in 2 Chronicles 22:2, then on what basis do the NASV, NIV, and ESV change it to “twenty-two”? They change “forty-two” to “twenty-two” on the basis of the Septuagint (LXX) which is a Greek version of the Hebrew Scripture just like the NIV is an English version of it. In other words, they use a version or translation to correct the original Hebrew text! Should not it be the other way round?

Why do they do this? They do this because of their fallacious assumption that (1) God did not preserve His words perfectly, (2) lost words exist in the Hebrew text, and (3) 2 Chronicles 22:2 is an “obvious” discrepancy (cf 2 Kgs 8:26). Thus, Glenny and all such non-VPPists are quick to use a fallible translation (eg, LXX) to correct the infallible Hebrew Text! This is no different from someone using the NIV today to correct any part of the Hebrew Text according to his whim and fancy! But Glenny calls it “conjectural emendation” which sounds scholarly but colloquially it means—“*Suka* only, change!” Can a translation be more inspired than or superior to the original language text? Can a translation or version (whatever the language) be used to correct the Hebrew? Glenny’s method of explaining such “obvious discrepancies” in the Bible is troubling for it displays (1) a sceptical attitude towards the numerical

integrity of God's Word, (2) a critical readiness to deny the present inerrancy of Scripture in historical details, and (3) a lackadaisical approach towards solving difficulties in the Bible by conveniently dismissing such difficulties as "scribal errors."

A godly approach is one that presupposes the present infallibility and inerrancy of God's Word not only when it speaks on salvation, but also when it speaks on history, geography or science. "*Let God be true, but every man a liar*" (Rom 3:4). Such a godly approach to difficult passages is seen in Robert J Sargent who, by comparing (not correcting) Scripture with Scripture, offered two possible solutions to the so-called "problem" or "error" in 2 Chronicles 22:2. Sargent suggested that "forty-two" could be either (1) Ahaziah's years counted from the beginning of the dynasty founded by Omri, or (2) the year in which Ahaziah was actually seated as king though anointed as one at "twenty-two" (2 Kgs 8:26).²⁹ Whatever the answer may be, the truth and fact is: the inspired and preserved Hebrew reading in 2 Chronicles 22:2 is "forty-two" and not "twenty-two," and no man has the right to change or correct God's Word by "conjectural emendation," taking heed to the serious warning not to add to or subtract from the Holy Scriptures (Rev 22:18-19).

Now, let us look at the next text which is 1 Samuel 13:1 which the KJV translates as, "Saul reigned one year." But the other versions read quite differently. The NASV has, "Saul was *forty* years old when he began to reign;" the NIV has, "Saul was *thirty* years old when he became king;" and the RSV/ESV has, "Saul was ... years old when he began to reign." Which of the above is correct? The only way whereby we can ascertain the correct reading is to go to the Hebrew Bible. The Hebrew Bible since day one reads *Ben-shanah Shaoul*, literally, "A son of a year (was) Saul," or idiomatically, "Saul was a year old."

Now, the difficulty is: How could Saul be only a year old when he began to reign? Scholars and translators who do not believe in the perfect preservation of the Scriptures say that this is an actual discrepancy in the Hebrew Text which they attribute to a "scribal error." This is why Michael Harding in a mistitled book—*God's Word in Our Hands*—wrote,

[I]n 1 Samuel 13:1-2 the Masoretic Text states that Saul was one year of age (*ben-shanah*—literally "son of a year") ... Some ancient Greek manuscripts ... read "thirty years" instead of "one year," ... On account of my theological conviction regarding the inerrancy of the autographa, I believe the original Hebrew text also reads "thirty," even though *we do not currently possess a Hebrew manuscript with that reading*.³⁰

Harding and those like him fail to apply the logic of faith to the promise of God that He will preserve and has preserved every iota of His inspired words. This leads them to conclude that a word is lost and 1 Samuel 13:1 contains a “scribal error” even when there is no such error to begin with. They change the text when the text needs no changing. They replace divine words with human words. Instead of attributing error to the translation (NASV, NIV, RSV, ESV), they rather fault the inspired and preserved Hebrew Text and treat it as an actual discrepancy even when there is absolutely none. This has caused many Bible believers to doubt God’s Word: Do we really have God’s infallible and inerrant Word in our hands? Many are indeed stumbled by such allegations of error in the Bible, and are questioning whether they can really trust the Scriptures at all if there is no such thing as a complete and perfect Word of God today.

It must be categorically stated that there is no error at all in the Hebrew Text and no mistake also in the KJV which translated 1 Samuel 13:1 accurately. So how do we explain 1 Samuel 13:1? A faithful explanation is offered by Matthew Poole who wrote,

[Saul] had now reigned one year, from his first election at Mizpeh, in which time these things were done, which are recorded in chap. xi., xii., to wit, peaceably, or righteously. Compare 2 Sam. ii.10.³¹

In other words, the year of Saul was calculated not from the time of his birth but from his *appointment as king*; “Saul was a year old *into his reign*.” This meaning is supported by the Geneva Bible which reads, “*Saul now had beene King one yeere*.” Rest assured, there is no mistake in the Hebrew Text and in the KJV here. God has indeed inspired and preserved His OT words perfectly so that we might have an infallible, inerrant OT Bible in our hands today.

New Testament Words

As much as the Lord has preserved His inspired OT words (Matt 5:18), so also has He preserved His inspired NT words (Matt 24:35). Where are His words? The divinely preserved words of God today are found in the pure and preserved Greek Textus Receptus underlying the KJV, and not in the corrupt and heretical Westcott-Hort Greek Text behind the modern versions which not only cast doubts on the authenticity of certain Biblical passages like the last 12 verses of Mark (Mark 16:9-20), and the *pericope de adultera* (John 7:53-8:11), but also scissored out the following verses of Scripture in whole or in part:

SCISSION AND CORRUPTION IN THE WESTCOTT-HORT TEXT AND THE MODERN ENGLISH VERSIONS		
Entire Verses Deleted		
Matt	17:21	Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.
	18:11	For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost.
	23:14	Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.
Mark	7:16	If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.
	9:44	Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.
	9:46	Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.
	11:26	But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.
	15:28	And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors.
Luke	17:36	Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.
	23:17	(For of necessity he must release one unto them at the feast.)
John	5:4	For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.
Acts	8:37	And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.
	15:34	Notwithstanding it pleased Silas to abide there still.
	24:7	But the chief captain Lysias came upon us, and with great violence took him away out of our hands.
	28:29	And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves
Rom	16:24	The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

**SCISSION AND CORRUPTION IN THE WESTCOTT-HORT TEXT
AND THE MODERN ENGLISH VERSIONS**

Portions of Verses Deleted or Changed

Matt	5:22	without a cause
	5:27	by them of old time
	6:13	For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen
	9:35	among the people
	10:3	Lebbaeus, whose surname was
	10:8	raise the dead
	12:35	of the heart
	13:51	Jesus saith unto them
	15:8	draweth nigh unto me with their mouth
	18:29	at his feet
	19:20	from my youth
	20:7	and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive
	20:16	For many be called, but few chosen
	20:22	and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with
	20:23	and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with
	22:13	take him away, and
	23:3	observe
	25:13	wherein the Son of Man cometh
	26:60	false witnesses
	27:35	that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet: They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots
Mark	1:2	in the prophets

SCISSION AND CORRUPTION IN THE WESTCOTT-HORT TEXT AND THE MODERN ENGLISH VERSIONS		
Portions of Verses Deleted or Changed		
Mark	1:14	of the kingdom
	2:17	to repentance
	3:5	whole as the other
	3:15	to heal sicknesses, and
	4:4	of the air
	6:11	Verily, I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment than for that city
	6:36	bread: for they have nothing to eat
	7:2	they found fault
	9:29	and fasting
	9:45	into the fire that never shall be quenched
	9:49	and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt
	10:24	for them that trust in riches
	11:10	in the name of the Lord
	12:4	and at him they cast stones
	12:30	This is the first commandment
	12:33	with all the soul
	13:14	spoken of by Daniel the prophet
	14:19	And another said, Is it I?
	14:27	because of me this night
	14:70	and thy speech agreeth thereto
Luke	1:28	blessed art thou among women
	1:29	when she saw him

**SCISSION AND CORRUPTION IN THE WESTCOTT-HORT TEXT
AND THE MODERN ENGLISH VERSIONS**

Portions of Verses Deleted or Changed

Luke	1:78	hath visited
	4:4	but by every word of God
	4:8	Get thee behind me, Satan
	4:18	to heal the brokenhearted
	4:41	Christ
	5:38	and both are preserved
	6:10	whole as the other
	6:45	treasure of his heart
	7:10	that had been sick
	7:31	And the Lord said
	8:45	and they that were with him
	8:45	and sayest thou, Who touched me?
	8:54	and he put them all out
	9:54	even as Elias did
	9:55	and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of
	9:56	For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them
	10:35	when he departed
	11:2	Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth
	11:4	but deliver us from evil
	11:11	bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask
	11:29	the prophet

SCISSION AND CORRUPTION IN THE WESTCOTT-HORT TEXT AND THE MODERN ENGLISH VERSIONS		
Portions of Verses Deleted or Changed		
Luke	11:44	scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites
	11:54	that they might accuse him
	17:3	against thee
	17:9	him? I trow not
	19:5	and saw him
	20:23	Why tempt ye me?
	20:30	took her to wife, and he died childless
	22:30	in my kingdom
	22:31	And the Lord said
	22:64	struck him on the face, and
	22:68	me, nor let me go
	23:23	and of the chief priests
	23:38	written over him in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew
	24:1	and certain others with them
	24:42	and of an honeycomb
John	3:13	which is in heaven
	3:15	not perish, but
	4:42	the Christ
	5:3	waiting for the moving of the water
	5:16	and sought to slay him
	6:11	to the disciples, and the disciples
	6:22	whereinto his disciples were entered

**SCISSION AND CORRUPTION IN THE WESTCOTT-HORT TEXT
AND THE MODERN ENGLISH VERSIONS**

Portions of Verses Deleted or Changed

John	6:47	on me
	8:9	being convicted by their own conscience
	8:10	and saw none but the woman
	8:59	through the midst of them, and so passed by
	9:11	the pool of
	10:26	as I said unto you
	11:41	from the place where the dead was laid
	12:1	which had been dead
	17:12	in the world
	19:16	and led him away
Acts	2:23	ye have taken
	7:30	of the Lord
	7:37	him shall ye hear
	9:5	it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks
	10:6	he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do
	10:21	which were sent unto him from Cornelius
	10:32	who, when he cometh, shall speak unto thee
	15:24	Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law
	17:5	which believed not
	18:21	I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem
	21:8	that were of Paul's company
	21:25	that they observe no such thing, save only

SCISSION AND CORRUPTION IN THE WESTCOTT-HORT TEXT AND THE MODERN ENGLISH VERSIONS		
Portions of Verses Deleted or Changed		
Acts	22:9	and were afraid
	22:20	unto his death
	24:6	and would have judged according to our law
	24:8	commanding his accusers to come unto thee
	24:15	of the dead
	24:26	that he might loose him
Rom	1:16	of Christ
	3:22	and upon all
	8:1	who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit
	8:26	for us
	9:31	of righteousness
	9:32	of the law
	10:15	preach the gospel of peace
	11:6	But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work
	14:6	and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks
	14:21	or is offended, or is made weak
	15:24	I will come to you
	15:29	of the gospel
1 Cor	5:7	for us
	6:20	and in your spirit, which are God's

SCISSION AND CORRUPTION IN THE WESTCOTT-HORT TEXT AND THE MODERN ENGLISH VERSIONS		
Portions of Verses Deleted or Changed		
I Cor	9:18	of Christ
	10:23	for me
	10:28	for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof
	11:24	Take, eat
	11:29	Unworthily
	15:47	the Lord
2 Cor	8:4	that we would receive
	12:11	in glorying
	13:2	I write
Gal	3:1	that ye should not obey the truth
	3:17	in Christ
	4:7	through Christ
Eph	3:9	by Jesus Christ
	3:14	of our Lord Jesus Christ
	4:17	other
	5:30	of his flesh, and of his bones
Phil	3:16	rule, let us mind the same thing
Col	1:2	and the Lord Jesus Christ
	1:14	through his blood
	2:2	and of the Father, and
	2:11	of the sins
1 Thess	1:1	from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ

SCISSION AND CORRUPTION IN THE WESTCOTT-HORT TEXT AND THE MODERN ENGLISH VERSIONS		
Portions of Verses Deleted or Changed		
2 Thess	2:4	as God
1 Tim	2:7	in Christ
	3:3	not greedy of filthy lucre
	3:16	"who" instead of "God"
	4:12	in spirit
	5:4	good and
	5:16	man or
	6:5	from such withdraw thyself
	6:7	and it is certain
2 Tim	1:11	of the Gentiles
Heb	1:3	by himself
	2:7	and didst set him over the works of thy hands
	3:6	firm unto the end
	8:12	and their sins
	10:9	O God
	10:30	saith the Lord
	11:11	was delivered of a child
	11:13	were persuaded of them
	12:20	or thrust through with a dart
Jas	4:4	adulterers and
1 Pet	1:22	through the Spirit
	4:1	for us

SCISSION AND CORRUPTION IN THE WESTCOTT-HORT TEXT AND THE MODERN ENGLISH VERSIONS		
Portions of Verses Deleted or Changed		
I Pet	4:14	on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified
1 John	2:7	from the beginning
	4:3	Christ is come in the flesh
	5:7	in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one
	5:13	and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God
Rev	1:8	the beginning and the ending
	1:11	I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and
	1:11	which are in Asia
	5:14	him that liveth for ever and ever
	11:1	and the angel stood
	11:17	and art to come
	14:12	here are they
	15:2	over his mark
	16:5	O Lord
	16:7	another out of
	16:14	of the earth and
	19:1	the Lord
	21:24	of them which are saved

All the above words are the words God has purely preserved and kept intact in the Greek Textus Receptus on which the KJV is based, but are doubted and deleted in the modern English versions which reflect the corruptions of the Westcott-Hort Text. A total of 2886 words (equivalent

to 1 and 2 Peter) have been scissored out of the KJV by the modern versions.³² Which Bible is true—the “cut up” Bible that is edited by modernists and neo-evangelicals, and based on heretical and corrupt manuscripts, or the “kept pure” Bible that is sourced in the Protestant Reformation and based on divinely preserved and uncorrupted manuscripts? If the Holy Spirit indwells you and grants you discernment, the choice is obvious.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this paper is as follows:

- (1) The Judeo-Christian Canon was never lost and found, but always preserved and identified, and they are the 66 books of the Bible—39 in the OT, and 27 in the NT, no more and no less, fixed and firm, the Apocrypha and Gnostic Gospels having no part whatsoever.
- (2) The OT and NT Texts were never lost and found, but always preserved and identified, and they are the Hebrew Masoretic Text of the OT, and the Greek Textus Receptus of the NT, and not the critical and corrupt texts of Kittel/Stuttgart, and Westcott-Hort.
- (3) The perfectly inspired words of the Hebrew/Aramaic OT and Greek NT were never lost and found, but always preserved and identified, and they are all the words of the Hebrew Masoretic Text (Ben Chayyim) and the Greek Textus Receptus (Stephanus, Beza, Scrivener) on which the KJV—the Reformation Bible—is based, and not the interpretive or speculative words of any version ancient or modern.

In these end-times, may God’s Church—“the pillar and ground of the truth”—return to the Reformed Bibliology of 16th Century Protestantism, and reject the Deformed Babelology of 20th Century Postmodernism, Neo-Evangelicalism, and Neo-Fundamentalism.

The Written Foundation of our Judeo-Christian Faith is sure and secure for “the word of our God shall stand for ever” (Isa 40:8). Amen!

Notes

¹ Jeffrey Khoo, “Inspiration, Preservation, and Translations,” a paper presented to the Truth Bible-Presbyterian Church Adults’ Sunday School, March 5, 2006.

² For instance, Princeton Seminary’s Bruce Metzger, in his textbook on New Testament textual criticism entitled, *The Text of the New Testament* (New

York: Oxford University Press, 1992), discusses the New Testament text in terms of “Its Transmission, Corruption and Restoration,” presuming that there is no such thing as a divinely preserved text that is without corruption, and that the restoration of the text is entirely in the hands of textual scholars and their universities, and not at all in God and His Church.

³ Jeffrey Khoo, “Sola Autographa or Sola Apographa?” *The Burning Bush* 11 (2005): 3-19. See also Theodore P Letis, *The Ecclesiastical Text* (Philadelphia: Institute for Renaissance and Reformation Biblical Studies, 1997).

⁴ The word “apocrypha” comes from the Greek *kryptein* (“to hide”) and speaks of the spurious nature of these 14 books: (1) 1 Esdras, (2) 2 Esdras, (3) Tobit, (4) Judith, (5) Rest of the Chapters of Esther, (6) Wisdom of Solomon, (7) Ecclesiasticus, (8) Baruch, (9) Song of the Three Holy Children, (10) History of Susanna, (11) Bel and the Dragon, (12) Prayer of Manasseh, (13) 1 Maccabees, (14) 2 Maccabees.

⁵ Dan Brown, *The Da Vinci Code* (New York: Doubleday, 2003), 254. See “The Gnostic Society Library” (www.gnosis.org/library.html).

⁶ Ben Witherington III, “Why the ‘Lost Gospels’ Lost Out,” *Christianity Today* (June 2004): 28-32.

⁷ See J W Burgon, *The Causes of Corruption of the Traditional Text of the Holy Gospels* (Collingswood: Dean Burgon Society, 1998 reprint). On page 13, Burgon wrote, “certain manuscripts ... particularly copies of a Version ... these do, to the present hour, bear traces incontestably of ancient mischief.”

⁸ See *Lost Books of the Bible Being All the Gospels, Epistles, and Other Pieces Now Extant Attributed in the First Four Centuries to Jesus Christ, His Apostles and Their Companions Not Included, by its Compilers, in the Authorized New Testament; and, the Recently Discovered Syriac Mss. of Pilate's Letters to Tiberius, etc.* (np: Alpha House, 1926).

⁹ H S Miller, *General Biblical Introduction* (Houghton: Word Bearer, 1947), 184-5.

¹⁰ Ibid, 185.

¹¹ Trinitarian Bible Society, “Statement of Doctrine of Holy Scripture,” *Quarterly Record* (April-June 2005): 1-15.

¹² See D A Waite, *Defending the King James Bible: A Fourfold Superiority*, 2nd ed (Collingswood: Bible For Today, 1996), 20-3.

¹³ J Daniel Hays in his paper, “Reconsidering the Height of Goliath,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 48 (2005): 701-14, questioned the height of Goliath (1 Sam 17:4) in the traditional and received Masoretic Text, calling “six cubits and a span” (ie, 9 feet, 9 inches) a “scribal error.” He argued in favour of “four cubits and a span” (ie, 6 feet, 9 inches) as found in the DSS (4QSam), LXX, and Codex Vaticanus. Thus Goliath was not that extraordinarily tall after all, and the Jews and the Christians have been reading the wrong height of Goliath all these centuries and millennia. Such a criticism of the Bible is

typical of scholars who are either ignorant or dismissive of the Biblical doctrine of VPP.

¹⁴ Adapted from S H Tow, *Beyond Versions* (Singapore: King James Productions, 1998), 121.

¹⁵ For a defence of the Byzantine Text, see Jakob Van Bruggen, *The Ancient Text of the New Testament* (Winnipeg: Premier, 1976); and Harry Sturz, *The Byzantine Text-Type and New Testament Textual Criticism* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1984). Dr Van Bruggen is Professor of NT at the Theological College of the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands (Broederweg, Kampen), and Dr Sturz was Professor of Greek at BIOLA (Bible Institute of Los Angeles). His book was his ThD dissertation at Grace Theological Seminary, Winona Lake, Indiana, USA.

¹⁶ For a defence of the Traditional or Received Text, see J W Burgon, *Revision Revised* (Collingswood: Dean Burgon Society, reprint 2000); E F Hills, *The King James Version Defended* (Des Moines: Christian Research Press, 1984); and Waite, *Defending the King James Bible*.

¹⁷ For the intentional corruptions of God's Word found in the Alexandrian manuscripts, see J W Burgon, *The Causes of Corruption of the Traditional Text* (Collingswood: Dean Burgon Society, reprint 1998).

¹⁸ Waite, *Defending the King James Bible*, xii.

¹⁹ Burgon, *Revision Revised*, 16.

²⁰ For a critique of modern versions based on the Westcott-Hort Text, see Jeffrey Khoo, *Kept Pure in All Ages: Recapturing the Authorised Version and the Doctrine of Providential Preservation* (Singapore: FEBC Press, 2001), 69-100.

²¹ Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, *The Text of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 102.

²² See Carsten Peter Thiede and Matthew D'Ancona, *The Jesus Papyrus* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1996).

²³ See Aland and Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, 91.

²⁴ Erwin Nestle, Barbara and Kurt Aland, eds, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 27th ed (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1979), 246. See Theodore Letis, "The Strange About-Face of the New American Standard Version," Institute for Renaissance and Reformation Studies, January 9, 2002, in <http://www.holywordcafe.com/bible/resources/IRRBS-01-09-02.pdf>, accessed on February 11, 2006.

²⁵ See chart on the two streams of NT Greek Texts in Jeffrey Khoo, *KJV: Questions and Answers* (Singapore: Bible Witness Literature, 2003), 9.

²⁶ See Jeffrey Khoo, "A Plea for a Perfect Bible," *The Burning Bush* 9 (2003): 1-15.

²⁷ Roy E Beacham and Kevin T Bauder, eds, *One Bible Only?* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2001), 121 (emphasis mine). See my critique of this book, "The

Emergence of Neo-Fundamentalism: *One Bible Only?* or “Yea Hath God Said?” *The Burning Bush* 10 (2004): 2-47.

²⁸ Ibid, 114-5 (italics mine).

²⁹ Robert J Sargent, “A Scribal Error in 2 Chronicles 22:2? No!,” *The Burning Bush* 10 (2004): 86-92. See also Chester Kulus, *Those So-Called Errors: Debunking the Liberal, New Evangelical, and Fundamentalist Myth that You Should Not Hear, Receive, and Believe All the Numbers of Scripture* (Newington: Emmanuel Baptist Theological Press, 2003), 367-8.

³⁰ James B Williams and Randolph Shaylor, eds, *God’s Word in Our Hands: The Bible Preserved for Us* (Greenville: Ambassador Emerald, 2003), 361 (italics mine). See my critique of this book, “Bob Jones University, Neo-Fundamentalism, and Biblical Preservation,” *The Burning Bush* 11 (2005): 82-97.

³¹ Matthew Poole, *A Commentary on the Holy Bible*, (McLean: MacDonald, nd), 1:542. See also Kulus, *Those So-Called Errors*, 222-5.

³² Jack Moorman, *Modern Bibles—the Dark Secret* (Los Osos: Fundamental Evangelistic Association, nd), 25.

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE WORD OF GOD

Nguyen Gia Hien

How can you and I know God correctly, besides His general revelation in Nature, without God's Word, the Holy Bible? How can you and I know that God is eternal, sovereign, all-powerful, all-wise, holy, righteous, faithful, loving, good, merciful and perfect without God's Word? How can you and I know God's will, commandments and instructions without God's Word? How can you and I know God's judgment and the condemnation of sin in hell without God's Word? How can you and I know our perishing state and God's salvation for us in the Saviour Jesus Christ, who truly came into this world, died for us, rose again for our justification and will come again for our complete redemption, without God's Word? How can you and I live "by every word of God" without the Holy Bible? How can you and I be sure that the revelation of God is complete, sufficient and authoritative without God's Word? How can you and I discern what is truth and falsehood when we hear a message or read an article without God's Word? How can you and I wholeheartedly believe and contend for God's Truth in this world full of deception, misleading human philosophies and theories, and all kinds of false doctrines without the very perfect Word of God in our hands today? Has God not known all about this and cared for His Word, and perfectly preserved His inspired Word so that you and I can wholeheartedly trust in His Word without any doubt? Surely the almighty, sovereign, holy and faithful God has, and even magnified His Word above all His Name (Ps 138:2).

The Holy Spirit's Teaching

It is a great blessing for you and me to read a book with the author beside us to teach us and explain his writing to us. The Holy Spirit is the Divine Author of the Holy Scriptures, but sadly many do not humbly trust in Him but in human reasoning and rationalistic methods to understand God's Word! No wonder, they cannot see or understand God's Truth.

The Holy Spirit, the Divine Teacher, comes to “teach” us “all things” (John 14:26). If you and I have any difficulty understanding a portion of the Scriptures due to our limited understanding, we should not quickly judge God’s Word, but just go to the Holy Spirit with a humble, meek, prayerful and teachable heart, and He will guide and help us to understand His Truth from other passages of the Scriptures as well, “The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way” (Ps 25:9); “But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things. ... But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him” (1 John 2:20, 27).

This however does not mean that you and I do not need faithful servants of God to teach us as “he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers” (Eph 4:11). Thus, we can learn a lot from God’s true servants. I really thank God for guiding me to the Far Eastern Bible College to learn His Truth from faithful and godly teachers. However, only the Holy Spirit can make me see the Truth personally with such a strong conviction that I will not want to lose it or compromise it for anything else. So with the help of the Holy Spirit, keep studying His Word diligently, “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim 2:15).

The Holy Spirit’s Guidance

The Lord Jesus taught and guided His disciples to know the Truth, and He promised them that after His ascension another Comforter, even the Spirit of Truth, would come to teach and guide them, “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come” (John 16:13). Here we see that although there are three distinct Divine Persons in the Trinity, none acts independently of the other two without their mutual trust and honour. The Holy Spirit does not speak of Himself but only speaks what He hears from God the Father and God the Son. Jesus Christ does the same, saying, “For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak” (John 12:49). Therefore, the words that the Lord Jesus and the Holy

Spirit speak are from God the Father. If you and I despise Jesus' words or the words the Holy Spirit inspired and guided His servants to write, even the Holy Scriptures, we despise God the Father! How serious it is!

The Holy Spirit will guide you and me into not just some truth but "all truth." All the truth that you and I need to know about God and about Jesus Christ, about His creation, about man, about His salvation for man in Christ, about His divinely inspired and preserved Word, about His future kingdom, judgement, new heaven and new earth, etc. have been recorded in the Holy Scriptures. In other words, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, will guide you and me into all the Holy Scriptures, which is God's Truth. Thus, the Holy Spirit will never approve the corrupt Bible texts and versions where His Truth is twisted, omitted or modified.

The Holy Spirit not only guides you and me into all truth but also into God's will: what we should say or do and where we should go according to His will, providence, and direction (Matt 10:19-20; Acts 8:28, 39; 16:6-10).

The Holy Spirit's Illumination

The natural man, no matter how intelligent or clever or scholarly he is, can never see, know, understand or discern spiritual things and God's Truth, and even regards them as foolishness, "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 Cor 2:14). Why? The level of life and nature of animals, even monkeys, is far lower than that of human beings. They cannot understand our talk, our writing, our discussion, our plan, our project, etc. Similarly, unbelievers cannot understand God's Word, God's Truth, God's plan, or God's way, "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isa 55:9). That is why you and I must be "born again" and "partakers of the divine nature" and receive the revelation and illumination from the Holy Spirit, "But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (1 Cor 2:10), and "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints" (Eph 1:17-18).

The Greek verb *photizo* means “to give light” (Rev 22:5), “to enlighten” (Eph 1:18), “to illuminate” (Heb 10:32), “to make one see or understand” (Eph 3:9). Then, you and I have to humbly set aside our human pre-understanding, prejudices and arguments when we come to God’s Word as only the Holy Spirit, “the Spirit of wisdom and revelation,” is able to make you and me to see, know and understand God’s Truth, His plan of salvation, and His glorious inheritance for us. The Holy Spirit, the Divine Author of the Holy Scriptures, has revealed His Truth to His Prophets and Apostles and used them to write it down, so when you and I read the Scriptures, we must humbly pray to the same Divine Author, “Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law” (Ps 119:18). It should be noted that the illumination does not give a new revelation. The revelation of God is complete in the Holy Scriptures, and God does not allow any addition to or subtraction from His Word (Rev 22:18-19).

The Holy Spirit and Interpretation

In order to understand and interpret the Holy Scriptures properly, you and I must be born again, sanctified, and illumined by the Holy Spirit. Next, you and I must humbly submit to the Holy Spirit and the authority of the inspired and preserved Scriptures in the original languages. Then you and I must use the most faithful and correct translation of the inspired and preserved Scriptures, and diligently study the Scriptures with a reverent, prayerful and teachable heart and with sound biblical doctrines.

How to interpret the Scriptures properly? The following are some basic principles of biblical interpretation:

(1) Humbly seek the illumination of the Holy Spirit in prayer. Those who trust in their intelligence without seeking the Holy Spirit fail to interpret properly.

(2) Diligently read and meditate on the Bible text as many times as possible to get the intended meaning before consulting the commentaries. Read the Bible text with faith and reverence because it is God’s Word.

(3) Read with the context of the Bible text in mind, the parts preceding and following the text, bearing in mind that Christ is the Centre of the Scriptures.

(4) The Bible has only one meaning and one sense. Even when there is a deeper sense, it still does not constitute a second sense or meaning. For example, Caiaphas the high priest prophesied, “it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.” The deeper sense is that “Jesus should die...not for that nation only, but that also He should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.” (John 11:50-52).

(5) Use Scripture to interpret Scripture. For example, the word “virgin” in Isaiah 7:14 means precisely “virgin” and not “young woman” as found in the RSV. Matthew 1:22-23 is the inspired commentary on Isaiah 7:14, pointing to the virgin birth of Christ.

(6) Be well grounded in the fundamental doctrines of the Bible. This will guard you from interpreting the Scriptures in such a way that would undermine the historic Christian Faith.

(7) There is only one fulfilment in prophecy. However, in a single prophetic text, there may be two prophecies requiring two fulfilments. For example, there are two prophecies in Joel 2:28-32, one was fulfilled at Pentecost (Joel 2:28-29; Acts 2) and the other will be fulfilled when Christ returns (Joel 2:30-32; Matt 24:29).

(8) Apply the literal or normal interpretation of Scripture. “When the plain sense makes common sense, seek no other sense”. The premillennialists have a proper interpretation of the Second Coming of Christ that Christ must return to establish His kingdom on earth for a thousand years based on a literal understanding of Revelation 5:10 and 20:1-7.

(9) Know that there are types and symbols in the Bible. For example, “the seven golden candlesticks” (lampstands) is used to symbolise the seven churches in Asia (Rev 1:11, 12, 20); and “the serpent was lifted up” is a type of Christ who was crucified for our salvation (John 3:14-15).

(10) Scripture does not contradict Scripture. Any contradiction is only apparent and must not be regarded as actual discrepancies. We need to humble ourselves and admit our limited knowledge and understanding so as to guard ourselves from an arrogant judgement and criticism of God’s Word. “Let God be true, but every man a liar” (Rom 3:4).

(11) Knowing the biblical languages is a great advantage. Carefully use Hebrew and Greek lexicons, grammars, concordances, theological

dictionaries and wordbooks, etc with much discernment to find out the meaning of root words, phrases, syntax, structures, tenses and moods, etc. This can help with a more precise understanding of the Bible text.

(12) Use Bible encyclopedias and dictionaries with responsibility and discernment (as not all are sound) to know the historical and cultural background of biblical times in order to interpret the Bible in the light of its historical context.

(13) When necessary, use Bible commentaries with much discernment, responsibility and prayer to get some good biblical explanation from godly, Bible-believing scholars. The interpretation must be biblical and should not contradict any fundamental doctrines of the Bible.

(14) Study the Bible with the commitment to apply or obey the principles and injunctions of the Bible in our lives today.

(15) The Holy Scriptures alone must be the sole, supreme and final authority of our faith and practice, not circumstances, not experiences, not human intellect, not the church, not any person, institution, or movement.

The Holy Spirit and the Inspiration and Preservation of Scripture

The Holy Spirit is the Divine Author of God's Word, the Holy Bible. He chose His servants—the Prophets and the Apostles—to write exactly what He wanted them to write so that the final product is the very inspired Word of God free from any mistake or error although their personalities and styles might be reflected in their writing (2 Pet 1:20-21). Thus, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God" or is "God-breathed" (2 Tim 3:16). The Holy Spirit inspired not only the contents of Holy Scripture, whether they be spiritual matters, or matters of history, geography or science but also every word.

Since God's Word is so vital for mankind to know the Truth about God and His will for them, Satan has spared no effort to attack and distort God's Word since the beginning (Gen 3:1-5). Sadly, Eve fell into Satan's trap, and then Adam listened to Eve, and both sinned against God and were cursed, and death entered into the world. It is really dangerous to depart from God's Word! Satan is still working hard to attack God's Word today, and many, even so-called "Christian scholars" have fallen into his

trap without being aware, thinking they are “scholarly” with their historical and textual criticisms! It is sad that many blindly listen to these men instead of God’s Word just like Adam, who listened to Eve.

The foundation of Christian faith is Christ and His Word. Satan attacks the faith by sowing the seed of doubt in the hearts of many who will eventually doubt Jesus Christ and His Word. Many argue that God’s Word is only perfect in the original manuscripts (autographs), and since the original manuscripts are no longer existing, they conclude that God’s Word is no longer perfect. They fail to acknowledge and believe that the sovereign, holy, true, almighty, faithful and perfect God has all power to preserve His inspired Word to the very last word for His people as He promised, “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” (Ps 12:6-7).

The Lord Jesus Christ was filled with the Holy Spirit, and He never doubted God’s Word but lived by God’s Word (Luke 4:1-4,18-21) and confirmed the perfect preservation of God’s Word to the jot and tittle although He had only copies of the Scriptures (apographs) in His day, “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). Jesus’ apostles were later filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4), and they never doubted or criticised God’s Word in their preaching and writings! In the true revivals throughout Church history, Spirit-filled believers thirsted for God’s Word and never doubted or questioned God’s Word!

The Holy Spirit and the Traditional and Received Texts

How can you and I recognise which Bible is God’s Word today since there are so many Bible translations and versions, all claiming to be the most faithful and correct translation of God’s Word from the original languages? Now, before we can answer this question, we need to understand certain things.

First, it should be noted that the Holy Spirit inspired His saints to record God’s Word in Hebrew and Aramaic for the Old Testament and in Greek for the New Testament. Therefore, the doctrines of verbal and plenary inspiration (VPI) and verbal and plenary preservation (VPP) of the Scriptures refer to the original languages of the Scriptures, and not the translations, even the King James Version (KJV).

Next, the copies of Hebrew and Aramaic Old Testament with 39 books have been confirmed by the Lord Jesus Christ, His apostles and His Church since the first century (Luke 24:44).

As there were many false gospels and corrupt manuscripts in Greek circulating, the Spirit-filled saints who were guided by the same Divine Author were able to recognise their Shepherd's voice (God's true Word) to identify the 27 books of the New Testament as Canon at the Council of Carthage in AD 397.

Then, in the 16th century, the Holy Spirit raised up His reformers to bring His people back to God's Word from the spiritual darkness under the Roman Catholic Church. By God's sovereignty and providence, in the days of the Protestant Reformation, God's people were guided by the same Divine Author to identify and confirm God's Word in the Traditional and Received Texts, and other faithful versions.

Many argue that it is impossible to have the inspired Bible to the jot and tittle today in the original languages because none of the original manuscripts exists, no man is perfect and the process of transmission was done manually by men, not by printing machines like today! Many others are clever to hide their unbelief by saying that God did preserve all His teachings or doctrines regarding the salvation of His people, but not every word of His Scripture. Many others just compromise and accept all kinds of texts and versions. They are not serious to choose the right text or version that God wants them to read. How about you?

The heart and mind of man are corrupt, sinful, doubtful, proud, deceitful, rebellious and wicked (Jer 17:9; Mark 7:21-23; Rom 1:28-32). In the days of Jesus, so many did not believe He is God Himself and that His Word is true despite His powerful preaching with so many miracles authenticating His Person and His Word. When Peter confessed that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God, he got that revelation not from himself but from God the Father (Matt 16:16-17). You and I must be illumined to see the Truth!

The same Holy Spirit, the Divine Author of God's Word, who helped and guided the Reformation saints and the KJV translators to recognise the preserved texts and to reject the corrupt ones will help and guide you and me to do the same. Do you seriously prefer the translations based on the modern critical texts with thousands of Greek words omitted and modified? What do you think about the name of "Christ" omitted

more than 30 times in the New Testament (Rom 1:16; Phil 4:13; etc), “God” replaced with “He” (1 Tim 3:16) and many other omissions including the Johannine Comma (1 John 5:7)? Unregenerate and sinful men cannot understand the importance of God’s perfect Word from the holy and perfect God, who hates sins, mistakes and errors and magnifies His Word above all His Name (Ps 138:2).

The almighty God is able to preserve all His Words as He promised (Ps 12:6-7) “for with God nothing shall be impossible” (Luke 1:37). Nothing is impossible with God including the preservation of His Words! Thus, with the logic of faith in our sovereign, almighty and faithful Holy Spirit, we trust that we do have God’s inspired and preserved Word in our hands today in the Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek texts underlying the KJV and all other versions based on those same Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek texts. As far as English versions are concerned, the KJV is the most faithful, most accurate and most reliable of all.

Conclusion

The Holy Spirit is the Divine Author of God’s Word, the Holy Bible. If the same Holy Spirit, who was sent by the Lord Jesus Christ and who indwelt the prophets and apostles, is dwelling in you and in me and controlling our hearts, minds and thinking, we shall do the same: magnifying God’s Word (Ps 138:2), living by God’s Word (Matt 4:4), trusting in God’s Word (Ps 119:42), holding forth God’s Word (Phil 2:16), preaching God’s Word (2 Tim 4:2), and contending for God’s Word (Jude 3) without any doubt, question or criticism, “He that saith he abideth in him (Jesus) ought himself also so to walk, even as he (Jesus) walked” (1 John 2:6). If you and I do otherwise, we are not truly filled with the Holy Spirit, and neither are we in Christ. May the Lord graciously help you and me humbly submit to the Holy Spirit and the authority of God’s Word always, “be filled with the Spirit” (Eph 5:18) so as to bear the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:22-23) for our heavenly Father’s glory (John 15:8). Amen.

16

A CHILD OF GOD LOOKS AT THE DOCTRINE OF VERBAL PLENARY PRESERVATION

Carol Lee

Introduction

This paper states my understanding of God's teaching in His Word concerning the Doctrine of Verbal Plenary Preservation and the position I must take with regard to this Doctrine.

I am no linguist or scholar of theology but I am a child of God. And I write with that as my only credential. My heavenly Father's revelation through His Word to me and all His children is clear (John 10:27: "My sheep hear my voice ...," John 18:37: "... Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.") and can be understood with the illumination of the Holy Spirit (John 14:26: "... the Holy Ghost ... shall teach you ...," Ps 119:18: "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.")

I therefore write as one child of God to another. It is hoped that this paper will help the God-fearing and God-honouring reader to come to an equally biblical understanding of (and response to) this Doctrine.

Definition

While God has inspired men of old to write His Word in Hebrew and Greek (ie, the divine, Verbal Plenary Inspiration of the autographs), God also has taken it upon Himself to providentially preserve all of His own words in Hebrew and Greek, so that they can never be lost. This is the Doctrine of Verbal (words) Plenary (all, full, complete) Preservation and this Doctrine is taught in the Word of God.

The Bible Teaches the Doctrine of Preservation

Psalm 12:6–7 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.*

Psalm 33:11 The counsel of the LORD *standeth for ever*, the thoughts of his heart to all generations.

Psalm 78:1–7 Give ear, O my people, [to] my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old: Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. We will not hide [them] from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done. For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should *make them known to their children*: That the generation to come might know [them, even] the children [which] should be born; [who] should arise and *declare [them] to their children*: That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments.

Psalm 100:5 For the LORD [is] good; his mercy [is] everlasting; and *his truth [endureth] to all generations*.

Psalm 105:8 He hath remembered his covenant *for ever*, the word [which] he commanded to a thousand generations.

Psalm 111:7–8 The works of his hands [are] verity and judgment; all his commandments [are] sure. They *stand fast for ever and ever*, [and are] done in truth and uprightness.

Psalm 117:2 For his merciful kindness is great toward us: and the truth of the LORD *[endureth] for ever*. Praise ye the LORD.

Psalm 119:89 *For ever*, O LORD, *thy word is settled* in heaven.

Psalm 119:152 Concerning thy testimonies, I have known of old that thou hast *founded them for ever*.

Psalm 119:160 Thy word [is] true [from] the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments *[endureth] for ever*.

Isaiah 40:8 The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall *stand for ever*.

Isaiah 59:21 As for me, this [is] my covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that [is] upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, *from henceforth and for ever*.

Matthew 4:4 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*.

Matthew 5:17–18 Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. 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.

Matthew 24:35 Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words *shall not pass away*.

John 10:35 If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture *cannot be broken*;

1 Peter 1:23–25 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which *liveth and abideth for ever*. For all flesh [is] as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord *endureth for ever*. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.

The Bible Teaches the Preservation of All the Words (Not Just Doctrines) of God

Psalms 12:6–7 *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.*

Psalms 119:89 For ever, O LORD, *thy word is settled* in heaven.

Isaiah 40:8 The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but *the word of our God shall stand for ever*.

Matthew 4:4 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.

Matthew 5:17–18 Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. 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.

Matthew 24:35 Heaven and earth shall pass away, but *my words* shall not pass away.

1 Peter 1:24–25 For all flesh [is] as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But *the word of the Lord endureth for ever*. And this is *the word* which by the gospel is preached unto you.

The Purpose of Verbal Plenary Preservation is to Sanctify God's Children When They Obey His Word

Deuteronomy 4:2 Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish [ought] from it, that ye may *keep the commandments* of the LORD your God which I command you.

Deuteronomy 29:29 The secret [things belong] unto the LORD our God: but those [things which are] revealed [belong] unto us and to our children for ever, that [we] may *do all the words of this law*.

Joshua 1:8 This book of the law shall *not depart out of thy mouth*; but thou shalt *meditate therein* day and night, that thou mayest *observe to do* according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

Psalms 78:1–7 Give ear, O my people, [to] my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old: Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. We will not hide [them] from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done. For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children: That the generation to come *might know [them, even] the children [which] should be born; [who] should arise and declare [them] to their children: That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments.*

Proverbs 5:7 Hear me now therefore, O ye children, and *depart not from the words* of my mouth.

Matthew 4:4 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.

John 20:30–31 And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye *might believe* that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye *might have life* through his name.

Romans 10:17 So then *faith [cometh]* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

John 17:17 *Sanctify* them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

2 Timothy 3:16–17 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*.

Revelation 22:7 Behold, I come quickly: blessed [is] he that *keepeth* the sayings of the prophecy of this book.

My Belief on the Doctrine of Verbal Plenary Preservation

Just as I believe by faith that God created out of nothing and that He created over a literal six-day period because the Word of God says so (no matter what the scientists or the science text books say!), I believe by faith that God can and has preserved His words for us because the Word

of God says so (no matter what the textual critics, scholarly linguists, commentators, etc may say!). (See above for the biblical teaching.)

Just as much have been written against the literal six-day creation (and the other miracles in the Bible), much have also been (and will continue to be) written against the verbal, plenary preservation of the Word of God.

But, finally, it is not what the “experts” or “godly men” say but what God’s Word says. It is not what I can see with my eyes and touch with my hands, it is what is revealed to me (and you) in God’s Word. (“The Word of God says it. That settles it. I believe it.”)

I believe in Jesus. I believe in the resurrection and ascension of Jesus. I believe there is a literal heaven and a literal hell. I believe in the rapture of saints (although it defies the law of gravity!). I believe not because I have seen all these with my eyes or that the “experts” or “godly men” confirm that these are possible in reality. I believe because God’s Word tells me so, and I believe by faith. It is enough that God’s Word says so.

Believing in God’s Word may cause me difficulties. For example, it means that I must believe that my unsaved loved ones will be left behind during the rapture. I must believe that my unsaved loved ones will end up suffering in a literal hell. Yet I must believe because God’s Word says so. I cannot twist God’s Word to make it say that my unsaved loved ones can be found in heaven. Let us never twist God’s Word to make our difficulties or problems go away. The criterion for what I believe, or do not believe, is not whether it suits me or not, not whether it is convenient for me or not, not whether I want to believe or not, not whether it will cause me problems or not, not whether my intellectual curiosity is satisfied or not. The criterion is and must be whether God’s Word teaches it or not.

Hebrews 11:3 *“Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.”*

Hebrews 11:7–8 *“By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.”*

Hebrews 11:13 “These *all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off*, and were persuaded of [them], and embraced [them], and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.”

Let us take God at His Word and trust the words He has revealed to us. Proverbs 3:5 says, “Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.” God’s Word is rich with the teaching of the Doctrine of Verbal Plenary Preservation. Let us believe God’s clear revelation to us. Let us not lean on our own understanding and start to doubt His Word.

Hebrews 11:7 tells us that “by faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house ...”. While Noah by faith obediently did all that the Lord commanded him (Gen 6:22, 7:5) and preached God’s Word to the people (2 Pet 2:5), the people carried on with their lives as per normal (Matt 24:38–39), ignoring the Word of God. Luke 17:26 says, “And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man.” And so we must be ready for God’s Word to be rejected today when we by faith believe and teach what God says in His Word.

Much have been written and spoken against the Doctrine of Verbal Plenary Preservation, but one thing that is glaring in all these is the lack of Bible support for the doctrine of non-verbal, non-plenary preservation. No where in the Bible does it teach that God’s Word will be preserved only in part. Nor does it teach that God’s Word is accurate only in the areas of faith and salvation and not in the areas of geography and history.

Let us not be hoodwinked into believing the lie of the evil one, couched in scholarly words, words that appeal to our intellect and pride. Remember the strategies the evil one used with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (Gen 3:1), and with our Lord Jesus in the wilderness (Luke 4:1–12). Let us learn from the mistake made by Adam and Eve and not repeat it. Let us learn from our Lord how not to fall into the trap of the evil one.

We believe in God, we must also believe in His Word. We must take God at His Word. I cannot explain how God can create over a mere, literal six-day period. But I believe in the literal six-day creation because the Word of God teaches that. I cannot explain how Christ can be born of a virgin. But I believe in His virgin birth because God’s Word says so. I cannot explain how God can preserve His every word, even to the jot and

tittle. But I believe He can because He revealed in His Word that He will. Let us take God at His Word. “But without faith [it is] impossible to please [him]: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is...” (Heb 11:6). “For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar ...” (Rom 3:3–4). Yes, “let God be true.” If He says He will preserve His words to the jot and tittle, let us “let God be true.”

You may ask: “What if I cannot reconcile God’s verses? What if I discover ‘mistakes’ or discrepancies in God’s Word?” Reader, ask yourself: “Am I smarter than God? Do I detect errors that God has missed? Is my God not capable of keeping His own words intact?”

God says He will preserve. Surely my almighty Lord God, the Creator of heaven and earth, is able to preserve accurately and perfectly the words that He has taken the trouble to inspire men of old to write.

If I cannot reconcile certain verses (and I believe God has promised to providentially preserve His Word Himself), it must then be because of my limited intelligence or understanding. The discrepancies must be *apparent discrepancies*, not real discrepancies. Perhaps, God may use a human teacher to enlighten me. Even if He does not, then I will wait till I see Him face to face and I am confident He will be able to explain those verses to me.

The Doctrine of Verbal Plenary Preservation is Not a New Teaching

It is not a new teaching but a very old doctrine that is being *taught in the Bible* itself (Ps 12:6–7, Matt 5:18, 24:35).

In addition, when the *New Testament* writers and Jesus referred to the “scriptures” (eg, 2 Tim 3:16, John 10:35), they were not referring to the autographs but the faithfully copied apographs. They (Jesus included) accepted without question the apographs as scriptures, as the very Word of God. If the apographs are good enough for Jesus, they are good enough for me.

Various confessional statements from the days of old have also revealed their belief in the Doctrine of Verbal Plenary Preservation. The Westminster Confession of Faith (1643–1648) states:

The Old Testament in Hebrew (which was the native language of the people of God of old), and the New Testament in Greek (which, at the time of

writing of it, was most generally known to the nations), being immediately inspired by God, and *by His singular care and providence, kept pure in all ages*, are therefore authentic; so as, in all controversies of religion, the Church is finally to appeal unto them.¹

Note that the Westminster Confession did not use the term “autographs” but spoke of the Scriptures in terms of the original LANGUAGES. What are “by His singular care and providence” being “kept pure in all ages”? The Hebrew words and the Greek words which God has inspired men of old to put down in writing! The Westminster Confession of Faith clearly teaches the 100% preservation of the Hebrew words and Greek words of the Holy Scriptures.

Both the Westminster Confession (1643–48) and the Helvetic Consensus Formula (1675) cite Matthew 5:18 as proof of the divine inspiration *and* special providential preservation of the Holy Scripture.

The Helvetic Consensus Formula (1675) states:

God, the supreme Judge, not only took care to have His Word, which is the ‘power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth’ (Rom 1:16), committed to writing by Moses, the prophets, and the apostles, but has also *watched and cherished it with paternal care ever since it was written up to the present time, so that it could not be corrupted by craft of Satan or fraud of man*. Therefore, the church justly ascribes it to His singular grace and goodness that she *has, and will have to the end of the world, a ‘sure word of prophecy’* (2 Pet 1:19) and ‘holy Scriptures’ (2 Tim 3:15), from which, though heaven and earth perish, *‘one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass’* (Matt 5:18).²

Francis Turretin (1623–1687) expounded on the early confessional doctrine of Biblical preservation and understood it to mean “entire preservation”:

Nor can we readily believe that God, who dictated and inspired each and every word to these inspired men, would not *take care of their entire preservation*.³

The Baptist New Hampshire Confession (1833) states:

We believe that the Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired, and is an infallible and inerrant treasure of heavenly instruction; that it has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter ... and therefore is, and *shall remain to the end of the world*, the true centre of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions should be tried.⁴

More recent statements have also revealed their belief in the Doctrine of Verbal Plenary Preservation. The International Council of Christian Churches (ICCC) 16th World Congress in Jerusalem 2000, Statement #2, “On the Word of God Forever Inerrant and Infallible” declares:

The first historic doctrine of the Christian Church presented in the doctrinal statement of this Council of churches is its belief in the inerrancy and infallibility of the entire Bible ... God’s Word has been given to us directly from heaven by the Holy Spirit and Jesus, while He was here, said that the Father had sent Him and had given to Him the words which He had delivered to man. Jesus was explicit when he said, “Heaven and earth shall pass away; but my words shall not pass away.” ... It is this Bible and its record of past prophecies that have been seen to be fulfilled in the smallest level, and *every Word of God is true* The ICCC reaffirms all the statements carefully and prayerfully worked out ... all of which are based squarely on this *holy and perfect record which came from heaven*, of which God is the Author and that indeed is why it is called the Word of God.⁵

Dr E F Hills (1912–1981) wrote:

If the doctrine of divine inspiration of the Old and New Testament Scriptures is a true doctrine, the doctrine of the providential preservation of these Scriptures must also be a true doctrine. It must be that down through the centuries *God has exercised a special, providential control over the copying of the Scriptures and the preservation and use of the original text have been available to God’s people in every age.*⁶

An Acid Test

Reader, if you are unable to accept God’s teaching concerning the verbal, plenary preservation of God’s Word, may I suggest that you make a list of your objections and examine them one by one. Do you object because of your need to “see” in order to believe? (John 20:25, “... Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.”) Do you object because believing will cause you problems or difficulties, and therefore you decide to twist God’s Word and make it say something else? Do you object because you refuse to admit your limited intellect when you are unable to understand or reconcile certain portions of God’s Word?

Perhaps, in the process, you will discover your lack of biblical support for your objection, that you actually have no real good reason for

opposing God's teaching on the Doctrine of Verbal Plenary Preservation except your own lack of faith and trust in Him and the teaching in His Word!

Twelve Possible Dangerous Outcomes if the Doctrine of Verbal Plenary Preservation is Rejected⁷

- (1) No inspired Word of God intact.
- (2) No absolutely infallible, inerrant Word of God.
- (3) God is unfaithful in keeping His repeated promise that He will preserve His Word forever.
- (4) Jesus' promises are unreliable (eg, "My words shall not pass away.")
- (5) Jesus did not mean what He said.
- (6) God is so incapacitated by the errors of man and dark events of history that He is unable to keep His promises.
- (7) Faith of Old Testament prophets and saints that God's Word will be kept intact is a false faith.
- (8) Affirmation of apostles and New Testament writers that God's Word will be kept intact is false.
- (9) Our forefathers' faith that the Word of God "by His singular care and providence, kept pure in all ages" is not acceptable.
- (10) Any one can question the authenticity and authority of the words in the Bible.
- (11) Believe "scholars" as to which part of Bible is wrong, instead of believing God.
- (12) No more absolutely trustworthy, perfect Word of God.

The Church Response and Responsibility

The Word of God is the authority on which our doctrines are based. It is the authority for all our preaching and teaching. Over the years, the church has found it necessary and important enough (rightly so) to make a stand for all the various doctrines and positions of the church especially when these are being attacked. Now, when the "root" of all our doctrines and positions is being attacked, it is imperative that the church makes a stand for the "root," the very Word of God itself.

In our Bible-Presbyterian church history, we see that the church took the stand of biblical separation (against Billy Graham and ecumenism).

The church also took the stand that the gift of tongue-speaking has ceased. It was a credit to the church that amidst much controversy and debate, it courageously stood on the Lord's side. There was unhappiness in certain quarters. With much sadness, the church lost some members in the process. But this is a price that the church had to pay (and was willing to pay) for obedience to her Lord and Master. Jesus has set us the example (Phil 2:8: "... he humbled himself, and became obedient ...," Luke 22:42: "... not my will, but thine, be done.") He was obedient to God the Father. He submitted to the will of His Father. So must the church. Such vital issues that pertain to the teachings of God warrant the church making a stand.

The church's recent uncompromising and vocal teaching against the movie "The Passion of the Christ" and against homosexuality shows that our leaders are diligently performing the task of a good "watchman" as required by God (Ezek 3:17; 33:6-7). When the church makes a stand, effectively three things take place:

- (1) The leadership clearly teaches the flock what God's Word says about the issue.
- (2) The leadership leads the flock in obeying God's Word.
- (3) The leadership leads the flock to stand united to speak with one voice for the Lord.

The present issue concerning the Doctrine of Verbal Plenary Preservation is a vital issue that hits at the root of our faith and the root of all our doctrines. It is not enough that in the past the church has courageously made stands that are for the Lord. The Word of God is now under attack. The church must once again make that decision to humbly obey her God and stand on the Lord's side by faithfully teaching what the Bible says about the Doctrine of Verbal Plenary Preservation (John 21:15-17: "... lovest thou me ...? ... Feed my lambs ... Feed my sheep ... Feed my sheep"). Praise God that a handful of our churches have already made that decision to stand on the Lord's side. The flock needs such watchful leaders to teach them the truth from God's Word and to lead them in obeying the truth. May God help our leaders to continue to be diligent, faithful and courageous watchmen for the Lord. May God help every child of God to read His Word and to believe by faith all that He has revealed through His Word.

Conclusion

I give all thanks and praise to my Heavenly Father for assuring me in His own Word that He has taken it upon Himself to keep His own words intact and that I have a most sure Word of God today on which I can be rooted firmly and not be “tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive” (Eph 4:14).

“... Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby” (Heb 12:11). Thank God for the “peaceable fruit of righteousness” in our hearts when we humbly submit ourselves to our Lord, and just believe and obey Him.

“But 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” (Heb 11:6).

May God help me (and every child of God) to believe, to cling on to, and to be rooted in His precious words as revealed to us in the Holy Scriptures.

To God be the glory!

Notes

¹ G I Williamson, *The Westminster Confession of Faith for Study Classes* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co, 1964), 14.

² The Formula Consensus Helvetica (1675), available from http://public.csusm.edu/guests/rsclark/Helvetic_Consensus_Formula.htm. Internet; Accessed on 25 January 2005.

³ Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, trans George Musgrave Giger, ed James T Dennison, Jr (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1992), 1:71.

⁴ Philip Schaff, ed, *The Creeds of Christendom with a History and Critical Notes. Vol III: The Evangelical Protestant Creed* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1931), 742.

⁵ ICCC 16th World Congress Statements, Jerusalem, November 8–14, 2000, Far Eastern Beacon, 23/17 (Christmas 2000): 14.

⁶ Edward F Hills, *The King James Version Defended* (Iowa: The Christian Research Press, 1956), 2.

⁷ Prabhudas Koshy, “If We Reject the Doctrine of the Perfect Preservation of the Bible,” *Bible Witness*, 2/4 (October–December 2002): 16–17.

BIBLICAL PRESUPPOSITIONS IN APPROACHING THE TEXTUAL DEBATE

Paul Ferguson

(1) All of our doctrines must be from the Bible (2 Tim 3:16). The Bible is self-attesting (1 Cor 14:29, 32, 37; Matt 18:19). How we view our world is not how God views it and believers are mandated to think God's thoughts after Him (Isa 55:9), which requires a scriptural presuppositional approach to the textual question. A believer must study to show "himself approved unto God" (2 Tim 2:15). As Cornelius Van Til puts it, "The Bible is thought of as authoritative on everything of which it speaks. And it speaks of everything." We are to receive these promises by faith (Heb 11:13; Matt 13:22; Rom 1:17).

God revealed the Scriptures so men could know His will both in the Old and New Testaments and in the future (Deut 31:9-13, 24-29; 1 John 1:1-4; 2:1-17; 2 Tim 3:14-17, 2 Pet 1:12-15). Certainly the Bible makes clear that no Scripture was intended for only the original recipient (Rom 15:4; 1 Cor 10:11). God intended for those writings to be recognised and received by the church as a whole (e.g. Col 4:16; Rev 1:4). These Words were to be guarded (1 Tim 6:20-21) as a "pattern of sound words" for the church (2 Tim 1:13-14) and to be used to instruct the future church (2 Tim 2:2).

(2) The Bible promises that God will preserve every one of His Words forever down to the very jot and tittle of the smallest letter (Pss 12:6-7; 33:11; 119:152, 160; Isa 30:8; 40:8; 1 Pet 1:23-25; Matt 5:18; 24:35).

(3) The Bible assures us that God's Words are perfect and pure (Ps 12:6-7; Prov 30:4-5).

(4) The Bible promises that God would make His Words generally available to every generation of believers (Deut 30:11-14; Isa 34:16; 59:21; Matt 4:4; 2 Pet 3:2; Jude 17). (This is general availability, not necessarily to every person on the planet.) Certainly, we are told that for

around two millennia in history only one small nation had the true and pure words of God, “He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation; and as for his judgments, they have not known them. Praise ye the LORD” (Ps 147:19-20).

(5) The Bible promises there will be certainty as to the Words of God (2 Pet 1:19; Luke 1:4; Prov 1:23; 22:20-1; Dan 12:9-10).

(6) The Bible promises that God would lead His saints into all truth, that the Word, all of His Words, are truth (John 16:13; 17:8, 17).

(7) God states that the Bible will be settled to the extent that someone could not add or take away from His Words (Rev 22:18-19; Deut 12:32). Indeed, the Apostle Peter in 2 Peter 3:2 warned the saints of his day to be mindful of the “Words” of the Old Testament writings (v2a) and the New Testament writings (v2b), which would be absurd if some of these Words had been corrupted or lost.

(8) The Bible shows that the true Church of Christ would receive these Words (John 17:8; Acts 8:14, 11:1; 17:11; 1 Thess 2:13; 1 Cor 15:3).

(9) The Bible implies that believers would receive these Words from other believers (Deut 17:18; 1 Kgs 2:3; Prov 25:1; Acts 7:38; Heb 7:11; 1 Thess 1:6; Phil 4:9).

(10) The Bible shows that Bible promises may appear to contradict science and reason. In Genesis 2 we see that a newly created world may look ancient. However, **the Scriptures remind us that “It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man” (Ps 118:8).**

(11) Christ implied the preservation of His very Words as a Standard of future judgment (John 12:48). He also warned of the vanity of ignoring His actual Words (Matt 7:26). Christ emphatically declared, “the Scripture cannot be broken” (John 10:35). In Matthew 22:29 Jesus rebuked, “*Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures.*” If the Scriptures were only accessible in the Originals then why would He chide them for being ignorant of Words that were not available? Believers are commanded to contend for the faith (Jude 3) and this faith is based upon the Words of God (Rom 10:17). Note that concerning the end-times, the Lord Jesus warned, “Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18:8 cf. Amos 8:11; Lam 2:9).

Here are other Bible evidences that guide us:

(1) God also has established Biblical precedents which show that He keeps and protects His Words. For instance, when Moses broke the original copy of the tables of God, they were replaced very soon afterwards and not hundreds of years later and Scripture makes the point that these second tablets were written “the words that were in the first tables” (Deut 10:2). In the book of Jeremiah, God responded to the burning of His inspired Words by preparing Baruch to record in it “all the former words that were in the first roll” (Jer 36:28).

(2) Jesus preached from the existing scrolls and we are explicitly told they were “Scripture” (Luke 4:21). Jesus also explicitly said the “Scripture” that they were reading was “spoken unto you by God” (Matt 22:31 cf. Mark 12:24-26). Indeed, Christ said to His audience that when they read the Scripture they would see that which was written by Daniel the prophet himself (Matt 24:15; Mark 13:14). Other New Testament passages argue from the Old Testament text based on a phrase (as in Acts 15:13-17), a word (Matt 22:32), or even the difference between the singular and plural form of a word (as in Gal 3:16).

(3) The Bible warns that there would be those who would “corrupt the word of God” (2 Cor 2:17) and handle it “deceitfully” (2 Cor 4:2). The Apostle Paul warns of those who “changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator” as heading towards apostasy (Rom 1:25). There would arise false gospels with false epistles (2 Thess 2:2). Jesus taught us that if a tree is corrupt, the fruit will be corrupt. Likewise, if a tree is good, the fruit will be good (Matt 7:17). He was speaking of false prophets. False prophets and false teachers corrupt the Scriptures (2 Pet 2:1-3). We must understand that there will always be a line of perversion as there will be of preservation. We are commanded to be **fruit inspectors based upon the premise that if a man’s doctrinal belief is in error** we can conclude that he will do the same to the Scriptures (2 Cor 2:17). “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge” (Prov 1:7); so all knowledge of the Words of God is rooted in God.

(4) God utilised fallible but Spirit-filled human writers to pen His divinely inspired Words of Scripture (2 Tim 3:16, 1 Pet 1:21). A fallible but Spirit-filled John the Baptist could point infallibly to Christ. As much as a fallible but Spirit-filled Church can recognise and receive the

infallible Canon, so can she also recognise and receive the infallible Words of this Canon (John 10:27). Canonicity was recognised by the true Church (not Rome) and the corollary of this must be that the Canonised Words must be recognised by the true and faithful Church and not Rome's texts or apostate textual critics such as Westcott, Hort, Aland, Metzger, Ehrman et al.

(5) The Church at Antioch has a noteworthy position in Scriptures in contrast to Alexandria. Antioch is the first place where the born-again believer is called a Christian (Acts 11:26). It is also interesting to see that where both Antioch and Alexandria are mentioned in the same passage, Antioch is listed as a place of service, while Alexandria is listed as a place of disruption (Acts 6:5-10). Egypt is for the most part associated with ungodliness in the Bible (Isa 19:14; Acts 7:39; Rev 11:8). Most of the New Testament books were written originally to cities in the Byzantine Text area and none written to Alexandria. However, it was precisely in Alexandria that corrupters of the true text dominated.

Dr Kent Brandenburg summarises from these presuppositions, "When we see what God has taught about His Words and the preservation of them, we choose to believe what He said, despite tangible evidence. Individual hand-copies had errors. God said that men would change the Words of Scripture. He warned of it. We see that this is the strategy of Satan, to amend the Words of God. However, God promised and so we believe that He overcame the work of Satan and preserved His Words so that we would have a settled text that is perfect in fulfillment of His promises. The *textus receptus* of the NT and the Hebrew Masoretic of the OT are the only texts that could have been preserved and available. They are the only texts that believers will claim perfection.

"I wasn't there when God created the world. I believe it anyway. I wasn't there when God inspired His Word. I believe it anyway. I wasn't there when Jesus died on the cross. I believe it anyway. I wasn't there when God preserved His Words. I believe it anyway. God will be pleased with your reception of the Words He preserved."

18

WHY WE SHOULD REGARD THE BIBLE AS AUTHORITATIVE

Prabhudas Koshy

It is important that we regard God's Word rightly. How well we excel in our Christian life is very much dependent upon how we esteem the Scripture. God spoke through Joshua that, "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success" (Joshua 1:8). Our blessings are directly related to our respect for every teaching of the Bible.

Since the Bible is the record of God's own words, the authority of God is inherent in the Bible. In the Bible, we hear God speaking with all His sovereign authority. If we accept God's authority, then we must also acknowledge the authority of each and every word which He has recorded in the Bible.

The following facts ascertain the supreme authority of the Bible in believers' lives.

God's Call to Keep the Bible Unaltered, Ascertains Its Authority

Every word of the Bible is to be taken with utmost reverence. We are commanded not to diminish or expand, subtract from or add to that which God has already revealed in the Bible. God does not allow any change to His Word, because such an action is against His own authority.

God said in Deuteronomy 4:2—"Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you."

In Deuteronomy 12:32, the Lord reminds us again, “What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.”

In Revelation 22:18-19, the Lord said, “For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, 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.” Here God warns us that altering God’s Word would simply result in not having a place in heaven.

No king would allow His commands or declarations to be altered, because it is challenging the authority of the king. When God commanded us not to alter His Word, He was stressing the importance of honouring His authority manifested in it. God seriously views how a man regards His Word. If any one approaches the Bible with carelessness and insubmissiveness, the Lord shall deal with him severely. God will hold the person who distorts His Word guilty on the day of judgement.

God’s Call to Obey the Bible, Ascertains Its Authority

God has clearly expressed the authority of His Word when He pronounced blessings upon all those who obey His Word and curses upon those who disobey it. Because God has given supreme authority to the Bible, He expects all men to come with submission to its teachings. We are told, “Ye shall diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, and his testimonies, and his statutes, which he hath commanded thee” (Deuteronomy 6:17).

God’s blessings are extended to only those who obey Him. Read the following passages from God’s Word.

“Ye shall observe to do therefore as the LORD your God hath commanded you: ye shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. Ye shall walk in all the ways which the LORD your God hath commanded you, that ye may live, and that it may be well with you, and that ye may prolong your days in the land which ye shall possess” (Deuteronomy 5:32-33).

God told the Israelites, “And the LORD thy God will make thee plenteous in every work of thine hand, in the fruit of thy body, and in the

fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy land, for good: for the LORD will again rejoice over thee for good, as he rejoiced over thy fathers: If thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which are written in this book of the law, and if thou turn unto the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul” (Deuteronomy 30:9-10).

Besides, God’s curse is pronounced upon those who disregard the authority of God’s Law, the Bible.

“Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them. And all the people shall say, Amen” (Deuteronomy 27:26).

“Thus saith the LORD God of Israel; Cursed be the man that obeyeth not the words of this covenant” (Jeremiah 11:3).

Startling indeed! If any one does not do “all the words of this law”, he is cursed. That is absolute authority.

The Bible Itself Ascertains Its Authority

The writers of the Bible often cited one another as authoritative evidence for what they wrote. While they were citing other parts of the Scripture, they often used the phrase “it is written.” The phrase “it is written” is used about 80 times to refer to other parts of the Scripture as God’s authoritative Word. This expression in the Bible is equivalent to the phrase “The Lord has said” or “Thus saith the Lord.” If any one is said to be disobeying that which is written, it actually means he is not obeying that which God has commanded. For example, in 2 Kings 14:6 the books of the Bible written by Moses are referred to as “...that which is written in the book of the law of Moses, wherein the LORD commanded...”

In short, the Bible regards every portion of it as God’s authoritative Word.

Jesus, the Apostles and the New Testament Writers Ascertained Its Authority

Jesus often quoted the Old Testament as God’s authoritative Word. One classic example of Jesus asserting the authority of the Scripture is seen when He used the Scripture to ward off the temptations of Satan (cf. Matthew 4:3-10). Jesus cited verses from Deuteronomy 8:3; 6:16, and 6:13; 10:20. Jesus’ citations of the Scripture in His preaching and in His

spiritual battle prove to us that He considered the Scripture as authoritative.

Like Jesus, the apostles also acknowledged the Old Testament as God's authoritative Word. (See the underlined parts of the following verse which indicate the apostles' belief that the Scripture is the authoritative Word of God given by the Holy Spirit.)

While explaining the death of Judas who betrayed Christ, Peter saw the fulfilment of a verse in Psalm and he acknowledged it as authoritative—"Men and brethren, this Scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus" (Acts 1:16).

The New Testament writers recognised their own writings as from God. Moreover, the first Christians acknowledged their writings as God's authoritative Word. In his epistle to the Corinthians, the Apostle Paul wrote that "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord" (1 Corinthians 14:37). Likewise we read in 1 Thessalonians 4:2—"For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus."

The New Testament writers regarded each other's writings as authoritative words from God. For example:

In 1 Timothy 5:18, Paul prefaced his statement with "the Scripture says," and then quoted from Deuteronomy 25:4 and Luke 10:7—"For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, the labourer is worthy of his reward." In quoting from both the Old and New Testaments, Paul regarded them as equal in authority.

In 2 Peter 3:16, Peter equated Paul's writing with "the rest of the Scriptures." Peter wrote: "As also in all his (Paul's) epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction."

In 2 Peter 3:2, the Apostle Peter affirmed the authority of both the Old and New Testaments, saying, "That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour."

Conclusion

God expects every believer to esteem His Word very highly. The authority of the Bible is affirmed by the following facts which we have already noted in detail:

- (i) God's command not to add to or subtract from the Bible;
- (ii) God's call to obey all that the Bible commands;
- (iii) The Bible's own claim of authority (e.g. "It is written");
- (iv) Jesus, the Apostles and the New Testament writers affirmed the authority of the Bible.

The last book of the Bible also exhorts us to regard His Word rightly—"Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand" (Revelation 1:3).

The Lord spoke through Jeremiah about the miserable and hopeless situation of the Jews who left God for idols and counsels of other religions and that of the world—"For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water" (Jeremiah 2:13). When the Jews left God's authoritative and powerful Word, they actually left the very source of a satisfying and meaningful life. Whatever they had accepted in place of God's Word was useless, like a broken cup which cannot hold water. Their thirst for a purposeful and blessed life was not quenched by other sources. What God requires of us is not to look for other sources, but to search into what He has already revealed in the Bible for help and blessings.

Acknowledging the authority of God's Word is like recognising the right source of the 'springs of life.' Submission to the authority of the Bible is like drawing from the right source of happiness and blessings.

IF WE REJECT THE DOCTRINE OF THE PERFECT PRESERVATION OF THE BIBLE

Prabhudas Koshy

Rejecting the Doctrine of the Perfect Preservation of the Bible will lead to many severe spiritual dangers. It will undermine the very foundation of the Christian faith. The following are the dangerous outcomes of not believing in the Perfect Preservation of the Bible.

If we reject the Perfect Preservation of the Bible, then we concede that:

1. We don't have the inspired Word of God intact, as the words of the originals are not kept pure (cf. 2 Timothy 3:16).

2. We don't have an absolutely infallible, inerrant Word of God, even though the Lord promises a perfect Word of God forever (cf. Psalm 19:7-9).

3. God is unfaithful in keeping His repeated promise that He will preserve His Word forever (cf. Psalm 12:6-7; Psalm 111:7-8; Psalm 119:89, 152, 160).

4. Jesus' promises, such as, "my words shall not pass away," are unreliable (Matthew 24:35; Mark 13:31; Luke 21:33).

5. Jesus did not mean what He said, because the Bible is not preserved as He uttered—"Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (Matthew 5:18; cf. Luke 16:17).

6. God was so incapacitated by the errors of man and dark events of history that He failed to keep His promises concerning the Preservation of His Word. (It also casts doubt on God's sovereignty, providence, omnipotence, omniscience, etc.)

7. The faith of the Old Testament prophets and saints that God's Word will be kept intact forever is a false faith. "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever" (Isaiah 40:8).

“The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether” (Psalm 19:9).

8. The affirmation of the apostles of Christ and the New Testament writers that God’s Word will be kept intact forever is false. (Matthew, Mark and Luke quoted Jesus’ affirmation of the Preservation of God’s Word, cf. 1 Peter 1:25).

9. Our forefathers’ faith that the Word of God “by His singular care and providence, kept pure in all ages” is not acceptable (Westminster Confession of Faith I. VIII).

10. Anyone can question the authenticity and authority of the words in the Bible (cf. John 17:17).

11. Some parts of the Bible must be subjected to the “scholarly opinion” of certain individuals. When those intellectuals point to us where the Bible is allegedly wrong, we should believe them more than the Bible itself (cf. Matthew 5:17-19).

12. It is wrong to have the presupposition that believers have an absolutely trustworthy, perfect Bible (cf. Psalm 18:30; Psalm 111:7-8; Psalm 119:128).

Denying the Perfect Preservation of the Bible will harm and hurt the Church. It will open the door for anyone to criticise the text of the Bible according to his personal thinking or opinion. This will further lead to doubting the absolute accuracy and authority of the Bible. Thus the very foundation of the church, the absolute sufficiency, trustworthiness and authority of the Bible will be weakened and destroyed. If we preachers do not have a perfectly preserved Bible, what assurance can the hearers have in our preaching of the Word? If we do not have a perfectly preserved Bible, our preaching is vain.

SOLA AUTOGRAPHIA OR SOLA APOGRAPHIA?

A Case for the Present Perfection and Authority of the Holy Scriptures

Jeffrey Khoo

The Issue at Hand

What is the use of having a Bible that was only perfect in the past, but no longer perfect today? Only the autographs (the original God-breathed scripts penned by the very hand of the inspired Apostles and Prophets) may claim infallibility and inerrancy but not the apographs (the copies of the autographs), so it is popularly taught. This paper intends to answer the question: Is the view that the Church no longer has the infallible and inerrant autographs but only fallible and errant apographs a tenable view?

The *Sola Autographa* view of infallibility and inerrancy is generally held today by so-called evangelicals and fundamentalists. The Evangelical Theological Society (ETS), despite its name, is mostly populated by neo-evangelicals who deny the total inerrancy of Scriptures albeit in varying degrees. The recent controversy over Open Theism in the ETS is a case in point.¹ The ETS definition of inerrancy is so loose that it allows for all kinds of interpretations with regard to what inerrancy means.² This is due to the ETS belief that inerrancy lies only in the autographs, “The Bible alone, and the Bible in its entirety, is the Word of God written and is therefore inerrant in the *autographs*.” The consensus among evangelical scholars is that the autographs are no longer in existence.³ As such, an individual who believes that the Bible contains mistakes may subscribe to such a statement because it can be said, “I only believe the Scriptures to be inerrant as originally given; I do not believe that they are inerrant today since we no longer have the autographs, the Scriptures as originally given.” It goes without saying that the theological confusion found in evangelical (or neo-evangelical) Christianity today

finds its root-cause in such a denial of Biblical inerrancy in the apographs.

Regrettably, the *Sola Autographa* view of inerrancy is also held by fundamentalist (or neo-fundamentalist) Bible colleges and seminaries. Two recent books—*From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man*⁴ and *One Bible Only?*⁵—authored by men from Bob Jones University and Central Baptist Theological Seminary (Plymouth) respectively championed such a position.⁶ Apart from the pro-Westcott/Hort and pro-modern versions stance that they have taken, they also contend that the Scriptures though verbally and plenary inspired in the autographs are *not* verbally and plenary preserved in the apographs. It is their assumption, that since God did not choose to preserve His inspired words perfectly, there can be no such thing as a perfect Scripture today.⁷ Or if there exists a perfect Scripture, there is no sure certainty of where it truly is.⁸

In the years 2002-3, the faculty of the Far Eastern Bible College debated this issue of the present perfection of Scripture which eventually saw the resignation of two of its members who could no longer take the Dean Burgon Oath.⁹ Having rejected the supernatural jot-and-tittle preservation of the Holy Scriptures, they could only affirm biblical infallibility and inerrancy in the autographs, but not the apographs. Such a false view of *Sola Autographa* as opposed to *Sola Apographa* has caused great confusion and hindrance to the evangelistic-fundamentalist cause worldwide.¹⁰ It is “Fundamentalism’s Folly” as one Baptist pastor-scholar has so aptly put.¹¹

Definition of Infallibility and Inerrancy

According to the Chamber’s Dictionary, the word “infallibility” means “incapable of error,” and the word “inerrancy” means “freedom from error.”¹² As such, “infallibility” may be deemed a *stronger* term for the perfection of Scripture than the term “inerrancy.” If the Bible by nature is incapable of error, it goes without saying that it must also be totally free from error.

This paper shall use the terms “infallibility” and “inerrancy” in their pure dictionary sense.

Infallibility and Inerrancy of the *Apographa*

The Scripture when it speaks of its inspiration and preservation and consequent infallibility and inerrancy speaks of them in terms of its

apographs. For instance, when Jesus spoke of the jot-and-tittle infallibility (or verbal inerrancy) of the Scriptures in Matthew 5:18, He was referring to the Scriptures that He had in His hands, which were the apographs of the OT Scripture, and not the autographs which had since disappeared. The canonical OT which was completed by the 5th century BC had been preserved exact and intact until the time of Jesus Christ in AD 27. The Apostle Paul when he spoke of the divinely inspired Scriptures in 2 Timothy 3:16 must have thought of them in terms of the Scriptures then used by the church (AD 64), which were the apographs, for the non-existent autographs could hardly have served as a supreme rule of faith and life that 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 Tim 3:16-17).

Some say that the Apostle Paul meant the perfect *autographa* when he spoke of the God-breathed Scriptures in 2 Timothy 3:16. If that was what Paul meant, then a question may be raised: how can an intangible and non-existent *autographa* serve as a supreme and final authority? An authority must be existing, present and accessible or else it would be no authority at all. An eye-witness who is already dead and unable to testify is of no use in a court of law.

Others say that Paul meant the *apographa*, but argue that the *apographa* cannot be deemed as perfect or complete. If this be the case, then how can an imperfect and an incomplete *apographa* serve as an all-sufficient guide for the perfect and complete equipping of the Christian towards godly living? If an eye-witness is not of impeccable character, but a compulsive liar, what good is he? His testimony would be utterly discredited. The same goes for Scripture. If the Church does not have an infallible and an inerrant Scripture, and have it today, then her supreme and final authority of faith and practice is all myth. But it is truthful that the Scripture was, is, and shall be God’s infallible and inerrant Word, and thus supremely authoritative (Ps 12:6-7, Ps 119:89, Matt 24:35, Heb 13:8).

Not only does the testimony of Scripture itself affirm the perfection of its apographs, the Reformers of the 16th century, in their declaration of *Sola Scriptura*, always thought in terms of the existing infallible and inerrant apographs rather than the autographs. The great Puritan divine—John Owen (1616-83)—believed in “the purity of the *present original copies* of the Scripture, or rather copies [*apographa*] in the original

languages, which the Church of God doth now and hath for many ages enjoyed as her treasure.”¹³ Francis Turretin (1623-87)—pastor-theologian of the Church and Academy of Geneva—wrote in his *Systematic Theology*, “By original texts, we do not mean the autographs written by the hand of Moses, of the prophets and of the apostles, which certainly do not now exist. *We mean their apographs* which are so called because they set forth to us the word of God in the *very words* of those who wrote under the immediate inspiration of the Holy Spirit.”¹⁴

The Protestant creeds reflect the Reformation doctrine of the infallibility of the *apographa* as their *Sola Scriptura*. It was not enough to affirm the infallibility and inerrancy of the *autographa* in the days of the Reformation for the Roman Catholic Church challenged *Sola Scriptura* at the Council of Trent (1545-63) by pointing out the scribal errors, variants and discrepancies in the extant Scriptures. The Reformers met this serious challenge by stating unequivocally that the extant Scriptures were infallible and inerrant by virtue of God’s promise to preserve His words to the last iota. In response to the Council of Trent, the Westminster Confession of Faith (1643-8) produced a most excellent statement on the continuing infallibility and inerrancy of Scripture, “The Old Testament in Hebrew ... and the New Testament in Greek ... being immediately inspired by God, and, *by His singular care and providence, kept pure in all ages*, are therefore authentic; so as, in all controversies of religion, the Church is finally to appeal unto them.” (I:8). The biblical proof-text cited was Matthew 5:18, “Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.”¹⁵ In the battle for the sole and supreme authority of the Scriptures over against the Roman Catholic dogma of papal and ecclesiastical infallibility, the doctrine of the special providential preservation of Scripture was eventually and necessarily credalised in the days of the Protestant Reformation.¹⁶

Although it is admitted that the Westminster Confession did not specifically use the terms “infallible” and “inerrant” to describe the Scriptures, their use of the word “authentic” said just as much. They did not at all believe that the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures that they possessed were in any way imperfect or errant. J S Candlish rightly observed that the word “authentic” did not mean simply that the Scriptures were “historically true,” but that in a literal sense, the existing Scripture “is a *correct copy* of the author’s work.”¹⁷ William F Orr put it

more forcefully, “Now this affirms that the Hebrew text of the Old Testament and the Greek of the New which was known to the Westminster divines was immediately inspired by God because it was *identical* with the first text that God has kept pure in all the ages. *The idea that there are mistakes in the Hebrew Masoretic texts or in the Textus Receptus of the New Testament was unknown to the authors of the Confession of Faith.*”¹⁸

In the local and present context, the Constitution of Life Bible-Presbyterian Church (1950), states, “We believe in the divine, verbal and plenary inspiration of the Scriptures in the original languages, their consequent inerrancy and infallibility, and as the Word of God, the supreme and final authority in faith and life.”¹⁹ This 20th century statement is in keeping with the ancient Confessions, speaking of the verbal and plenary inspiration, infallibility and inerrancy of “the *Scriptures* (ie, autographs and apographs) in the original *languages* (ie, Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek),” as opposed to the “original *autographs*” *per se*.²⁰

Although the above statement is true to the reformed understanding of *Sola Scriptura*, the 21st century contention for the present perfection of Scripture requires a clearer and stricter statement. True Life Bible-Presbyterian Church (2004) has risen to the occasion, and offers a more definitive statement in her Constitution, which reads, “We believe in the divine, Verbal Plenary Inspiration (Autographs) and Verbal Plenary Preservation (Apographs) of the Scriptures in the original languages, their consequent inerrancy and infallibility, and as the perfect Word of God, the supreme and final authority in faith and life (2 Tim 3:16, 2 Pet 1:20-21, Ps 12:6-7, Matt 5:18, 24:35).”

It is historically quite clear that the Reformation slogan of *Sola Scriptura* involved a belief in an existing Hebrew OT and Greek NT in their respective apographs that were not only fully inspired but also entirely preserved to their last jot and tittle, and hence absolutely infallible and totally inerrant. The infallible and inerrant apographs could legitimately serve as the Protestant Church’s supreme and final authority in all matters of faith and life. It ought to be noted that the 19th-20th century idea of infallibility and inerrancy as residing *only* in the autographs was utterly foreign to the minds of the 16th-17th century Reformation saints and scholars.²¹

Perfect Autographs, Errant Apographs, and Textual Criticism

The current evangelical view of “inerrant autographs” is a relatively new one that began in the 19th century in conjunction with the introduction of rationalistic textual criticism. Conservative theologians have long identified textual criticism (or lower criticism) as a threat to the biblical doctrine of verbal inspiration.²²

Textual Criticism as introduced by Westcott and Hort treated the Scriptures like any ordinary literature, and sought by human reasoning and subjective analysis to judge which part of Scripture is inspired and which part is not.²³ They touted the highly corrupted Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus as the new standard text, and rejected the traditional *Textus Receptus* as the providentially preserved text.²⁴ Their revision of the providentially preserved *Textus Receptus* saw them cutting out a total of 9,970 Greek words from it in their newly edited Greek text of 1881. The Westcott and Hort text deleted such divinely preserved and time-honoured passages as the *Pericope de adultera* (John 7:53-8:11), the last 12 verses of Mark (Mark 16:9-20), and the Johannine Comma (1 John 5:7).²⁵ Their denial of verbal inspiration as seen in their rendering of 2 Timothy 3:16 was soundly castigated by Southern Presbyterian theologian—Robert Dabney—as the work of a Socinian and a rationalist.²⁶

The tragedy in reformed scholarship was in B B Warfield’s adoption of the Westcott and Hort textual critical theory and his redefinition of the doctrine of biblical inerrancy to make it apply only to the autographs. Warfield’s novel concept of *Sola Autographa* unfortunately caught on, and became the new paradigm in the textual critical exercise of reconstructing (or rather deconstructing) the inspired text. The new paradigm of older, harder, shorter readings as the inspired reading is based on false rules.²⁷ Based on such false rules, “A textual critic engaged upon his business is not at all like Newton investigating the motions of the planets: he is much more like a dog hunting for fleas.”²⁸ Indeed!

The uncritical acceptance of Westcott and Hort’s false textual-critical theory by Princeton Seminary, and later evangelical and fundamental seminaries resulted in the *Textus Receptus* being replaced by the United Bible Societies and the Nestle-Aland Critical Texts as the “commonly received” text in NT studies and modern translations.²⁹ Over a hundred modern English versions have been birthed by this mutilated

and corrupted text causing much confusion over the infallibility, inerrancy and authority of the Scriptures. Where is *the* Bible? Do modern textual critics have the answer? They are agnostic!

Who are the textual critics that determine which text is the inspired text that Christians should use? They are the editors of the current Critical texts, viz, Aland and Metzger among others who are modernists.³⁰ Can we expect them to make spirit-guided decisions with regard to the text? “Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? Or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart” (Ps 24:3-4). Can the Spirit of Truth be pleased to use men devoid of the Spirit to guide them into all truth concerning His Word of Truth (John 16:13)? Georg Luck of Johns Hopkins University has rightly said, “our critical texts are no better than our textual critics.”³¹ Jesus said it well, “Can the blind lead the blind? Shall they not both fall into the ditch?” (Luke 6:39). Non-spiritual men have produced a non-spiritual text that formed the basis of a plethora of liberal, ecumenical and feminist versions that demote the deity of Christ and deny the veracity of the Scriptures. Is it no wonder that the mainline denominational churches today are in such a pathetic state, plagued by rampant apostasy and immorality?

Fundamentalism’s love affair with Westcott and Hort, the modern versions, and textual criticism is truly a classic case of the unequal yoke (2 Cor 6:14-7:1). The KJV and its underlying inspired and preserved Hebrew and Greek texts ought to be *the* Text of Biblical Fundamentalism.³² But today, certain fundamentalists are speaking with a forked tongue: they pay lip service to the KJV as the “very” (100%) Word of God, but undermine its very source—the underlying Hebrew Masoretic Text and Greek *Textus Receptus*—saying that it is not 100% (with much deference to Westcott and Hort).³³ It goes without saying that this partnership of the KJV with the Westcott and Hort Text in the classrooms of fundamental theological colleges and seminaries is a marriage made in hell. Is it no wonder that fundamentalism today is dying?

The Verbal Plenary Preservation of the Holy Scriptures

There is a vital need today for true biblical fundamentalists to resuscitate the indispensable doctrine of the verbal and plenary preservation (VPP) of the Holy Scriptures, and by so doing, recapture the Reformation battle-cry of *Sola Scriptura* as found in the infallible and

inerrant *apographa* of the traditional Hebrew Masoretic Text and the Greek *Textus Receptus* on which the venerable KJV is based.

The 19th century Warfieldian concept of the inerrant *autographa* as reflected in contemporary evangelicalism ought to be expanded to include the inerrant *apographa*. According to Richard Muller of Calvin Theological Seminary, “The Protestant scholastics do not press the point made by their nineteenth-century followers that the infallibility of Scripture and the freedom of Scripture from error reside absolutely in the *autographa*, and only in the derivative sense in the *apographa*; rather, the scholastics argue positively that the *apographa* preserve intact the true words of the prophets and the apostles and that the God-breathed (*theopneustos*) character of Scripture is manifest in the *apographa* as well as in the *autographa*. In other words, the issue primarily addressed by the seventeenth-century orthodox in their discussion of the *autographa* is the continuity of the extant copies in Hebrew and in Greek with the originals both *quoad res*, with respect to the thing or subject of the text, and *quoad verba*, with respect to the words of the text.”³⁴ It is quite clear that the Reformation scholars believed in the 100% inspiration and 100% preservation of the *very words* of Scripture that God has breathed out, and not simply the doctrines (2 Tim 3:16, Ps 12:6-7, Matt 5:18, 24:35). Without the words, where the doctrines? It must be pointed out that the current neo-evangelical and neo-fundamental view of (1) verbal inspiration and total inerrancy in the autographs alone, and (2) conceptual inspiredness and limited inerrancy in the apographs, contradicts reformed and fundamental dogmatics.

Myron Houghton of Faith Baptist Seminary was precisely right when he wrote, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God” [2 Timothy 3:16]. Another way of saying this would be, ‘all Scripture is God-breathed,’ or ‘all Scripture comes from the mouth of God.’ This means God is directly responsible for causing the Bible writers to put down everything that He wanted written without error and without omission. But what of the Bible I hold in my hand? Is it God’s Word? Can it be trusted? The answer is yes! Both truths—the inspiration and inerrancy of the original manuscripts and the trustworthiness of the Bible in my hand—must be acknowledged. To affirm the inspiration and inerrancy of the original writings while casting doubt on the authority of the Bible that is available to us is just plain silly. Can you *really* imagine someone seriously saying, ‘I have good news and I have bad news: the good news

is that God wanted to give us a message and therefore caused a book to be written; the bad news is that He didn't possess the power to preserve it and therefore we don't know what it said!' A view of inspiration without a corresponding view of preservation is of no value."³⁵

Ian Paisley, renowned leader of the World Congress of Fundamentalists and President of the European Institute of Protestant Studies, wrote likewise, "The verbal Inspiration of the Scriptures demands the verbal Preservation of the Scriptures. Those who would deny the need for verbal Preservation cannot be accepted as being really committed to verbal Inspiration. If there is no preserved Word of God today then the work of Divine Revelation and Divine Inspiration has perished."³⁶

In the battle for the Bible today, there is a need for Bible-believing and Bible-defending churches and seminaries to produce statements of faith that affirm the Scriptures to be verbally and plenary preserved in the apographs; that all the Hebrew and Greek words of the Masoretic Text and the *Textus Receptus* underlying the Reformation Bibles as represented by the Authorised Version are the verbally and plenary inspired words of God, and therefore absolutely infallible, totally inerrant and supremely authoritative.³⁷

There is also a need to be specific in the identification of the preserved text. In his discussion on "How to Combat Modernism—Follow the Logic of Faith,"³⁸ Edward F Hills warned against a false view of preservation that says (1) the doctrines are preserved, but not the words (contra Matt 24:35, Mark 13:31, Luke 21:33), or (2) the true reading is preserved somewhere out there in the whole body of extant manuscripts. Such a general and uncertain view would imply that God was somehow careless in preserving His inspired words. Hills rightly advised, "It is not sufficient merely to *say* that you believe in the doctrine of the special, providential preservation of the holy Scriptures. You must *really* believe this doctrine and allow it to guide your thinking. You must begin with Christ and the Gospel and proceed according to the logic of faith. This will lead you to the Traditional text, the *Textus Receptus*, and the King James Version."³⁹

It is by this same logic of faith applied consistently that D A Waite concluded that "the WORDS of the Received Greek and Masoretic Hebrew texts that underlie the KING JAMES BIBLE are the very

WORDS which God has PRESERVED down through the centuries, being the exact WORDS of the ORIGINALS themselves.”⁴⁰ (Note that Waite is speaking of the Hebrew and Greek words underlying the KJV, and *not* the English words, nor the KJV *per se*.)

This is not a new view, but a restatement of an old truth. By believing in the verbally and plenary preserved apographs, we are affirming or reaffirming good old Protestant and Reformation Theology. It is heartening to note that God’s people, filled and guided by the Spirit, are recognising this vital truth of the verbal and plenary preservation of the Scriptures, and not a few theological institutions have already taken a declared position for it.⁴¹

One such institution is the International Council of Christian Churches (ICCC). In its 16th World Congress in Jerusalem, 2000, a statement, “On the Word of God Forever Inerrant and Infallible,” was passed: “The first historic doctrine of the Christian Church presented in the doctrinal statement of this Council of churches is its belief in the inerrancy and infallibility of the *entire* Bible ... God’s Word has been given to us directly from heaven by the Holy Spirit and Jesus, while He was here, said that the Father had sent Him and had given Him the words which He had delivered to man. Jesus was explicit when He said, ‘Heaven and earth shall pass away; but my words shall not pass away.’ The penalty pronounced on adding to or taking from the Scriptures was severe judgement from God Himself. ... It is this Bible that has brought into existence the ICCC. It is through this Bible that the Holy Spirit has given the faith to the leaders who have established this Council and has helped them maintain a sure and clear witness to the Bible’s *full* truthfulness. It is this Bible and its record of past prophecies that have been seen to be fulfilled in the *smallest* level, and *every* Word of God is true. ... Nothing that the archaeologists have discovered and will discover will contradict this Book. ... This Holy Book is the work of our righteous God in making possible the only salvation that exists and in bringing men and women through the preaching of the Word in all its ‘foolishness’ into God’s everlasting kingdom. The ICCC reaffirms all the statements carefully and prayerfully worked out ..., all of which are based squarely on this holy and *perfect* record which came from heaven, of which God is the Author and that indeed is why it is called the Word of God.”⁴²

The Far Eastern Bible College, in a necessary effort to preserve her original reformed and fundamentalist ethos, has issued a statement on the Holy Scriptures that was unanimously passed by her Board of Directors on December 29, 2003. Article 4 of the College Constitution reads,

- 1.1 The Statement of Faith of the College shall be in accordance with that system commonly called “the Reformed Faith” as expressed in the Confession of Faith as set forth by the historic Westminster Assembly together with the Larger and Shorter Catechisms.
- 1.2 In abbreviated form, the chief tenets of the doctrine of the College, apart from the Doctrinal Position Statement of the College, shall be as follows:
 - 1.2.1 We believe in the divine, Verbal Plenary Inspiration (Autographs) and Verbal Plenary Preservation (Apographs) of the Scriptures in the original languages, their consequent inerrancy and infallibility, and as the perfect Word of God, the supreme and final authority in faith and life (2 Tim 3:16, 2 Pet 1:20-21, Ps 12:6-7, Matt 5:18, 24:35).
 - 1.2.1.1 We believe the Hebrew Old Testament and the Greek New Testament underlying the Authorised (King James) Version to be the very Word of God, infallible and inerrant.
 - 1.2.1.2 We uphold the Authorised (King James) Version to be the Word of God—the best, most faithful, most accurate, most beautiful translation of the Bible in the English language, and do employ it alone as our primary scriptural text in the public reading, preaching, and teaching of the English Bible.
 - 1.2.1.3 The Board of Directors and Faculty shall affirm their allegiance to the Word of God by taking the Dean Burgon Oath at every annual convocation: I swear in the Name of the Triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit that I believe “the Bible is none other than the voice of Him that sitteth upon the throne. Every book of it, every chapter of it, every verse of it, every word of it, every syllable of it, every letter of it, is direct utterance of the Most High. The Bible is none other than the Word of God, not some part of it more, some part of it less, but all alike the utterance of Him that sitteth upon the throne, faultless, unerring, supreme.”

Conclusion

The Burning Bush will continue to publish articles to defend the present perfection of the original language Scriptures on which the Authorised Version is based. Bible-believing and Bible-defending pastors and scholars do not hide from alleged “discrepancies” in the Bible. In future issues, we shall endeavour to glorify God and edify His saints by explaining these difficult passages according to a faith-based, thoroughly reformed, theological-presuppositional approach to the Scriptures—the *apographa* we possess today contain no mistakes whatsoever!

It is enough just now to close with the words of Dean Burgon: “I hear some one say,—It seems to trouble *you* very much that inspired writers should be thought capable of making mistakes; but it does not trouble me.—Very likely not. It does not trouble *you*, perhaps, to see stone after stone, buttress after buttress, foundation after foundation, removed from the walls of Zion, until the whole structure trembles and totters, and is pronounced insecure. Your boasted unconcern is very little to the purpose, unless we may also know how dear to you the safety of Zion is. But if you make indignant answer,—(as would heaven you may!)—that your care for GOD’s honour, your jealousy for GOD’s oracles, is every whit as great as our own,—*then* we tell you that, on *your* wretched promises, men more logical than yourself will make shipwreck of their peace, and endanger their very souls. There is no stopping,—no knowing where to stop,—in this downward course. Once admit the principle of fallibility into the inspired Word, and the whole becomes a bruised and rotten reed. If St. Paul a little, why not St. Paul much? If Moses in some places, why not in many? You will doubt our LORD’s infallibility next! ... It might not trouble *you*, to find your own familiar friend telling you a lie, every now and then: but I trust this whole congregation will share the preacher’s infirmity, while he confesses that it would trouble *him* so exceedingly that after one established falsehood, he would feel unable ever to trust that friend implicitly again.

“... But I believe that the Bible IS the Word of GOD—and I believe that GOD’s Word must be absolutely infallible. I shall therefore believe the Bible to be absolutely infallible,—until I am convinced to the contrary.”⁴³

“No, Sirs! The Bible (be persuaded) is the very utterance of the Eternal;—as much GOD’s Word, as if high Heaven were open, and we

heard GOD speaking to us with human voice ... [T]he Bible, from the Alpha to the Omega of it, is filled to overflowing with the Holy Spirit of GOD: the Books of it, and the sentences of it, and the words of it, and the syllables of it,—aye, and the very letters of it.”⁴⁴ Amen and Amen!

“Help, LORD; for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men. They speak vanity every one with his neighbour: with flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak. The LORD shall cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaketh proud things: Who have said, With our tongue will we prevail; our lips are our own: who is lord over us? For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the LORD; I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him. 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. The wicked walk on every side, when the vilest men are exalted” (Ps 12).

“Yea, let God be true, but every man a liar” (Rom 3:4). *Soli Deo Gloria!*

Notes

¹ Go to <http://www.etsjets.org> for information on the 2003 ETS Membership Challenge on Open Theism.

² The interpretive nature of the term “inerrancy” has led former ETS President, Millard J Erickson, to describe “inerrancy” as “a reference to the *variously interpreted* doctrine that the Bible is free from error” (emphasis mine) in his *Concise Dictionary of Christian Theology*, sv “Inerrancy.”

³ Modern textual critics assume that “the autographs (originals) of the NT books are a hypothetical source only, since none are extant.” J Harold Greenlee, *Introduction to New Testament Criticism* (Grand Rapids MI: Wm B Eerdmans, 1964), 33.

⁴ James B Williams, ed, *From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man* (Greenville SC: Ambassador-Emerald, 1999), 25-26.

⁵ Roy E Beacham and Kevin T Bauder, eds, *One Bible Only?* (Grand Rapids MI: Kregel, 2001), 102-103.

⁶ For a comprehensive review of both books, see my articles, “Bob Jones University and the KJV: A Critique of *From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man*,” *The Burning Bush* (2001): 1-34; and “The Emergence of Neo-Fundamentalism: *One Bible Only?* Or ‘Yea Hath God Said?’,” *The Burning Bush* (2004): 2-47. See also “The Leaven of Fundamentalism: A History of the Bible Text Issue in Fundamentalism,” videocassette tape 3, Pensacola Christian College, 1998.

⁷ Beacham and Bauder, *One Bible Only?*, 121.

⁸ Williams, *From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man*, 182.

⁹ At every annual convocation, the FEBC Board of Directors and faculty swear to uphold the perfection of Scriptures, that “the Bible is none other than the voice of Him that sitteth upon the throne. Every book of it, every chapter of it, every verse of it, every word of it, every syllable of it, every letter of it, is direct utterance of the Most High. The Bible is none other than the Word of God, not some part of it more, some part of it less, but all alike, the utterance of Him that sitteth upon the throne, faultless, unerring, supreme.” Adapted from J W Burgon, *Inspiration and Interpretation* (Collingswood NJ: Dean Burgon Society, 1999 reprint), 89.

¹⁰ On the infallibility of the apographs, listen to David Allen’s lecture, “The Special Providential Preservation of the Word of God,” delivered to the Scottish Reformation Society, February 2, 2004 at <http://www.bible-sermons.org.uk/audio-sermons/767-special-providential-preservation-of-the-word-of-god>. In a letter to this author dated April 2, 2004, Allen clarified that his lecture was meant “to show that the current ‘Reformed’ position was not a view shared by the Reformers.” The current “Reformed” position is the “inerrant autographs” position originally espoused by B B Warfield of Princeton Seminary. It is however unfortunate that Allen in his message on “The Faithful Keeping and Copying of the Word of God,” at Life Bible-Presbyterian Church, Singapore, on June 22, 2004, undermined the very doctrine of preservation he tried so hard to present when he (1) *dogmatically* asserted that Psalm 12:6-7 does not mean the preservation of God’s words whatsoever, (2) opened the possibility of “scribal errors” in the preserved Hebrew text in places where there are none (eg, 2 Chron 22:2), and then (3) introduced a fallacious hermeneutical rule that Scripture “corrects” Scripture (implying that the Scriptures contain mistakes).

¹¹ Peter W Van Kleeck, *Fundamentalism’s Folly?* (Grand Rapids MI: Institute for Biblical Textual Studies, 1998), see especially pages 20-27 on “Dogmatic Disjunction.” Van Kleeck offers a historical survey of the interpretation of Psalm 12:6-7 in the days of the reformers (15-19). For an exegetical defence of the verbal plenary preservation of the words of Scripture in Psalm 12:6-7, see Thomas M Strouse, “The Permanent Preservation of God’s Words, Psalm 12:6,7,” in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, ed Kent Brandenburg (El Sobrante CA: Pillar & Ground, 2003), 29-34.

¹² *Chamber’s Twentieth Century Dictionary*, comp Rev Thomas Davidson, sv “Infallible,” “Inerrable.”

¹³ Quoted by Theodore P Letis, *The Ecclesiastical Text* (Philadelphia PA: Institute for Renaissance and Reformation Biblical Studies, 1997), 43.

¹⁴ Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, vol 1 (Philipsburg NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1992), 106. Emphasis mine.

¹⁵ *The Westminster Standards: An Original Facsimile* (Audubon NJ: Old Paths, 1997).

¹⁶ Other Protestant creeds followed suit: The Confession of the Waldenses (1655), The Savoy Declaration (1658), The Baptist Confession (1688), Methodist Articles of Religion (1784), The New Hampshire Baptist Confession (1833), Confession of the Evangelical Free Church of Geneva (1848), The Reformed Episcopal Articles of Religion (1875). In none of them was the term “autographa” used. See Philip Schaff, ed, *The Creeds of Christendom*, vol 3 (Grand Rapids MI: Baker, 1931).

¹⁷ J. S Candlish, “The Doctrine of the Westminster Confession on Scripture,” as cited in Theodore Letis, ed, *The Majority Text* (Philadelphia PA: Institute for Renaissance and Reformation Biblical Studies, 1987), 174. Emphasis mine.

¹⁸ William F Orr, “The Authority of the Bible as Reflected in the proposed Confession of 1967,” as quoted by Letis, *The Majority Text*, 174. Emphasis mine.

¹⁹ *Fifty Years Building His Kingdom*, Life Bible-Presbyterian Church Golden Jubilee Magazine, 1950-2000, Singapore, 51.

²⁰ This historic church in Singapore suffered a split in 2003 due to a non-reformed interpretation of the constitution which applied the terms “inerrancy” and “infallibility” only to the autographs and not apographs, employing anti-preservationist arguments from anti-reformed dispensational Baptists of *One Bible Only?* (op cit) notoriety. Re: “Preserving Our Godly Path,” Life B-P Church Sunday School, December 1, 2002 (lifebpc@pacific.net.sg), and this author’s critique of it (febcb@pacific.net.sg).

²¹ Cf Richard A Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy, ca 1520 to ca 1725*, vol 2, *Holy Scripture*, 2d ed (Grand Rapids MI: Baker Academic, 2003), 300-7.

²² Letis, *The Ecclesiastical Text*, 1.

²³ See B F Westcott and F J A Hort, *Introduction to the New Testament in the Original Greek* (Peabody MA: Hendricksen, 1998 reprint) for the man-made rules of anti-fedeistic textual criticism.

²⁴ Read J W Burgon, *The Revision Revised* (Collingswood NJ: Dean Burgon Society, 2000 reprint) for a refutation of the Westcott and Hort’s false Greek text and theory.

²⁵ For a defence of the authenticity of these precious passages, see E F Hills, *The King James Version Defended* (Des Moines IA: Christian Research Press, 1984), 150-68; J W Burgon, *The Last Twelve Verses of Mark* (Collingswood NJ: Dean Burgon Society, 1871); and Michael Maynard, *A History of the Debate Over 1 John 5:7-8* (Tempe AZ: Comma Publications, 1995); Jeffrey Khoo, “A Preliminary Examination of the Antiquity and Authenticity of the Johannine Comma (1 Jn 5:7f),” *Foundation*, May June 2000, 34-5.

²⁶ Cited in Jeffrey Khoo, "Bob Jones University and the KJV," *The Burning Bush* (2001): 10-11.

²⁷ It is no wonder that scholars today are re-evaluating the textual critical canons of Westcott and Hort. See David Alan Black, ed, *Rethinking New Testament Textual Criticism* (Grand Rapids MI: Baker, 2002), 27, 31.

²⁸ A E Houseman, "The Application of Thought to Textual Criticism," in *Selected Prose*, ed J Carter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), 131-2.

²⁹ Edward F Hills, "A History of My Defence of the King James Version," *The Burning Bush* (1998): 99-105; Theodore Letis, "B B Warfield, Common-Sense Philosophy and Biblical Criticism," in *The Ecclesiastical Text*, 1-29; Jeffrey Khoo, *Kept Pure in All Ages: Recapturing the Authorised Version and the Doctrine of Providential Preservation* (Singapore: FEBC Press, 2001), 117-120.

³⁰ David Cloud, *For Love of the Bible* (Oak Harbor WA: Way of Life Literature, 1995), 37-44.

³¹ Cited in Black, *Rethinking New Testament Textual Criticism*, 50.

³² "For fundamentalist society as a whole the Authorized Version functioned as the direct and immediate expression or transcript of divine revelation ... The virtual use of only one English version, and it is one originating within very traditional early seventeenth-century Christianity, thus indirectly but very powerfully supported the alienation of the fundamentalist public from, and its opposition to, the positions, interests and methods from which all biblical criticism grew and on which it depended." James Barr, *Fundamentalism* (Philadelphia PA: Westminster, 1978), 210-1.

³³ Cf Thomas M Strouse, "Fundamentalism and the Authorized Version," a paper presented to the National Leadership Conference, Calvary Baptist Theological Seminary, Lansdale PA, February 29, 1996.

³⁴ *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms*, s v "autographa."

³⁵ Myron J Houghton, "The Preservation of Scripture," *Faith Pulpit* (August 1999): 1-2. Stuart Lease, former president of Lancaster Bible College, likewise said, "Now I believe that God so superintended both the writing and the preservation of Scripture, not only the words, but the very letters."

³⁶ Ian R K Paisley, *My Plea for the Old Sword* (Belfast: Ambassador, 1997), 103.

³⁷ See Jeffrey Khoo, "A Plea for a Perfect Bible," *The Burning Bush* (2003): 1-15.

³⁸ Edward F Hills, *Believing Bible Study* (Des Moines IA: Christian Research Press, 1977), 219.

³⁹ *Ibid*, 220.

⁴⁰ D A Waite, *Defending the King James Bible: A Four-fold Superiority* (Collingswood NJ: Bible For Today, 1996), 48.

Sola Autographa or Sola Apographa?

⁴¹ See list in Jeffrey Khoo, *KJV Q&A* (Singapore: Bible Witness Literature Ministry, 2003), 18-19; Cloud, *For Love of the Bible*, 269-414.

⁴² “ICCC 16th World Congress Statements,” *Far Eastern Beacon* 32 (December 2000): 9. Emphasis mine.

⁴³ Burgon, *Inspiration and Interpretation*, 73-4.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 76.

ATTACKS ON THE AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE BY APOSTATES

Paul Ferguson

The Bible is God's infallible revelation of Himself to mankind. The Scripture makes it very clear that its every Word is essential. All of our doctrines, standards, convictions, and our practices are derived from the Scriptures. The doctrine of the Sufficiency of Scripture enables us to confidently appeal to these Words to determine all of our theological and doctrinal boundaries. God's revelation is authoritative, sufficient, and clear—and ultimately necessary for our existence (Job 23:12; Prov 29:18; Isa 46:10; Amos 8:11; Matt 5:17-18; 16:1-4; John 10:35; Rom 1; 2 Tim 3:15; Titus 1:2; Heb 6:13). The whole system of God's truth is set forth in the Holy Bible as God's inerrant, infallible and plenary Word. Even Peter acknowledged the supremacy of Scripture over his wonderful experiences with Christ in 2 Peter 1:16-18. Commentator Samuel Cox wrote, "*Peter knew a sounder basis for faith than that of signs and wonders. He had seen our Lord Jesus Christ receive honor and glory from God the Father in the holy mount; he had been dazzled and carried out of himself by visions and voices from heaven; but, nevertheless, even when his memory and heart are throbbing with recollections of that sublime scene, he says, 'we have something surer still in the prophetic word.' ... It was not the miracles of Christ by which he came to know Jesus, but the word of Christ as interpreted by the spirit of Christ.*"

Rationalistic Modernism

Today, many a compromising church have accommodated themselves to rationalistic modernism to the point that they no longer hold absolute positions, save perhaps for religious pluralism and the Golden Rule. However, the advent of relativism especially in the textual issue is an insidious adversary, for it rejects the real possibility of absolute truth, even if it promotes infinite forms of meaning. One apologist once described this pattern as the "treason of the intellectuals."

Since the Word of God is our only effective offensive weapon, it would be wholly inconsistent with the character of God to send us out into battle with a sword that is not dependable and uncertain. The Word attests to Christ, and Christ attests to the Word—in fact Christ was the Word made flesh! All of Scripture was inspired by the Holy Spirit to set forth God's unique system of truth and thus the system of truth is self-attesting. Robert Reymond shows how absolutely vital the Scriptures are, *"We must not forget that **the only reliable source of knowledge that we have of Christ is the Holy Scripture.** If the Scripture is erroneous anywhere, then we have no assurance that it is inerrantly truthful in what it teaches about him. And if we have no reliable information about him, then it is precarious indeed to worship the Christ of Scripture, since we may be entertaining an erroneous representation of Christ and thus may be committing idolatry. The only way to avoid this conclusion is to keep the Christ of Scripture and the Scripture itself in vital union with each other—the former the Giver of the latter—and to affirm that the latter is true because it was inspired by the former who is Truth itself (John 14:6)."*

Theologian John Murray makes it clear the desperate state of mankind without the Scriptures, *"Without Scripture we are excluded completely from the knowledge, faith, and fellowship of him who is the effulgence of the Father's glory and the transcript of his being, as destitute of the Word of life as the disciples would have been if Jesus had not disclosed himself through his spoken word.... Our dependence upon Scripture is total. Without it we are bereft of revelatory Word from God, from the counsel of God 'respecting all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith and life.'... It is because we have not esteemed and prized the perfection of Scripture and its finality, that we have resorted to other techniques, expedients, and methods of dealing with the dilemma that confronts us all if we are alive to the needs of this hour ... let us also know that it is not the tradition of the past, not a precious heritage, and not the labours of the fathers, that are to serve this generation and this hour, but the Word of the living and abiding God deposited for us in Holy Scripture."*

False Worldviews

As a consequence of the Fall man is estranged from the God of Scripture, giving rise to the many false worldviews that have arisen

throughout history. Man's ability to think logically has been impaired but not erased by the Fall. The consequence of this is that often man's reasoning is flawed, and can even be logically valid but from the wrong premises. Therefore, it is foolish to make Holy Scripture subordinate or equal to human reasoning.

Throughout the Scriptures, we see perennial attacks by the devil and rebellious mankind on God's authority. The very first textual critical attack on God's Words came in Genesis when we are told a serpent who "was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made" cast doubt by posing the question, "Yea, hath God said?" Satan's strategy deals in doubt and cultivates it by attacking the certainty of God's Word by changing the truth, which is seen in his temptation of Eve (Gen 3) and of the Lord Jesus (Matt 4). It should be also noted that Eve also was a critic by adding to the Words of God. Like our modern textual critics, Satan and Eve did what they wanted to do with God's Words.

The Bible is very clear that the Devil hates the Word of God. He utilized Rome to burn some copies, but his main attack was on the text itself. We are told that Satan questioned it, misquoted it, took it out of context, and attempted to get someone to doubt God's promises (Gen 3, Matt 4, and all of Job). The Apostle Paul warns of those who "changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator" as heading towards apostasy (Rom 1:25).

As a consequence, today most professing Christians lack a coherent Biblical worldview. Many set up a buffer zone between the parts of the Bible they accept and the parts they reject. The reality of objective truth is denied as the Postmodern Church turn to feelings and experiences in replacement for truth, and exchange worldviews as quickly as they try on new clothes. It is increasingly difficult to defend the true faith to a world and a Church that is unwilling to make any judgment concerning truth. We must, however, assert the infallibility of Scripture over the fallibility of human science and we must never allow the latter to drive our interpretation of the Biblical text. In other words, we are not integrationists who accept such as synthesis. We cannot don God-denying glasses with the unbeliever and then try to point God out using them. As Douglas Wilson eloquently put it, *"The Bible meets no standard; the Bible is the standard. Conservative defenders of the Word too often act like the Bible is an exceptionally bright student, always acing every test we might devise for it. But the tests we devise are always skewed, and the*

*very idea of testing here is deeply problematic. We have the whole classroom turned around. Our propeller heads in the back row—the scientists—were not enrolled in order to grade the teacher. And those in the second row—the textual critics—need to quit passing notes and listen some more. ... The Bible is not a grab bag of infallible truths, thoughtfully provided by God so that we could have an axiomatic starting point for our subsequently autonomous reasoning. The Scriptures **are authoritative**. We are men, with our breath in our nostrils. We are creatures with little pointy heads. Further, to complicate matters further, we are sinful creatures. We must be under a complete authority, full authority, exhaustive authority. The charge will of course be that we have embraced obscurantism. We are opposed to science, or health, or worse yet, to good food, wholesome air and bright sunshine. But we should remain content, whether the slander sticks or not. As creatures, we cannot function without an ultimate court of appeal. This is true of every man, believing or unbelieving, and the only choice we have is whether or not that ultimate court will be the Scriptures. But surely it should be considered odd when **Christians** deny that ultimate place to what God has told us.”*

Our Only Defence

The great attack in the last days is on the existence of God by atheists, and the authority of Scripture by textual critics. There is a need to build a Biblical defence to these assaults using the Biblical presuppositional approach through the “spectacles of Scripture.” Our defence of the faith should have no different ultimate authority than our method of expounding the faith. The Lordship of Christ demands we articulate and practice a Christian apologetic, Bibliology, art, science, and music. In doing so, we need to honour God’s Words above the words of any man. We trust His promises and wisdom above that of any man.

THE DEADLY SIN OF ATTACKING THE BIBLE

Timothy Tow

Adapted from the author's paper, "A Standard Raised," published in the July 1980 issue of The Reformation Review, the official organ of the International Council of Christian Churches

A More Deadly Sin

Now, there is a more deadly sin that destroys us; and that is, as Dr Chia Yu Ming my teacher in China has said, the sin of the mind and the sin of the spirit, the sin of rejecting truth, the sin of wilful ignorance! In the words of Isaiah, Judah has forsaken judgment, *"In transgressing and lying against the LORD, and departing away from our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood ... for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter. Yea, truth faileth"* (Isa 59:13-15).

One fitting backdrop of these words of condemnation is the prophet's confrontation with apostate King Ahaz. This is recorded in Isaiah 7 and 2 Kings 16. Because Judah had backslidden from worshipping the living and true God (1 Thess 1:9) and given herself to idols and heathen sacrifices, so God had permitted her to be attacked by the kings of Israel and Syria. Since Judah was the Lord's chosen one, His covenant abideth.

He sent the prophet to assure the nation of His mercies in the midst of war preparations. When the Lord graciously condescended to show His protecting presence with a sign from heaven, or in the sea, the unregenerate king hypocritically answered, *"I will not ask, neither will I tempt the LORD"* (Isa 7:12). This hypocrisy is ripped aside by Isaiah's scathing denunciation, accompanied with the famous prophecy on Christ's virgin birth. Isaiah retorted, *"Hear ye now, O house of David; Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel"* (Isa 7:13-

14). What were Ahaz's innermost reactions? I am sure he who disbelieved the Word of God in the offer of His outward manifestations of salvation had also spurned the virgin birth.

Today the enemy has come in with a flood of philosophies to destroy the Church. There was Roman Catholicism with many superstitions, then Deism and Rationalism, out of which has come Higher Criticism. As "*They hatch cockatrice' eggs, and weave the spider's web: he that eateth of their eggs dieth, and that which is crushed breaketh out into a viper*" (Isa 59:5), so out of the eighteenth-century destructive criticism of Holy Scripture has come the reptile Modernism, or Liberalism, which Dr Machen has called "a pagan religion." From Modernism, or Liberalism, has come Barthianism, or Neo-orthodoxy, and a proliferation like the hydra of every "style" of high-sounding anti-Christian theology, the latest of which is neo-evangelical "scholarship" so called. Though the International Council of Christian Churches (ICCC) has been raised of God to offset the ecumenism of the World Council of Churches, which today is degenerated to a self-glorified socio-political gathering of professional churchmen, our greatest fight is with Satan masquerading within it, whose work of mischief is to attack God's Word. Of this hidden adversary our Lord says, "*Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it*" (John 8:44).

The greatest lie Satan has spread in this generation is the teaching through neo-evangelical professors of the Fuller Seminary type. They proudly concede that the Bible has "limited inerrancy." A corresponding subtle attack from even greater heights of conceit (the sin that brought Lucifer's downfall) is to criticise the Bible's so-called "grammatical errors." Fancy a Greek professor picking on John's or Peter's "uncouth" rhetoric when he himself cannot stammer a kindergarten rhyme in modern Greek. Let him say in grammatical modern Greek, "Little Bo-peep has lost her sheep, and doesn't know where to find them" After all, if Greek scholarship is so profound, the *koiné* must be deepened by the classical and broadened by the modern. And how much Shakespearean English do these Greek professors know if the King James Version offers them a double superlative? Please let them point out the grammatical error of Acts 26:5, "*that after the most straitest sect of our*

religion I lived a Pharisee.” How true is the observation of Herbert Spencer, “When a man’s knowledge is not in order, the more of it he has, the greater will be his confusion.” And better still is Paul’s verdict, *“Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth. And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know. But if any man love God, the same is known of him”* (1 Cor 8:1-3).

The Battle for the Bible

The Battle for the Bible is the life-and-death struggle in our generation as never before! It has been observed by Dr Charles Woodbridge that there have been three periods of great controversy between truth and error in the course of Church history. The first period occurred in the time of Constantine in the controversy between Athanasius and Arius. It came to a head at the Council of Nicea, 325 AD, when Arianism was condemned. It was a fight over the person and deity of Christ. The second period occurred in the sixteenth century in Luther’s repudiation of popery. The fight centred on the work of Christ, *“for the just shall live by faith.”* The third period is now, since “scholars” began to pick on the Bible because they themselves are “blind” (eighteenth century to this day). This attack is on the Word of Christ. What is the main battle the Council is waging? It is not so much with Communism, or Ecumenism, or “Billy Grahamism” as with the father of lies whose work of mischief from the Garden of Eden to this day is to destroy God’s Word.

The doctrine of the plenary, verbal inspiration [and preservation] of Holy Scripture is taught by none other than the Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. The classic declaration on this doctrine of doctrines is found in the famous Sermon on the Mount, *“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. 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 5:17-18). Our Lord guarantees His Word perfect and pure to the last letter, “to the cross of a t and the dot of an i,” if you would. Here is God’s standard, like the “Stars and Stripes” over the fortress at Baltimore flying high, to resist Satan’s all-out onslaught. Here is the second standard of the ICCC Doctrinal Statement, resisting the foe of our faith. Truly our Declaration on the Bible’s inerrancy, infallibility, and supremacy has rallied all of you sons of the faith throughout the world to come here and stand with the Lord of

Truth. “*Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth*” (Ps 60:4).

For the strengthening of every seminary and Bible college within our movement, let me offer this declaration of Far Eastern Bible College, Singapore, for mutual encouragement: Far Eastern Bible College deems the doctrine of the plenary, verbal inspiration [and preservation] of Holy Scripture, inerrant and infallible, to be the cornerstone of all other doctrines. Every member of the Board of Directors and Faculty must, under solemn oath at a special service held each year, subscribe to absolute belief in this doctrine to the exclusion of the latest neo-evangelical leaven of “limited inerrancy” and so-called textual and grammatical errors. These are Satan’s newest tactics for discrediting the everlasting and ever-living words “*that proceedeth out of the mouth of God*” (Matt 4:4). As Satan constantly changes his tactics in order to beguile, if possible, even the elect, we declare that any question directed against the person and work of Christ, such as His deity, virgin birth, miracles, substitutionary death, bodily resurrection, and personal, visible return is deemed an attack on the immaculate Lord Himself. Any question posed against the Bible is deemed an act of rebellion against the Triune God.

We affirm with Dean Burgon of Oxford that “The Bible is none other than the voice of Him that sitteth upon the throne. Every book of it, every chapter of it, every verse of it, every word of it, every syllable of it, every letter of it, is direct utterance of the Most High. The Bible is none other than the Word of God, not some part of it more, some part of it less, but all alike the utterance of Him who sitteth upon the throne, faultless, unerring, supreme.”

Which Bible?

(ICCC Resolutions on the Bible in Amsterdam 1998 and Jerusalem 2000)

“BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, that the International Council of Christian Churches, assembled in the historic English Reformed Church in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, observing its 50th Anniversary, August 11-15, 1998, urge all Bible-believing churches worldwide to use only the Authorised KING JAMES VERSION in their services and in their teaching ministry, and warn the followers of Christ against these innumerable ‘new’ bibles which are not translations at all, but revisions

conforming to the personal bias and views of those who have originated them and who profiting by commercial sales of such.”

“Believing the OT has been preserved in the Masoretic Text and the NT in the Textus Receptus, combined they gave us the complete Word of God. The King James Version in English has been faithfully translated from these God-preserved manuscripts. ... We the International Council of Christian Churches meeting in Jerusalem, 8-14 November 2000 strongly urge the churches in their pulpits and people at large, to continue to use the time honoured and faithful longer translations and not the new shorter versions that follow in too many places the short eclectic texts. These are very similar to the shorter Westcott and Hort texts that remove or cast doubt on so many passages and words.”

THE DEAN BURGON OATH

Jeffrey Khoo

What is an Oath?

According to Chambers Dictionary (original edition, 1901), an oath is “*a solemn statement with an appeal to God as witness, and a calling for punishment from Him in case of falsehood or of failure.*” Taking an oath is thus a very serious matter. According to the definition as found in Chambers Dictionary, it involves (1) a solemn statement, (2) an appeal to God as witness, and (3) a punishment from God in case of falsehood or failure.

Who was Dean Burgon?

John William Burgon lived from 1813 to 1888. He was born in Smyrna (cf Rev 2:8), a city of Asia Minor which is today Asiatic Turkey. He was a graduate of Oxford University where he earned three degrees (BA, MA and MDiv). Burgon was such an outstanding scholar that he was later appointed Oxford professor of divinity in 1867. In 1876 he became the Dean of Chichester, and was henceforth known as Dean Burgon.

Just as David was raised up to fight Goliath, Burgon was raised by the Lord to challenge Westcott and Hort—two liberal Anglicans who attacked the inspiration and preservation of the Holy Scriptures. Filled with holy indignation that God’s Word—the very foundation of the Christian Faith had been undermined, he devoted the last 30 years of his life to the defence of the Traditional and Preserved Text and the King James Bible over against the corrupt Westcott-Hort Text and their Revised Version which is the father of all the modern versions of the English Bible today.

Burgon had a high regard for the King James Bible. Consider what he said, “*Our Authorised Version is the one religious link which at present binds together ... millions of English speaking men scattered over*

the earth's surface. ... It may be confidently assumed that no 'Revision' of our Authorised Version, however judiciously executed, will ever occupy the place of public esteem which is actually enjoyed by the work of the Translators of 1611—the noblest literary work in the Anglo-Saxon language. We shall in fact never have another 'Authorised Version.' ... As something intended to supercede our present English Bible, we are thoroughly convinced that the project of a rival Translation is not to be entertained for a moment. For ourselves, we deprecate it entirely." Concerning the King James translators, Burgon wrote, "*Verily, those men understood their craft! 'There were GIANTS in those days.'* ... *because the SPIRIT of their GOD was mightily upon them.*"

Like Burgon, True Life upholds "*the Authorised (King James) Version to be the Word of God—the best, most faithful, most accurate, most beautiful translation of the Bible in the English language, and do employ it alone as our primary scriptural text in the public reading, preaching, and teaching of the English Bible*" (Constitution, 4.2.1.3).

What Is the Dean Burgon Oath?

In his defence of the Word of God against Westcott and Hort, Dean Burgon produced a most sublime statement of faith on the perfection and purity of the Holy Scriptures. He said, "*The Bible is none other than the voice of Him that sitteth upon the Throne! Every Book of it, every chapter of it, every verse of it, every word of it, every syllable of it, every letter of it, is the direct utterance of the Most High! The Bible is none other than the Word of God: not some part of it more, some part of it less; but all alike, the utterance of Him who sitteth upon the Throne; faultless, unerring, supreme!*" At the FEBC 11th graduation service in 1979, the Rev Dr Timothy Tow, founding principal of FEBC turned this statement into an oath, and required every member of the teaching faculty to take it.

Is the Dean Burgon Oath according to the Scriptures? It most certainly is. "*The Bible is none other than the voice of Him that sitteth upon the throne.*" The phrase "Thus saith the LORD" appears 415 times in the Bible to tell us that it is the direct utterance of the Most High God. God speaks to us today directly through the Holy Scriptures. Each time we read the Bible it has the authority of "Thus saith the LORD." And this Bible is none other than the God-breathed words of the Hebrew OT and the Greek NT that form the basis of our Authorised King James Bible

which Dean Burgon promoted and defended in his battle against the corrupt text and translation of Westcott and Hort.

To what extent is the Word of God pure and perfect? It is pure and perfect to the last iota. The psalmist in Psalm 19:7 says, *"The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul."* Psalm 119:140 says, *"Thy word is very pure: therefore thy servant loveth it."* Proverbs 30:5 says, *"Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him."* 2 Timothy 3:16 says, *"All scripture is given by inspiration of God."* Note that "All Scripture" is inspired of God, not "Some Scripture" or "Most Scripture" but *"All Scripture."* Every word of God is important and significant. Jesus said in Matthew 4:4, *"It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."* That was why Dean Burgon wrote, *"The Bible is none other than the Word of God: not some part of it more, some part of it less; but all alike, the utterance of Him who sitteth upon the Throne; faultless, unerring, supreme!"* The Bible is faultless and unerring not only on matters of salvation, but also of science, history, and geography. We reject the view that the Bible contains "insignificant" mistakes like spelling mistakes, chronological mistakes, numbering mistakes, or so-called scribal mistakes.

Do we have the pure and perfect Word of God today? The answer is again a resounding yes. God not only inspired His words 100%, He also promised to preserve His inspired words 100%, to the last jot and tittle. Jesus said in Matthew 5:18, *"Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."* Matthew 24:35, Mark 13:31, Luke 21:33 say, *"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."* Psalm 12:6-7, *"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."* The Westminster Confession of Faith (chap I, para VIII) states, *"The Old Testament in Hebrew ... and the New Testament in Greek, ... being immediately inspired by God, and, by His singular care and providence, kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentical."* That is why we affirm with Burgon, *"Every Book of it, every chapter of it, every verse of it, every word of it, every syllable of it, every letter of it, is the direct utterance of the Most High!"*

Please note that Dean Burgon wrote these words in the *present tense*: “Every book, chapter, verse, word, syllable and letter *IS* (not *WAS*) direct utterance of the Most High.” The Greek word *gegraptai* (perfect tense of *grapho*, “to write”) translated “it *is* written,” or “it *stands* written,” is used 67 times in the Bible to teach us in no uncertain terms that the Bible *was, is, and will always be* the perfect Word of God—*forever* infallible and inerrant. This is a statement, a position, an oath of faith. Hebrews 11:6 says, “*But 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.*”

Allegiance to the Perfect Word of God

May FEBC maintain this good tradition put in place by the Rev Dr Timothy Tow, and may all Board and Faculty members take the Dean Burgon Oath sincerely without reservations. As Numbers 30:1-2 says, “*This is the thing which the LORD hath commanded. If a man vow a vow unto the LORD, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond; he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth.*” When we take an oath that is in accordance to the Holy Scriptures and say what God says in His Sacred Word, we are safe and secure, and shall receive His blessing to serve Him who is the King of kings and the Lord of lords. To Him be all glory and honour. Amen.

PART III

Biblia

JOHN OWEN ON THE PERFECT BIBLE

Jeffrey Khoo

Introduction

John Owen (1616-83) was the respected systematic theologian of the Puritan tradition. One of his greatest works—“On the Divine Original of Scriptures”—sought to vindicate the purity and integrity of the Hebrew and Greek Texts of the Old and New Testament. His writings in 23 volumes were published electronically by AGES Software in 2000. I have quoted Owen extensively below, and the page numbers are those of Volume 16 of *The Works of John Owen* (as found in *The AGES Digital Library Series*, www.ageslibrary.com).

John Owen clearly believed in the Verbal Plenary Inspiration (VPI) and Verbal Plenary Preservation (VPP) of Scripture. He wrote, “That as the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament *were immediately and entirely given out by God himself*, his mind being in them represented unto us without the least interveniency of such mediums and ways as were capable of giving change or alteration *to the least iota or syllable*; so, by his good and merciful providential dispensation, in his love to his word and church, his whole word, as first given out by him, *is preserved unto us entire* in the original languages; where, shining in its own beauty and lustre (as also in all translations, so far as they faithfully represent the originals), it manifests and evidences unto the consciences of men, without other foreign help or assistance, its divine original and authority” (450).

Owen affirmed the VPI and VPP of the Scriptures in the “original languages” (364). He opposed Bible-deniers who said that “the original copies of the Old and New Testaments are so corrupted that they are not a certain standard and measure of all doctrines, or the touch-stone of all translations” (366). His view of the 100% inspiration and 100% preservation of the original language Scriptures as found in the Autographs and Apographs truly reflects the Reformation mind of *Sola*

Scriptura over against the Neo-evangelical and Neo-fundamental view of *Sola Autographa*.

Verbal Plenary Inspiration

Owen affirmed the VPI of the Holy Scriptures as written by the apostles and prophets: “That the laws they made known, the doctrines they delivered, the instructions they gave, the stories they recorded, the promises of Christ, the prophecies of gospel times they gave out and revealed, were not their own, not conceived in their minds, not formed by their reasonings, not retained in their memories from what they heard, not by any means beforehand comprehended by them (1 Pet 1:10-11), but were all of them immediately from God” (384). “Thus, the word that came unto them was a book which they took in and gave out without any alteration of one tittle or syllable (Ezek 2:8-10, 3:3; Rev 10:9-11)” (386).

The Scripture is a product of divine and not human inspiration. Owen wrote, “the Scripture was not an issue of men’s fancied enthusiasms, not a product of their own minds and conceptions, not an interpretation of the will of God by the understanding of man—that is, of the prophets themselves. Neither their rational apprehensions, inquiries, conceptions of fancy, or imaginations of their hearts, had any place in this business; no self-afflation, no rational meditation, manned at liberty by the understanding and will of men, had place herein” (391).

The prophets and apostles were under the direct supervision of God in penning the Holy Scriptures: “God was so with them, and by the Holy Ghost so spake in them—as to their receiving of the Word from him, and their delivering of it unto others by speaking or writing—as that they were not themselves enabled, by any habitual light, knowledge, or conviction of truth, to declare his mind and will, but only acted as they were immediately moved by him. Their tongue in what they said, or their hand in what they wrote, was no more at their own disposal than the pen is in the hand of an expert writer” (384-5).

The Bible has many writers, but only one Author—God Himself. It is only truthful to conclude that a perfect God must give a perfect Bible. It goes without saying that a perfect Author must give a perfect Script.

Owen explained that the divine inspiration of the Scriptures concerns the words, not simply the doctrines. He argued for word-inspiration and not thought-inspiration. “It is the *he graphe* that is

theopneustos (2 Tim 3:16), ‘the writing, or word written, is by inspiration from God.’ Not only the doctrine in it, but the *graphie* itself, or the ‘doctrine *as written*,’ is so from him. Hence, the providence of God hath manifested itself no less concerned in the preservation of the writings than of the doctrine contained in them; the writing itself being the product of his own eternal counsel for the preservation of the doctrine” (387).

Thus the Scriptures bind our conscience to affirm its veracity and authenticity purely by our faith in them. “Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear” (Heb 11:3). “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom 10:17). Owen wrote, “We do so receive, embrace, believe, and submit unto it, because of the authority of God who speaks it, or gave it forth as his mind and will, evidencing itself by the Spirit in and with that Word, unto our minds and consciences: or, because that the Scripture, being brought unto us by the good providence of God, in ways of his appointment and preservation, it doth evidence itself infallibly unto our consciences to be the word of the living God” (410).

Verbal Plenary Preservation

Owen not only believed in a 100% inspired Autographa but also a 100% preserved Apographa. He wrote, “It is true, we have not the Autographa of Moses and the prophets, of the apostles and evangelists; but the Apographa or ‘copies’ which we have contain every *iota* that was in them” (387).

On the VPP of Scripture, Owen agreed that the Autographs have “utterly perished and lost out of the world.” However, that does not mean that the *contents* of the Autographs have perished and are lost also. Every one of the words of the Autographs has been preserved by the promise of God (Ps 12:6-7, Matt 5:18, 24:35). Although it is readily acknowledged that God chose not to preserve His Word miraculously but providentially, Owen believed that the care and providence ensured “the preservation of *every tittle* contained in them” (454).

Owen did not deny the existence of textual variants (387). Nevertheless, he clarified that “the whole Word of God, in every letter and tittle, as given from him by inspiration, is preserved without corruption” (388). There is no question from the above statement that

Owen saw the 100% preservation of Scripture as a dogma and not simply a conviction.

Owen argued that if the infallible Word is not preserved wholly and intact, then the Book is useless and our faith has no sure foundation. He raised this concern: “It will assuredly be granted that the persuasion of the coming forth of the word immediately from God, in the way pleaded for, is the foundation of all faith, hope, and obedience. But what, I pray, will it advantage us that God did so once deliver his word, if we are not assured also that that word so delivered hath been, by his special care and providence, *preserved entire and uncorrupt* unto us, or that it doth not evidence and manifest itself to be his word, being so preserved? (Isa 59:21, Matt 5:18, 1 Pet 1:25, 1 Cor 11:23, Matt 28:20)” (450). In other words, if God’s Word is not perfect today, fully preserved, how then can we appeal to it as our sure and steadfast, final and supreme rule of faith and practice? We simply cannot! If the Scriptures be not perfect, Christians are a most miserable lot for sure (1 Cor 15:19).

Some presume that only the doctrines of Scripture are preserved but not its words. What has Owen to say about this? Are only doctrines preserved or words as well? Owen affirmed the latter, “Nor is it enough to satisfy us, that the doctrines mentioned are preserved entire; *every tittle and iota* in the Word of God must come under our care and consideration, as being, as such, from God” (389). Owen clearly believed in verbal and not conceptual preservation. Without the words, where the doctrines? It is not only fallacious but utterly illogical to say that only doctrines are preserved but not the words (cf. Gal 3:16).

Supreme and Final Authority

Owen argued that the absolute authority of the Holy Scriptures rests on the very fact that they are the very Word of God, breathed out (*theopneustos*) from heaven (2 Tim 3:16). The supreme authority of Scripture remains so today because of the special providence of God for He has promised that the Hebrew OT and Greek NT “have been transmitted to us without corruption or mutilation” (382).

The Word of God has self-evidencing power because it is Light itself. “Now, the Scripture, the Word of God, is light. Those that reject it are called (Job 24:13) ‘light’s rebels’—men resisting the authority which they cannot but be convinced of (Ps 19:8, 43:3, 119:105, 130; Prov 6:23; Isa 9:2; Hos 6:5; Matt 4:16, 5:15; John 3:20-21). It is a light so shining

with the majesty of its Author, as that it manifests itself to be his (2 Pet 1:19), ‘a light shining in a dark place,’ with an eminent advantage for its own discovery, as well as unto the benefit of others ... A church may *bear up the light — it is not the light*. It bears witness to it, but kindles not one divine beam to further its discovery. All the preaching that is in any church, its administration of ordinances, all its walking in the truth, hold up this light” (412-3).

On the basis of the self-evidencing efficacy of the Scriptures, Owen ridiculed those who with a double tongue claim to believe the Scriptures to be the very Word of God, and yet demanding human proof for it: “By saying that the Scripture is the word of God, and then commanding us to prove it so to be, they render themselves obnoxious unto every testimony that we produce from it that so it is, and that it is to be received on its own testimony” (404).

“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge” (Prov 1:7). Unless man applies the principle of faith as expressed in Hebrews 11:6, “believe that he is” (i.e., “believe that His Word is what it claims to be, the very Revelation of God itself”), he will remain blind and lost in his pride and arrogance. Our assurance that the Holy Scriptures are the very words of God, “is in and from the Scripture itself; so that there is no other need of any further witness or testimony, nor is any, in the same kind, to be admitted” (405). Science (from Latin *scientia* meaning “knowledge”) must come under the microscope and scrutiny of Scripture, and not vice versa.

The Word of God shares its authority with no one. It is its own authority and sovereign in its judgements. Truth is determined by the Scriptures, and by the Scriptures alone, not the traditions of the church, nor the opinions of men, no matter how great they may be for who can be greater than God? Only God and His Word are infallible, not the Church, not man. As such, our supreme and final authority in faith and practice can only be our infallible God who has revealed Himself infallibly in His infallible Word.

Textual Criticism

Owen said that “the supernatural Scriptures must not be treated like any ordinary book.” His high view of Scripture led him to dismiss textual criticism which he averred might be useful for human literature, but certainly not divine Scripture. He wrote, “It were an easy thing to correct

a mistake or corruption in the transcription of any problem or demonstration of Euclid, or any other ancient mathematician, from the consideration of the things themselves about which they treat being always the same, and in their own nature equally exposed to the knowledge and understanding of men in all ages. In things of pure revelation—whose knowledge depends solely on their revelation—it is not so” (389).

In Owen’s mind, textual criticism contravenes the doctrine of VPP. He wrote against certain scholars who tried to correct the OT, “And these are the chief heads and springs of the criticisms on the Old Testament, which, with so great a reputation of learning, men have boldly obtruded on us of late days. It is not imaginable what prejudice the sacred truth of the Scripture, preserved by the infinite love and care of God, hath already suffered hereby; and what it may further suffer, for my part I cannot but tremble to think. ...The dangerous and causeless attempts of men to rectify our present copies of the Bible” (376).

Owen was against textual critical judgements that went against the *Textus Receptus*: “We know the vanity, curiosity, pride, and naughtiness of the heart of man; how ready we are to please ourselves with things that seem singular and remote from the observation of the many, and how ready to publish them as evidences of our learning and diligence, ... Hence it is come to pass, ... that whatever varying word, syllable, or tittle, could be by any observed, wherein any book, though of yesterday, varieth from the common received copy, though manifestly a mistake, superfluous or deficient, inconsistent with the sense of the place, yea, barbarous, is presently imposed on us as a various lection” (467). This certainly argues against minority and indeed spurious lections of the corrupted Alexandrian manuscripts of the Westcott and Hort Text which goes against “the common received copy.”

God has supernaturally preserved every jot and tittle of His Word by “His singular care and providence.” Insofar as copying or printing errors are concerned, Owen says that “there is no need of men’s critical abilities to rectify such mistakes” (532). No man should play textual critic. God is His own Textual Critic, and He knows how to keep His Word intact and pure.

Conjectural Emendation

Owen minced no words in denouncing the conjectural emendation of Scripture: “The conjectures of men conceited of their own abilities to correct the word of God are not to be admitted ... All that yet appears impairs not in the least the truth of our assertion, that every letter and tittle of the word of God remains in the copies preserved by his merciful providence for the use of his church” (461).

Owen was decidedly against calling a corruption in the text a variant reading. He wrote, “First, then, here is professedly no choice made nor judgment used in *discerning* which may indeed be called various lections, but all differences whatever that could be found in any copies, printed or written, are equally given out. Hence many differences that had been formerly rejected by learned men for open corruptions are here tendered us again. ... It is not every variety or difference in a copy that should presently be cried up for a various reading” (468). This surely applies to the Alexandrian manuscripts which had been cast into the waste basket and long rejected as corrupt; but textual critics today hail them as the oldest and the best, removing the inspired and preserved readings for obscure and corrupt readings.

If Owen were to be given a copy of the United Bible Societies’ (UBS) or Nestle-Aland’s (NA) Greek texts with their critical apparatuses, he would have decried their indiscriminate display of variant readings, and not only that, the actual replacement of ancient readings from the commonly received texts with corrupt ones from already rejected heretical texts. He warned of “how, by the subtlety of Satan, there are principles crept in even amongst Protestants, undermining the authority of the ‘Hebrew verity’ [i.e., the original inspired words of Scripture] as it was called of old, wherein Jerusalem hath justified Samaria, and cleared the Papists in their reproaching of the Word of God” (377). Note that the UBS and NA Critical Texts are edited by Roman Catholics and Modernists. What a shame it is that as in the days of Owen, undiscerning Protestants today clear “the Papists [and Modernists] in their reproaching of the Word of God.” The Protestants today are undermining the Reformers. These are certainly days of Deformation, not Reformation.

The indiscriminate display of textual variants and the conjectural emendations of textual criticism destroy the certainty over the identity of God’s totally inspired and entirely preserved Scripture as commonly

received. Owen wrote, “If these hundreds of words were the critical conjectures and amendments ... what security have we of the mind of God as truly represented unto us, seeing that it is supposed also that some of the words in the margin were sometimes in the line? And if it be supposed, as it is, that there are innumerable other places of the like nature standing in need of such amendments, what a door would be opened to curious, pragmatistical wits to overturn all the certainty of the truth of the Scripture every one may see. Give once this liberty to the audacious curiosity of men priding themselves in their critical abilities, and we shall quickly find out what woeful state and condition the truth of the Scripture will be brought unto” (517).

The anti-preservationist textual critics today call “all men fools or knaves that contend for its purity [i.e., the purity of the Scriptures],” yet as Owen rightly challenged, “they are none of them able to show, out of any copies yet extant in the world, or that they can make appear ever to have been extant, that ever there were any such various lections in the originals of the Old Testament” (378). Surely, one such example is 2 Kings 8:26 and 2 Chronicles 22:2 where the Hebrew originals record the age of Ahaziah when he became king as 22 and 42 respectively, evincing no scribal error in keeping to the Lord’s promise of “jot and tittle” inspiration and preservation (Matt 5:18).

The Christian is thus no fool to believe that in the Scriptures no words are lost, and such discrepancies only apparent.

Against “Ruckmanism”

Owen was no Ruckmanite. He wrote against the “Ruckmanites” of his day, who “place themselves in the throne of God, and to make the words of a translation authentic from *their* stamp upon them, and not from their relation unto and agreement with the words spoken by God himself” (365).

These proto-Ruckmanites elevated the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Hebrew OT, also known as the LXX) to a place it did not deserve, above the original Hebrew Scripture. They criticised the Hebrew text in favour of the LXX by questioning the existence of an infallible and inerrant OT in the apographs. They claimed that the existing Hebrew Scriptures cannot be trusted because the “ancient Hebrew letters are changed from the Samaritan to the Chaldean; the points or vowels, and accents, are but lately invented, of no authority;

without their guidance and direction nothing is certain in the knowledge of that tongue; all that we know of it comes from the translation of the LXX; the Jews have corrupted the Old Testament; there are innumerable various lections both of the Old and New; there are other copies differing from those we now enjoy that are utterly lost” (367).

It goes without saying that a Romish or a Ruckmanite view of a doubly inspired version or translation whether ancient or modern goes directly against Jesus’ promise to preserve the original language Scripture to the jot and tittle (Matt 5:18). The denigration of the Hebrew Scriptures in favour of the LXX or any other version insults the Author of the Holy Scriptures who had appointed the Jewish people to be keepers of the oracles of God (Rom 3:2). It is well known how the Jews took religious and meticulous care in their transcription of Holy Writ. This is clearly attested by a common saying among them, “to alter one letter of the law is no less sin than to set the whole world on fire” (456).

Owen rightly saw the LXX as a corrupt version with an uncertain origin. “The Septuagint is ... woefully corrupt. Its rise is uncertain. Some call the whole story of that translation into question ... The circumstances that are reported about them and their works are certainly fabulous. That they should be sent for upon the advice of Demetrius Phalereus, who was dead before, that they should be put into seventy-two cells or private chambers, that there should be twelve of each tribe fit for that work, are all of them incredible. Some of the Jews say that they made the translation out of a corrupt Chaldee paraphrase; and to me this seems not unlikely. Josephus, Austin, Philo, Jerome, Zonaras, affirm that they translated the Law or Pentateuch only” (529).

In light of this, Owen wrote against a certain one who attempted to change the inspired Hebrew text by means of the LXX: “It was an unhappy attempt, ... that a learned man hath of late put himself upon, viz., to prove variations in all the present Apographa the Old Testament in the Hebrew tongue from the copies used of old, merely upon *uncertain conjectures* and the credit of *corrupt translations*. ... The translation especially insisted on by him is that of the LXX. That this translation either from the mistakes of its first authors ... or the carelessness, or ignorance, or worse, of its transcribers—is corrupted and gone off from the original in a thousand places twice told, is acknowledged by all who know aught of these things. Strange that so corrupt a stream should be judged a fit means to cleanse the fountain” (388).

He went on to say, “To advance any, all translations concurring, into an equality with the originals,—so to set them by it as to set them up with it on even terms,—much more to propose and use them as means of castigating, amending, altering any thing in them, gathering various lections by them, is to set up an altar of our own by the altar of God, and to make equal the wisdom, care, skill, and diligence of men, with the wisdom, care, and providence of God himself” (459).

This sort of a shameful conjectural emendation of the Hebrew Scriptures is precisely what the translators of the New International Version (NIV) and New American Standard Bible (NASB) have done, using the corrupt LXX to correct the Hebrew in 2 Chronicles 22:2 (cf. 2 Kgs 8:26). There they rendered the age of Ahaziah as 22 instead of 42 contradicting the inspired and preserved text. If such fallacies are allowed, where are we to stop?

Are such employments of translations in correcting the originals valid? Owen answered thus, “for my own part, I am solicitous for the ark, or the sacred truth of the original, and that because I am fully persuaded that the remedy and relief of this evil provided in the translations is unfitted to the cure, yea, fitted to increase the disease. Some other course, then, must be taken; and seeing the remedy is notoriously insufficient to effect the cure, let us try whether the whole distemper be not a mere fancy, and so do what in us lieth to prevent that horrible and outrageous violence which will undoubtedly be offered to the sacred Hebrew verity, if every learned mountebank may be allowed to practice upon it with his conjectures from translations” (520).

It ought to be noted that Owen does not deny that in corrupt translations, a man may find the gospel and salvation, but he argued that this should not in any wise cause Christian Protestants to deny that God had indeed preserved, and will continue to preserve His infallible and inerrant Word to the jot and tittle.

Apparent Discrepancies

On things hard to be understood, Owen commented, “It is readily acknowledged that there are many difficult places in the Scripture, especially in the historical books of the Old Testament. ... The industry of learned men of old, and of late Jews and Christians, has been well exercised in the interpretation and reconciliation of them: by one or other a fair and probable account is given of them all. Where we cannot reach

the utmost depth of truth, it hath been thought meet that poor worms should captivate their understandings to the truth and authority of God in his word. If there be this liberty once given, that they may be looked on as corruptions, and amended at the pleasure of men, how we shall be able to stay before we come to the bottom of questioning the whole Scripture I know not. That, then, which yet we insist upon is, that according to all rules of equal procedure, men are to prove such corruptions before they entertain us with their provision of means for remedy” (533). This is sane and sound advice. “Yea, let God be true, but every man a liar” (Rom 3:4).

Conclusion

John Owen believed in the authority, purity and perfection of the Holy Scriptures. As it is today, so was it in his day that “Many there have been, and are, who, through the craft of Satan and the prejudice of their own hearts, lying under the power of corrupt and carnal interest, have engaged themselves to decry and disparage that excellency of the Scripture which is proper and peculiar unto it” (363). Owen called these Bible disparagers, “pretenders” and so they were, “having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof” (363-4).

Owen was persecuted for defending the 100% preservation of the Holy Scriptures. He was unjustly accused of creating unrest, but he spoke sincerely, “When I have been for peace, others have made themselves ready for war; some of them, especially one of late, neither understanding me nor the things that he writes about,—but his mind for opposition was to be satisfied. This is the manner of not a few in their writings: they measure other men by their own ignorance, and what they know not themselves they think is hid to others also” (378).

It may be asked: Why do so many Protestants today deny the *total* preservation of the Scriptures when it is clearly stated in so many places that the Scriptures are *forever* infallible and inerrant? Owen offers this reason, “Many men who are not stark blind may have yet so abused their eyes, that when a light is brought into a dark place they may not be able to discern it. Men may be so prepossessed with innumerable prejudices—principles received by strong traditions—corrupt affections making them hate the light—that they may not behold the glory of the Word when it is brought to them” (413).

What then is the solution? It is simply to submit to the supreme authority of the infallible Word. Owen wrote, “The Word, then, makes a

sufficient proposition of itself, wherever it is; and he to whom it shall come, who refuses it because it comes not so or so testified, will give an account of his atheism and infidelity. He that hath the witness of God need not stay for the witness of men, for the witness of God is greater” (414). How we need to humble ourselves not only before the Christ, but before His Word if we are truly to see the Light of Truth! This is the logic of faith (Heb 11:6).

Christians who deny the self-evidencing infallible and inerrant Word that God has perfectly inspired and preserved question their Saviour, and undermine the very Foundation of their faith. Owen wrote, “How know we that the Scripture is the word of God; how may others come to be assured thereof? The Scripture, say we, bears testimony to itself that it is the word of God; that testimony is the witness of God himself, which whoso doth not accept and believe, he doth what in him lies to make God a liar” (417).

“If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?” (Ps 11:3). May the Lord grant us faith to believe in the precepts and promises of His forever infallible and inerrant Word so that we might begin to understand and appreciate the twin doctrines of 100% inspiration (VPI) and 100% preservation (VPP) of the Holy Scriptures.

DID GOD PROMISE TO PRESERVE HIS WORDS?

Interpreting Psalm 12:6-7

Quek Suan Yew

Psalm 12:6-7 states, “*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.*” The teaching from these two verses appears quite clear that God would preserve His Holy Word forever. Yet many have argued otherwise. They say that the preservation in verse 7 refers to people only.

Those who interpret Psalm 12:7 to mean people and not the words of God say that since the pronominal suffix in “keep them” (v7a) is in the masculine gender (plural) and “the words of the LORD” (v6) is in the feminine gender (plural), the pronoun “them” must refer to “people.” They argue that for “them” to refer to God’s words the pronominal suffix must also be in the feminine gender agreeing with its antecedent and related noun.

The above grammatical argument against the preservation of God’s words in Psalm 12:6-7 is false. Gesenius, a Hebrew Grammarian, wrote, “Through a weakening in the distinction of gender ... masculine suffixes (especially in the plural) are not infrequently used to refer to feminine substantives (E Kautzsch, ed, *Gesenius’ Hebrew Grammar*, 2nd ed by A E Cowley [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910], 440, sect O).” Besides Psalm 12:7, here are a few other examples from the OT where this occurs:

- (1) Genesis 31:9, “Thus God hath taken away the cattle of your [*masculine plural pronoun suffix*—referring to Rachel and Leah] father, and given them to me.”
- (2) Genesis 32:15, “Thirty milch camels with their [*masculine plural pronoun suffix*—referring to the thirty female camels] colts, forty kine, and ten bulls, twenty she asses, and ten foals.”

- (3) Exodus 1:21, “And it came to pass, because the midwives feared God, that he made them [*masculine plural pronoun suffix* — a reference to the midwives] houses.

Thus, according to the Hebrew language, it is most legitimate to take the *masculine plural pronominal suffix* “them” (v7a) to refer to the feminine plural “words of the LORD” in verse 6. It is *eisegesis* to insist that the pronoun “them” must mean “people” only, not “words.”

Anti-preservationists also argue that the pronominal suffix in “preserve them” (v7b) is in the singular, and so the KJV translators were wrong to render it as “them” (plural). It is true that the pronominal suffix for “preserve them” in verse 7b is a third person masculine singular suffix (him). Why did the KJV translators translate it as “them?” The answer is in the attaching of the energetic *nun* (the Hebrew letter *n*) to the pronominal suffix. When this occurs an additional rule applies in the Hebrew language. It is important to note that there is no masculine plural pronominal suffix in the third person when the energetic *nun* is applied to a verb (see *Gesenius*, 157-8, I sect 4, I). Hence the Scripture writer, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, used the singular masculine pronominal suffix, retaining the same gender as in “keep them” in verse 7a. It is again very legitimate and consistent with Hebrew grammar for the KJV translators to translate the masculine singular pronominal suffix with the energetic *nun* as a masculine plural pronoun — “them.”

When we speak of context, it is the immediate context that is considered first, and not the distant context. The immediate context speaks of the words of the Lord. Hence the preservation and keeping (guarding) would be the words of the Lord. We know that the grammar and syntax allow it. Verse 6 is what is known as an *emblematic parallelism* where the purity of God’s Word is likened to the sevenfold purification (as pure as you can ever get) process of purging silver of every bit of dross leaving behind the purest silver (see Tremper Longman III, *How to Read the Psalms* [Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1988], 100). This verse teaches that the words of the Lord are without error or fallibility and it is 100% perfect.

Verse 7 is known as a *synonymous parallelism* where the second line restates what is mentioned in the first, but using different words (Longman III, 99). As mentioned before, the use of the energetic *nun* emphasises the act of preservation. This preservation is forever. The

relationship between verses 6 and 7 is what we call *synthetic parallelism* where the second verse adds or expands on the teaching mentioned in the first verse. These two verses combined teach that the words of God are forever perfect; like silver purified seven times, they will be preserved by God for eternity.

The contrast within the psalm would be the words of these evil men versus the words of the Lord. These evil men speak vanity and flattery (v2), and boast that their words will prevail and no one is lord over them (v4). The psalmist counters this by declaring that it is the words of the Lord that will prevail over the words of the evil ones. This is the assurance and comfort that the Lord gives to His people. Do not fear the words of these evil flatterers and boasters; trust in the words of the Lord that is purified seven times as opposed to the words of the evil men which are vain, proud and stem from a double heart (v2). God will keep (guard) His holy words and preserve (action is emphasised by the energetic *nun*) them from this generation forever. The Lord gave this verbal assurance to that generation and after because He knew they needed it. God's people were distressed by the many wicked and confusing words that came from proud and evil men. But the thrice holy and perfect God encouraged His people by reminding them that His words and promises are ever true and will forever remain.

Do we have a perfect Bible today? The faith of the believers was put to the test. They had to choose whether to believe and trust in the inerrant, infallible and divinely inspired and preserved Word of God Almighty or the errant, fallible words of sinful men. Decision and decisiveness are needed today. Is your faith based on the pure words of God or the proud words of men? Choose you this day whom you will believe.

JESUS' VIEW OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURE

An Exposition of Matthew 5:17-19

Prabhudas Koshy

Introduction

No Christian should hold on to any view that contradicts what Jesus has taught. Today, there is much confusion and contention among “Christian” teachers and leaders on the subject of the infallibility and preservation of the Scripture. But as committed Christians, we cannot afford to be confused or misled by false views concerning the Scripture, especially when Christ has unequivocally stated His view for us to hold on to. Jesus affirmed the infallibility and preservation of the Scripture by saying: “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. 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...” (Matthew 5:17-19). To understand Jesus’ teaching on the infallibility and preservation of the Scripture, we shall study His words found in Matthew 5:17-19.

Matthew records these words of Christ as part of the Sermon on the Mount. In verse 18, for the first time in His sermon, Jesus used the authoritative and dogmatic formula “I say unto you;” and He repeats it again in verse 20: “For I say unto you ...” This suggests to us that Jesus really expects our total attention on the words that follow so that we may study them and observe them as cardinal doctrine and practice. There should be no contention about these explicit words of Jesus about the Scripture. His view about the Scripture, expressed in Matthew 5:17-19, should be our view always.

It would be very helpful if we can recollect the historical and scriptural background of the passage under our consideration to get the real feel of its emphasis.

Historical and Scriptural Background

Historical Background: Since John the Baptist introduced Christ to the world, the eyes of everyone in Israel were upon Him. He appeared to be very different from the scribes and Pharisees. He did not follow the prevailing theology of His day and refused to identify Himself with any of the sects of His time. He disregarded their traditions as well as their extraneous and legalistic rules. As a friend of publicans and sinners, He proclaimed love and grace. His meekness and humility made Him distinguishable from all other religious teachers who were proud, boastful and hypocritical. He preached forgiveness of sins and dispensed mercy. Consequently, the people and the Jewish leaders wondered if He was destroying all the absolutes of the Old Testament Scripture for some new teaching. Many were inclined to think that He intended to subvert the authority of God's Word.

So Jesus came forward to remove their doubts and said, in effect, "What you see and hear is nothing new at all. I did not come to remove the Old Testament law but to reiterate and fulfil it." So His amazing manifesto is in direct harmony with the Old Testament, though it was in direct confrontation with their thinking. When the scribes and Pharisees were making the traditions binding upon people, Jesus was talking about grace and mercy. But Jesus told them that they had dragged the divine standard so low that it was necessary to raise it again. Having a greater commitment to the law than the most scrupulous scribe or Pharisee, Jesus proceeded to support the unfailing and lasting authority of the Scripture.

Scriptural Context: In Matthew 5:3-12, Jesus gives a list of the characteristics of a true Christian. Then, in verses 13 and 16, He emphasised what a true believer ought to be and how he should act. From verses 17 to 20, Jesus shows how it is possible to be like what He taught us to be. Here He shows us how to live out the Beatitudes and be the salt and light in a decaying and darkened world; certainly not by lowering God's standard that is written, but by striving to live in complete obedience to all that God has revealed, even to the jot and tittle. This was, obviously, a shocking appeal to the society of Jesus' day, which obeyed only what it wanted to.

Jesus introduces the key to a righteous life as nothing else but keeping of God's law. The only way to have true righteousness is to go beyond the phoney externalism of the scribes and Pharisees, to the

inward righteousness that is only wrought by the power and authority of God's Word. Therefore, when Jesus came, He did not abolish the Old Testament but He reinforced it.

Jesus Adheres Himself to the Whole of the Scripture

To understand how extensive and emphatic Jesus' declaration of His view of the Scripture is, the words He used must be carefully considered. First of all, what did Jesus mean when He referred to the law or the prophets? The term "law" can be a reference to the Ten Commandments or the first five books of Moses, or to the whole Old Testament. But usually, the Jews used the word when they were talking about the oral scribal traditions that they had been receiving from various rabbis.

Now when Jesus said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law....," He was not talking about the traditions of men. By using the definite article "the law," the multitude should have understood that Jesus was talking about the law of God. But how do we know whether Jesus was referring to the Ten Commandments or the Pentateuch or the whole Old Testament? Verse 17 settles it, when it says: "the law, or the prophets." In the Gospel of Matthew, "the law and the prophets" is used four times (Matthew 5:17; 7:12; 11:13; 22:40), with reference to the whole of the Old Testament. Therefore, we can confidently say that "the law" in this passage in Matthew 5 refers to the whole Old Testament.

Interestingly, in 5:17 "the law" and "prophets" are not connected by the conjunction "and" (Greek *kai*) as in the other three places mentioned above. Here instead of *kai*, Matthew uses the adversative "or" (Greek *e*). Lenski comments: The "adversative" divides the Old Testament into two parts: "The law" or Pentateuch; "the prophets" or all the rest of the Old Testament. In other words, the word "or" implies that the attitude taken by Christ is the same towards both. Thus, Jesus most emphatically proclaims His full adherence to the whole of the Old Testament.

Another term that stresses His total adherence to the Scripture is "fulfil," when He said: "I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil" (5:17). Now the question before us is—In what way did Christ fulfil "the law" and "the prophets?" Many commentators argue that Christ fulfilled the law and the prophets in two different ways. The prophets are fulfilled in a predictive fashion: what they predict comes to pass and is thereby fulfilled. The law, some say, is fulfilled by confirming the law in its

deeper meaning while others say Jesus fulfilled the law by dying on the cross, thus satisfying the demands of the law against all who would believe in Him. Though these ideas are established elsewhere in the New Testament, the emphasis that Matthew conveys is more extensive. Elsewhere, Matthew records Jesus as saying, “For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John” (Matthew 11:13). Not only do the prophets prophesy, but the law also prophesies. In other words, the entire Old Testament has a prophetic function and Jesus came to fulfil the Old Testament. In Matthew 5:17, therefore, we must rid ourselves of conceptions of fulfilment which are too narrow. Jesus fulfilled the entire Old Testament—the law and the prophets, in many ways. Because they point towards Him, He had certainly not come to abolish them, but rather, to fulfil them in a rich diversity of ways. In summary, we can say that Jesus’ life and ministry were not in opposition to the Old Testament, but in fulfilment of all that it says.

Jesus Affirms That Every Letter of the Scripture Will Be Preserved

Thus, after declaring His total adherence to the Scripture, He states His view of the Scripture: “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” (verse 18). As we noticed before, “the law” in this verse also refers to the entire Old Testament. It would be unwarranted if we say “the law” refers only to the legal requirements, especially when we study verse 18 in the light of verse 17. Thus, referring to the entire Old Testament, He wishes to make a strong assertion when He says, “For verily I say unto you.” The word “verily” is a translation of the Greek term “amen” which is a transliteration of the Hebrew word for “truth.” Therefore, it generally identifies something true, faithful or absolute. This expression, thus, explains to us how highly Jesus regards the Scripture, and how important the following statement is of His view of the Scripture—“Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.”

Jesus then tells us how long the Scripture will continue to be unerring and authoritative—“till heaven and earth pass.” In other words, Jesus was emphasizing the relative imperishability of God’s Word, by saying that it would be here even when the universe passed out of its present existence.

Then He continues to express His view in the most exhaustive way by saying, “one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” A “jot” (or *yodh*) refers to the smallest letter of the Hebrew alphabet, which is very similar to an apostrophe. A “tittle” is an appendage or portion of the letter, a mark by which one letter is distinguished from another. So what Jesus is saying is that not even the tiniest Hebrew letter shall pass from this law until all would be fulfilled.

If God does not preserve every letter of the Scripture, then the truth of God’s Word would be lost. The purity and authority of the whole Scripture are dependent on every section of the Scripture, every book, every chapter, every word, and every letter. Even the smallest letter or a portion of a letter cannot be lost, if the authority and infallibility of the Scripture have to remain unaffected all through time. The Lord Jesus assures us that His Word will be preserved true to every letter. We may have difficulty in understanding how the Lord could speak of absolutely perfect preservation of the Scripture in its originals, when there were cases of scribal errors in manuscripts. Though scribal errors have occurred in some copies, the Lord promises to keep His Word free from all such human errors for His people to believe and obey.

Today, we have no need to approach the Scripture with doubt. It is divinely preserved from all impurity. Through the history of the church, we can see how God providentially guided godly men not only to determine the books of the canon of the Scripture, but also to recognise the exact original words of those books for an obedient life. In the Hebrew and Greek texts underlying the King James Bible, we have these perfectly preserved texts through the ages, recognised by godly men during the days of the Reformation, and continued to be used by the church for the past 400 years approximately. A perfectly preserved Bible to the end of times—that is what the Lord Jesus promised in Matthew 5:18, and that is what we have today.

Jesus Warns Us Not to Disregard Even the Least Commandment of the Scripture

Because every letter of the Scripture will be preserved to the end of days, Jesus warns us about setting aside or disannulling any portion of the Scripture. “Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same

shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven” (verse 19). The word “therefore” takes our attention backward, and gives us one reason why we should not disregard the Scripture. The reason is, as we found earlier, that God’s Word is imperishable.

Then Jesus forewarns us of the consequences, if we disregard even a smallest portion of His Word—“Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven.” The word “break” (Greek *luo*) means “to loose, release, nullify or destroy.” Therefore, the idea conveyed is if anyone releases himself from an obligation to obey or to teach exactly what it says, even the least of it, he will be called the least in the kingdom of heaven. This suggests that such men will face the Lord’s judgment for unbelief and loss of reward.

Another significant phrase that should be noticed is “these commandments.” The expression “these commandments” must be understood within the context since any expressed antecedent for the term “these” is absent. In the previous verses, Jesus referred to the whole Old Testament and claimed that He came not to destroy but to fulfil them. Since Jesus is the fulfilment of “the law” and “the prophets” (or the whole Old Testament points to Him), our responsibility is not only to obey the commandments of the Old Testament but also His teachings as found in the New Testament. We must also take heed of the words of the New Testament writers for they were written as inspired by His Spirit.

Conclusion

In this passage, we have seen how our Lord promises to preserve all the letters of His Word that His people may have an infallible, everlasting Scripture. As disciples of Jesus, we must also hold the same view of the Scripture, which Jesus proclaimed. To doubt the perfect preservation of the Bible, as many have done, is to simply deny Jesus’ promise. That would also mean to drift away from the perfect standard of righteousness. The message the Lord gives in Matthew 5:17-19 is: Fulfil God’s law, and do not break even the least of His commandments, because His Word is pre-eminent, permanent and pertinent till the end of days. All Christians must affirm their allegiance to the Word of God. If anyone, therefore, questions its perfect preservation, infallibility and authority, he cannot be considered a faithful Christian, let alone a faithful Bible teacher. Dear reader, it is time for us to take heed of our Saviour’s words more than

Jesus' View of the Holy Scripture

ever before, and uphold His perfect Word by believing, obeying and proclaiming all of its words.

DID JESUS AND THE APOSTLES RELY ON THE CORRUPT SEPTUAGINT?

Prabhudas Koshy

The Septuagint (aka LXX) or Greek translation of the OT is an unreliable version both yesterday and today. We cannot be certain of the authenticity of its readings. Its textual purity was questioned by Thackeray who said, “We are much more certain of the *ipsissima verba* of the NT writers than of the original Alexandrian version of the OT” (ISBE, s.v. “Septuagint”).

It has been claimed that Jesus and the Apostles quoted the Greek translation of the Old Testament, namely the Septuagint, even though they knew that it was corrupt. Why this claim? This claim is made to support the use of corrupted modern English versions of the Bible. It is argued that since Jesus and the Apostles used a corrupt Greek translation of the Old Testament, we today can also use corrupt modern versions of the Bible. Some even allege that those who say that it is wrong to use a corrupt version of the Bible are in danger of accusing our Lord and His Apostles of sin. This allegation is inaccurate on two counts: (1) the assumption that Jesus and the Apostles quoted from the Septuagint is false, and (2) the promotion or support of the use of corrupt versions certainly dishonours Christ.

The claim that Jesus and the New Testament writers always used the Septuagint to quote from the Old Testament is without biblical evidence. It has been said that in the New Testament there are about 263 direct quotations from the Old. However, many of these Old Testament quotations in the New are significantly different from the Septuagint. If Jesus and the Apostles relied on the Septuagint for all their Old Testament quotations, such a difference would not have resulted.

There was no need for Jesus and the New Testament writers to rely on the Septuagint to quote the Old Testament. Jesus Himself was the Author of the Holy Scriptures. He could quote Hebrew Scriptures and

translate them infallibly into Greek. As far as the Apostles were concerned, the Holy Spirit was their Chief Aide who supervised their writing of the Scriptures. There is nothing against them citing the Old Testament and translating the words into Greek themselves. Let us be mindful that both Testaments were inspired of the Holy Spirit; and that the Spirit was their infallible Author.

The New Testament's translations and interpretations of the Old Testament are not taken from any corrupt human work. Whatever the New Testament says about the Old Testament, whether it is a translation into Greek or an interpretation, it must be viewed as the infallible and inerrant work of the Holy Spirit. Every word of the New Testament, including quotations, interpretations and applications of the Old Testament, is not from any corrupt human translation but from the Holy Spirit Himself. As such it is highly unlikely that Jesus and the New Testament writers quoted from the corrupt Septuagint as some allege.

Moreover, Jesus made no mention of the Greek Septuagint. Neither did He assert that His quotations were taken from the Septuagint, nor mention the Septuagint. However, He did speak about the Hebrew text of the Old Testament. In Matthew 5:18, He referred to the Hebrew text of the Old Testament when He said, "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." The *jot* (or *yodh*) is the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet; and the *tittle* is a portion of a letter that distinguishes two similarly written letters. Here Jesus spoke authoritatively about the accuracy of the Hebrew text of the Old Testament. Jesus also declared His commitment to every letter of the Hebrew text of the Old Testament (Matt 5:17-18). It is impossible to think that Jesus who affirmed His absolute commitment to every letter of the Hebrew Text of the Old Testament would quote or endorse its corrupt translation. If Jesus used the Greek Septuagint, His scriptures would not have contained the jots and the tittles. He obviously used the *Hebrew* Scriptures and not its corrupt Greek version!

In addition, the descriptive designation of the Old Testament used by Jesus in the New Testament reveals that He used the Hebrew Scriptures instead of the Greek Septuagint. He often referred to the Old Testament as (1) "The Law and the Prophets" and (2) "The Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms." In Luke 24:44 we read, "And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was

yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.” The reason for such a reference to the Old Testament was because the Hebrew Bible was then divided into three parts: the Law, the Prophets and the Writings. The *Septuagint* contained no such division. Not only that, the Septuagint contained the spurious Apocryphal books that have been mixed together with the canonical Old Testament. How could Jesus have possibly referred to the corrupt Septuagint if the order of the biblical books had already been hopelessly mixed up with the non-inspired Apocryphal books?

If Jesus had spoken only of His commitment to the Hebrew text of the Old Testament, how can one claim that Jesus relied on the corrupt Greek translation of the Old Testament Scriptures? Certainly such a statement is a misrepresentation of Christ.

Certainly the conduct of our Lord and the Apostles was very different from some of the modern day ministers who accept versions produced by men who deny the inspiration, infallibility and inerrancy of the Scriptures. Does it not dishonour Christ to allege that He and His Apostles quoted a version that was calculated to diminish the clarity and glory of true doctrines? It is startling that some would dare to attribute such a heinous act to Him and His Apostles! It is impossible to think that Christ who is holy, just and truthful would endorse a translation that disregards the truth and the glory of the Almighty. The very nature of God would tell us that Christ would never have sanctioned the use of a corrupt Greek version of His Word. It is those who want to use inferior or corrupt modern versions, who say that Christ endorsed the corrupt Septuagint. Certainly we want to have no part in such an erroneous view of Christ.

In the pattern of Christ and His Apostles, we accept no inferior or corrupt translation, but the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures behind the KJV. As far as English translations go, the KJV is the best—the most faithful and most reliable.

LOST WORDS IN OUR BIBLE?

Jeffrey Khoo

Introduction

The Word of God is forever infallible and inerrant. The Church today has a 100% Perfect Bible without any mistake because God promised to preserve His inspired words to the last jot and tittle (Matt 5:18). Thus, (1) the inspired Scriptures were never lost but *always preserved* without any corruption or missing words; (2) the Sacred Scriptures are *always infallible and inerrant*, and *supremely authoritative not only in times past, but also today*—*Sola Scriptura!*

As Bible-believing Christians, there is a need to defend the preserved words of God not just in the NT but also in the OT. Today, our OT Scriptures are being questioned by some who do not believe that God has preserved every jot and tittle of His words in the OT, going against what Jesus promised in Matthew 5:18. They say that some insignificant or redundant words of the OT have already been totally lost and nowhere to be found. According to them, these “lost words” contribute to the so-called “scribal errors” in our OT Scripture.

This article seeks to assure all believers that the same God who had originally inspired His OT words has also continuously preserved all of His words to the jot and tittle (Matt 5:18). Christians can truly live by God’s every word (Matt 4:4) because every word of God has been kept intact without any word lost.

Jot-and-Tittle Preservation

The OT Scriptures were first given to Israel—God’s chosen nation. Romans 3:1-2 tells us that God had committed to the Jews the safekeeping and copying of the Holy Scriptures. Knowing well the divine nature of the Scriptures, that the words of the sacred pages were the very words of the Almighty God, they copied the Scriptures with great precision and accuracy employing very strict rules. For instance: (1) “No

word or letter could be written from memory; the scribe must have an authentic copy before him, and he must read and pronounce aloud each word before writing it.” (2) “The revision of a roll must be made within 30 days after the work was finished; otherwise it was worthless. One mistake on a sheet condemned the sheet; if three mistakes were found on any page, the entire manuscript was condemned.” (3) “Every word and every letter was counted, and if a letter were omitted, an extra letter inserted, or if one letter touched another, the manuscript was condemned and destroyed at once.”¹ These very strict rules of transcription show how precious the Jews had regarded the inspired words of God, and how precise their copying of these inspired words must have been. Such strict practices in copying “give us strong encouragement to believe that we have the real Old Testament, *the same one* which our Lord had and which was originally given by inspiration of God.”²

The words of the Scriptures are important (Deut 8:3, Matt 4:4, Luke 4:4). God uses His words to communicate His Truth so that we might know who and what He is and how we might be saved through Him. The Bible clearly tells us that it is God’s written words (*pasa graphe*—“All Scripture”) that are inspired (2 Tim 3:16), and from these inspired words come all the doctrines that are sufficient and profitable for the spiritual growth and maturity of the believer (2 Tim 3:17). The Bible also clearly says that God Himself will preserve all His inspired words to the jot and tittle without the loss of any word, syllable or letter (Ps 12:6-7, Matt 5:18, 24:35).

Now if we have the inspired, infallible and inerrant words of God today preserved in the traditional and Reformation Scriptures, then how do we explain the differences or discrepancies found in the Bible especially those found in 1 Samuel 13:1, 2 Chronicles 22:2, and many other places. Can these be due to “scribal errors”?

Since God has preserved His inspired words to the last iota and no words are lost but all kept pure and intact in the original language Scriptures, we must categorically deny that our Bible contains any mistake or error (scribal or otherwise). But it is troubling that certain evangelicals and fundamentalists would rather choose to deny the present infallibility and inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures by considering the “discrepancies” found in 1 Samuel 13:1 and 2 Chronicles 22:2 and other like passages to be *actual* instead of *apparent* discrepancies, and calling them “scribal errors.”

No “Lost Word” and No “Scribal Error” in 2 Chronicles 22:2

A denial of the verbal preservation of the Scriptures will invariably lead one to believe that some words of God have been lost and remain lost leading to a “scribal error” view of the OT Scriptures. For instance, W Edward Glenny denies that God has perfectly preserved His Word so that no words have been lost. He says, “The evidence from the OT text suggests that such is not the case. *We might have lost a few words ...*”.³ Based on his “lost words” view of the Bible, he was quick to point out “obvious discrepancies” in the OT like 2 Chronicles 22:2. He pontificates,

In 1 Chronicles 8:26 [sic], the KJV states that Ahaziah was twenty-two when he began to reign; the parallel in 2 Chronicles 22:2 says that he began to reign at the age of forty-two. ... These *obvious discrepancies* in the KJV and the Hebrew manuscripts on which it is based show that *none of them perfectly preserved the inspired autographa*.⁴

Now, know that 2 Chronicles 22:2 reads “forty-two” in the KJV. A number of the modern versions like the NASV, NIV, and ESV read “twenty-two” instead. So which is the original, inspired reading: “forty-two” (in KJV), or “twenty-two” (in NASV, NIV, and ESV)? In making such a textual decision, we must have a perfect standard, and that infallible and inerrant standard is the inspired and preserved Hebrew Scripture, and not any translation ancient or modern.

It is significant to note that every single Hebrew manuscript reads “forty-two” (*arebba'im wushetha'im*) in 2 Chronicles 22:2. There is no evidence of lost words—every word to the letter is preserved, and reads precisely as “forty-two” as accurately translated in the KJV. If every Hebrew manuscript reads “forty-two” in 2 Chronicles 22:2, then on what basis do the NASV, NIV, and ESV change it to “twenty-two”? They change “forty-two” to “twenty-two” on the basis of the Septuagint (LXX) which is a Greek version of the Hebrew Scripture just like the NIV is an English version of it. In other words, they use a version or translation to correct the original Hebrew text! Should not it be the other way round?

Why do they do this? They do this because of their fallacious assumption that (1) God did not preserve His words infallibly, (2) lost words exist in the Hebrew text, and (3) 2 Chronicles 22:2 is an “obvious” discrepancy (cf 2 Kgs 8:26). Thus, Glenny and all such non-preservationists are quick to use a fallible translation (eg, LXX) to

correct the infallible Hebrew Text! This is no different from someone using the NIV today to correct any part of the Hebrew Text according to his whim and fancy! But Glenny calls it “conjectural emendation”⁵ which sounds scholarly but it is pure guesswork. Can a translation be more inspired than or superior to the original language text? Can a translation or version (whatever the language) be used to correct the Hebrew? Glenny’s method of explaining such “obvious discrepancies” in the Bible is troubling for it displays (1) a sceptical attitude towards the numerical integrity of God’s Word, (2) a critical readiness to deny the present inerrancy of Scripture in historical details, and (3) a lackadaisical approach towards solving difficulties in the Bible by conveniently dismissing such difficulties as “scribal errors.”

A godly approach is one that presupposes the present infallibility and inerrancy of God’s Word not only when it speaks on salvation, but also when it speaks on history, geography or science. “*Let God be true, but every man a liar*” (Rom 3:4). Such a godly approach to difficult passages is seen in Robert J Sargent who, by comparing (not correcting) Scripture with Scripture, offered two possible solutions to the so-called “problem” or “error” in 2 Chronicles 22:2. Sargent suggested that “forty-two” could be either (1) Ahaziah’s years counted from the beginning of the dynasty founded by Omri, or (2) the year in which Ahaziah was actually seated as king though anointed as one at “twenty-two” (2 Kgs 8:26).⁶ Whatever the answer may be, the truth and fact is: the inspired and preserved Hebrew reading in 2 Chronicles 22:2 is “forty-two” and not “twenty-two,” and no man has the right to change or correct God’s Word by “conjectural emendation,” taking heed to the serious warning not to add to or subtract from the Holy Scriptures (Rev 22:18-19).

No “Lost Word” and No “Scribal Error” in 1 Samuel 13:1

Now, let us look at the next text which is 1 Samuel 13:1 which the KJV translates as, “Saul reigned one year.” But the other versions read quite differently. The NASV has, “Saul was *forty* years old when he began to reign;” the NIV has, “Saul was *thirty* years old when he became king;” and the RSV has, “Saul was ... years old when he began to reign.” Which of the above is correct? The only way whereby we can ascertain the correct reading is to go to the Hebrew Bible. The Hebrew Bible since day one reads *Ben-shanah Shaoul*, literally, “A son of a year (was) Saul,” or idiomatically, “Saul was a year old.”

Now, the difficulty is: How could Saul be only a year old when he began to reign? Scholars and translators who do not believe in the jot-and-tittle preservation of Scripture say that this is an actual discrepancy in the Hebrew Text which they attribute to a “scribal error.” This is why Michael Harding in a mistitled book—*God’s Word in Our Hands*—wrote,

[I]n 1 Samuel 13:1-2 the Masoretic Text states that Saul was one year of age (*ben-shanah*—literally “son of a year”) ... Some ancient Greek manuscripts ... read “thirty years” instead of “one year,” ... On account of my theological conviction regarding the inerrancy of the autographa, I believe the original Hebrew text also reads “thirty,” even though *we do not currently possess a Hebrew manuscript with that reading*.⁷

Harding and those like him fail to apply the logic of faith to the promise of God that He will preserve and has preserved every iota of His inspired words. This leads them to conclude that a word is lost and 2 Chronicles 22:2 contains a “scribal error” even when there is no such error to begin with. They change the text when the text needs no changing. They replace divine words with human words. Instead of attributing error to the translation (LXX, NASV, NIV, RSV), they rather fault the inspired and preserved Hebrew Text and treat it as an actual discrepancy even when there is absolutely none. This has caused many Bible believers to doubt God’s Word: Do we really have God’s infallible and inerrant Word in our hands? Many are indeed stumbled by such allegations of error in the Bible, and are questioning whether they can really trust the Scriptures at all if there is no such thing as a complete and perfect Word of God today.

It must be categorically stated that there is no error at all in the Hebrew Text and no mistake also in the KJV which translated 1 Samuel 13:1 accurately. So how do we explain 1 Samuel 13:1? A faithful explanation is offered by Matthew Poole who wrote,

[Saul] had now reigned one year, from his first election at Mizpeh, in which time these things were done, which are recorded in chap. xi., xii., to wit, peaceably, or righteously. Compare 2 Sam. ii.10.⁸

In other words, the year of Saul was calculated not from the time of his birth but from his *appointment as king*; “Saul was a year old *into his reign*.” This meaning is supported by the Geneva Bible which reads, “*Saul now had beene King one yeere*.” Rest assured, there is no mistake in the Hebrew Text and in the KJV here. God has indeed inspired and

preserved His OT words perfectly so that we might have an infallible, inerrant OT Bible in our hands today.

Conclusion

The inspired words of the Hebrew OT are all the words of the Hebrew Masoretic Text (Ben Chayyim). The Trinitarian Bible Society regards the Ben Chayyim OT Text underlying the KJV to be the preserved and definitive Text, and that the correct OT reading is to be found in precisely this Text.⁹

The Biblical doctrine of the jot-and-tittle preservation of the Holy Scriptures affirms a 100% infallible and inerrant Bible *today!* The Written Foundation of our Judeo-Christian Faith is sure and secure for “the word of our God shall stand for ever” (Isa 40:8). Amen!

Notes

¹ H S Miller, *General Biblical Introduction*, 4th ed (Houghton, Word-Bearer, 1947), 184-185.

² Ibid, 185.

³ Roy E Beacham and Kevin T Bauder, eds, *One Bible Only?* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2001), 121.

⁴ Ibid, 115.

⁵ Ibid, 114.

⁶ Robert J Sargent, “A Scribal Error in 2 Chronicles 22:2? No!” *The Burning Bush* 10 (2004): 90-92.

⁷ James B Williams and Randolph Shaylor, eds, *God’s Word in Our Hands: The Bible Preserved for Us* (Greenville: Ambassador Emerald International, 2003), 360-361.

⁸ Matthew Poole, *A Commentary on the Holy Bible* (McLean: MacDonald, nd), 1:542.

⁹ “Statement of Doctrine of Holy Scripture,” *Trinitarian Bible Society Quarterly Report*, April-June 2005, 10-11.

MISTAKES IN THE BIBLE?

Jeffrey Khoo

A young believer once asked his pastor this question, “Pastor, are there any mistakes in the Bible?” The pastor assured the young believer with what he claims to be an “honest” answer, “There are no mistakes in the Bible that should cause you any worry.” Such an answer is hardly honest but the hissing of the old serpent, “Yea, hath God said?” (Gen 3:1).

As faithful believers, we affirm without doubt the Bible to be totally infallible and inerrant, our sole and supreme authority of faith and practice. We affirm the Verbal Plenary Inspiration (VPI) and Verbal Plenary Preservation (VPP) of the Holy Scriptures and identify VPI and VPP Texts to be the Hebrew Masoretic and Greek Received Texts on which the Reformation Bible—the King James Bible—is based. But *“what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.”* (Rom 3:3-4).

Unbelief of VPI and/or VPP has caused some to fall short of believing that the Bible is 100% perfect, without any mistake. “Where are the mistakes?” you ask. Let us look at a few of the so-called “mistakes,” and with the logic of faith, the Christian who loves the Lord and His Word will see that they are not at all mistakes.

Forty-two or Twenty-two?

Those who deny VPP believe that some words of God have been lost and remain lost leading to a “scribal error” view of the OT Scriptures. For instance, W Edward Glenny denies that God has perfectly preserved His Word so that no words have been lost. He says, “The evidence from the OT text suggests that such is not the case. *We might have lost a few words ...*” (*One Bible Only?*, p121). Based on his “lost words” view of the Bible, he was quick to point out “obvious

discrepancies” in the OT like 2 Chronicles 22:2, and pontificates, “These *obvious discrepancies* in the KJV and the Hebrew manuscripts on which it is based show that *none of them perfectly preserved the inspired autographa*.” (*One Bible Only?*, p115).

Now, know that 2 Chronicles 22:2 reads “forty-two” in the KJV. A number of the modern versions like the NASV, NIV, and ESV read “twenty-two” instead. So which is the original, inspired reading: “forty-two” (in KJV), or “twenty-two” (in NASV, NIV, and ESV)? In making such a textual decision, we must have a perfect standard, and that infallible and inerrant standard is the inspired and preserved Hebrew Scripture, and not any translation ancient or modern.

It is significant to note that every single Hebrew manuscript reads “forty-two” (*arebba'im wushetha'im*) in 2 Chronicles 22:2. There is no evidence of lost words—every word to the letter is preserved, and reads precisely as “forty-two” as accurately translated in the KJV. If every Hebrew manuscript reads “forty-two” in 2 Chronicles 22:2, then on what basis do the NASV, NIV, and ESV change it to “twenty-two”? They change “forty-two” to “twenty-two” on the basis of the Septuagint (LXX) which is a Greek version of the Hebrew Scripture just like the NIV is an English version of it. In other words, they use a version or translation to correct the original Hebrew text! This is “Ruckmanism” no less!

A godly approach is one that presupposes the present infallibility and inerrancy of God’s Word not only when it speaks on salvation, but also when it speaks on history, geography or science. “*Let God be true, but every man a liar*” (Rom 3:4). Such a godly approach to difficult passages seeks to compare (not correct) Scripture with Scripture. There are two possible solutions to the so-called “problem” or “error” in 2 Chronicles 22:2. “Forty-two” could be either (1) Ahaziah’s years counted from the beginning of the dynasty founded by Omri, or (2) the year in which Ahaziah was actually seated as king though anointed as one at “twenty-two” (2 Kgs 8:26). Whatever the answer may be, the truth and fact is: the inspired and preserved Hebrew reading in 2 Chronicles 22:2 is “forty-two” and not “twenty-two,” and no man has the right to change or correct God’s Word by “conjectural emendation,” taking heed to the serious warning not to add to or subtract from the Holy Scriptures (Rev 22:18-19).

One Year or 30/40/... Years?

Now, let us look at the next text which is 1 Samuel 13:1 which the KJV translates as, “Saul reigned one year.” But the other versions read quite differently. The NASV has, “Saul was *forty* years old when he began to reign;” the NIV has, “Saul was *thirty* years old when he became king;” and the RSV and ESV has, “Saul was ... years old when he began to reign.” Which of the above is correct? The only way whereby we can ascertain the correct reading is to go to the Hebrew Bible. The Hebrew Bible since day one reads *Ben-shanah Shaoul*, literally, “A son of a year (was) Saul,” or idiomatically, “Saul was a year old.”

Now, the difficulty is: How could Saul be only a year old when he began to reign? Scholars and translators who do not believe in the jot-and-tittle preservation of Scripture say that this is an actual discrepancy in the Hebrew Text which they attribute to a “scribal error.” This is why Michael Harding wrote, “[I]n 1 Samuel 13:1-2 the Masoretic Text states that Saul was one year of age (*ben-shanah*—literally “son of a year”) ... Some ancient Greek manuscripts [ie, translations or versions]... read “thirty years” instead of “one year,” ... I believe the original Hebrew text also reads “thirty,” even though *we do not currently possess a Hebrew manuscript with that reading.*” (*God’s Word in Our Hands*, pp360-361).

Harding and those like him who deny that God has preserved every jot and tittle of His inspired words (Matt 5:18) conclude that a word is lost and 1 Samuel 13:1 contains a “scribal error” even when there is no such error to begin with. Instead of attributing error to the translation (NASV, NIV, RSV, ESV), they rather fault the inspired and preserved Hebrew Text and treat it as an actual discrepancy even when there is absolutely none. This has caused many Bible believers to doubt God’s Word: Do we really have God’s infallible and inerrant Word in our hands? Many are indeed stumbled by such allegations of error in the Bible, and are questioning whether they can really trust the Scriptures at all if there is no such thing as a complete and perfect Word of God today.

It must be categorically stated that there is no error at all in the Hebrew Text and no mistake also in the KJV which translated 1 Samuel 13:1 accurately. So how do we explain 1 Samuel 13:1? A faithful explanation is offered by Matthew Poole who wrote, “[Saul] had now reigned one year, from his first election at Mizpeh, in which time these

things were done, which are recorded in chap. xi., xii., to wit, peaceably, or righteously. Compare 2 Sam. ii.10.”

In other words, the year of Saul was calculated not from the time of his birth but from his *appointment as king*; “Saul was a year old *into his reign*.” This meaning is supported by the Geneva Bible which reads, “*Saul now had beene King one yeere*.” Rest assured, there is no mistake in the Hebrew Text and in the KJV here. God has indeed inspired and preserved His OT words perfectly so that we might have an infallible, inerrant OT Bible in our hands today.

Nebuchadnezzar or Nebuchadrezzar?

These two names—Nebuchadnezzar and Nebuchadrezzar—are found in Jeremiah 29 verse 3 and verse 21 respectively to refer to the same king. Bible and Truth deniers who do not believe in VPI and/or VPP are quick to conclude that the Bible here is in error; they call it a spelling or a scribal error.

But we who believe in the present perfection and absolute authority of the Scriptures have always believed and defended the total inerrancy of Scripture, its VPI and VPP, based on the logic of faith. So, how do we explain the two spellings, one with an “n” and the other with an “r.” It is really a simple solution requiring childlike faith on God’s pure and perfect words (Matt 4:4, Rom 3:4, Heb 11:3, 6). The Bible being historically true and accurate would have us know that there were two ways of spelling the name of the Babylonian king. He could either be called Nebuchadnezzar or Nebuchadrezzar. It is significant to note that the switch from “r” to “n” is “not uncommon” in Semitic languages (eg, Benhadad and Barhadad). “Nebuchadnezzar” then, would be the Hebrew spelling, and “Nebuchadrezzar” the Aramaic spelling (re: International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, sv, “Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadrezzar”). A modern-day example would be Singapore (English) and Singapura (Malay)—both are correct spellings (not scribal errors) and refer to the same country.

Big Fish or Whale?

There are those who fault KJV for calling the “fish” that swallowed Jonah a “whale” for a whale they say is no fish but mammal. Were the translators mistaken and not intelligent enough to know that a fish is no mammal?

We do not believe there is any translation mistake here. The technical or specific word for “fish” in the Greek is *ichthus*. But here in Matthew 12:40, the Greek word is not *ichthus* but *ketos* (the equivalent to the Hebrew *haddag*) which can mean either “a large fish” or “a huge sea creature.” A whale though a mammal and not technically a “fish” (*ichthus*) is nevertheless a sea creature and falls within the generic usage of *ketos*. Spiros Zodhiates commented, “Jon 1:17 tells us that God prepared a great fish. He, who can do anything, could have made the fish capable of swallowing Jonah, preserving him in its belly and then casting him out again alive. God does not need to be assisted by natural possibilities to perform a miracle. This term was in that day, as it is today, common parlance for any kind of aquatic creature. Its non-technical usage would allow for a mammal such as a whale and would therefore contain no error.” (The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament, sv “*ketos*.”). So, it is a misconception to think that the word *ketos* cannot refer to a sea mammal like the whale. It is important to know that the word *ketos* is a general word for any kind of creature that lives in the sea, whether fish, shark, dolphin, or whale. The context determines how the word is to be used, and the translation of *ketos* as “whale” in the KJV is entirely valid and accurate. Hence, no error in the Greek, and no error in the English translation, no error in God’s miraculous work, and no error in God’s infallible Word.

30

GOD’S WORD IS SETTLED FOR EVER (PSALM 119:89)

George Skariah

Introduction

How long does the purity of the Word last? Does it last only for one generation, the generation that received the inspired Word? or does it continue to remain holy, perfect, pure, and true, even for the generations to come? There are several scriptural passages that talk about God’s Word being preserved for ever. Psalm 12:6-7 says, “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.” The same thought has been echoed in several other portions of the Scripture. The psalmist in Psalm 119 says, “For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven” (verse 89); “Concerning thy testimonies, I have known of old that thou hast founded them for ever” (verse 152); and “Thy word *is* true *from* the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments *endureth* for ever” (verse 160). In Isaiah 40:8, the prophet says, “The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.” The Apostle Peter writes in 1 Peter 1:23-25, “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh *is* as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: but the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.” In this article, Psalm 119:89 will be discussed in detail.

Context

Psalm 119 is the *locus classicus*, when it comes to the doctrine of the preservation of the Bible. This is the longest psalm with 176 verses and the most elaborate of the Alphabetical Psalms. It consists of twenty-two groups of eight verses each. The first group has all its verses

beginning with the Hebrew letter Aleph, the second with Beth, and so on alphabetically. The Masoretes observed that in every verse of this psalm, except verse 122, there is direct reference to the Word of God, using one of these ten terms: law, way, testimony, precept, statute, commandments, judgment, word, saying, and truth. Along with several themes concerning the Word of God, the psalmist, in this psalm, talks about the nature of God's Word (see vv. 89, 144, 152, 160). There are several verses that talk about God's Word as true/truth (vv. 142, 151, 160).

The immediate context (vv. 81-88) is all about comfort from God's Word in times of affliction. In this section, the psalmist shows how he was comforted by faith in God's eternal Word while he was under persecution. For that reason, he commends the worth of God's Word. His commendation of God's Word is based on four reasons: (1) the stability of God's Word in heaven (v. 89); (2) the durable usefulness of it in every age of the church (v. 90a); (3) by God's Word, the earth is established (vv. 90b, 91); and (4) his own experience of deriving comfort and strength from God's Word in his affliction (v. 92).

The Eternal Nature of God's Word (v. 89)

The psalmist says, "For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven." Significantly, the psalmist places "for ever" in the beginning of the sentence, followed by "O LORD" in the vocative, together adding great emphasis to the statement. The adverb "for ever" indicates indefiniteness of time. It is used in relation to God's everlasting covenant (Genesis 9:16; 17:7, 13, 19; Exodus 31:16), God's law (Isaiah 59:21; Psalm 119:160), God's promises (promised dynasty of David: 2 Samuel 7:13, 16, 26), His relations with His people (1 Chronicles 29:18; Psalm 45:17), Messianic reign (Psalm 110:4; Isaiah 9:6), etc. Here it is used to express the extent of the preservation of God's Word, i.e., "for ever," a time that is indefinite in its extent. The same adverb is also used in verses like Psalm 12:7; 119:152, 160; Isaiah 40:8; 59:21 (also in 1 Peter 1:23, 25), all referring to the same topic.

That which is settled for ever is "thy word." What does it refer to? Some people believe that it is "a general designation for God's communication, whether spoken or written, although the vast majority of its uses have direct application to the spoken, not the written word" (James G. Williams, *God's Word in Our Hands*, 90-91). Without much objection, one may accept that "word" could mean word spoken by God

since it has “speech” as its lexical meaning along with “word.” However, this in no way minimizes one’s understanding of “word” as God’s written Word because the written Word of God is His breathed-out words.

The prophets in the Old Testament frequently used this word, especially the construct phrase “the Word of the LORD” or its counterpart “the Word of God” to refer to God’s revelation which they received from the Lord and also to that which is already written. (For example, see the superscriptions of the prophetic books such as Hosea 1:1; Joel 1:1; Jonah 1:1; Micah 1:1; Zephaniah 1:1; Haggai 1:1; Zechariah 1:1; and Malachi 1:1; also see 1 Chronicles 17:3.) When the Apostle Peter talks about the written Word of God (“prophecy of the scripture”) in 2 Peter 1:20-21, he refers to it as the Word that was spoken, “Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost.”

Significantly, the psalmist mentions the other synonyms such as “ordinances,” “law,” “precepts,” “testimonies,” etc. in the same section, all referring to the written Word of God. The psalmist, in Psalm 119, constantly uses these synonyms along with “word” to refer to the written revelation of God.

The psalmist uses the verb “settled”, which has the root meaning of “to set, to put, to place.” It is in passive form (Niphal stem), and hence, “to be put, set.” So, it has the sense of to “be stationed,” and “stand firm.” Then the psalmist mentions the location of God’s Word standing firm, “in heaven.” It is the eternal habitation of the infinite, eternal, and unchangeable God.

What does the psalmist assert here? The psalmist affirms that God’s Word is for ever certain and sure because it is for ever set firm in the eternal heaven. Some say that this verse only talks about the “immutability of God’s truth” and nothing has been said about the “durability of the text” (J. G. Williams, 92). No one challenges the fact that this verse talks about the immutability of God’s Word. However, the point here is that this verse affirms more than the immutability of God’s written revelation. As noted earlier, the adverb “for ever” is placed very emphatically in the beginning of the sentence, and with the added locative “in heaven”. By this, the psalmist emphasizes the durability as well. Delitzsch comments on this verse, “Eternal and imperishable in the

constant verifying of itself is the vigorous and consolatory word of God, to which the poet will ever cling. It has heaven as its standing-place, and therefore it also has the qualities of heaven, and before all others, heaven-like stability” (Psalms, 254). Plummer adds, “However fleeting, changeable and unsatisfactory are all things merely temporal; yet the word of God is stable, unchangeable and everlasting. It depends upon his truth and faithfulness, and these are so much a part of his nature that if he were without them, he would cease to be God, vv. 89, 90, 91. The divine faithfulness has never failed” (W. S. Plummer, *Studies in the Book of Psalms*, 1060).

Some people regard what verse 89 teaches to be God preserving His Word primarily in heaven. William Barrick writes, “. . . God preserves His Word primarily in heaven. God’s revelatory Word is fixed firmly in heaven. Regardless of what might happen to His Word on earth, it is securely preserved in His mind” (“Ancient Manuscripts and Biblical Exposition,” *The Master’s Seminary Journal* 9/1, 28). It is totally illogical for God to preserve His Word perfectly in heaven and never care about what is happening to His Word on earth. If God is concerned to perfectly preserve His Word in heaven, by the same token, He is also concerned to preserve His Word on earth. What is the point of God having His perfect Word in heaven, and His church on earth having a corrupt Bible! God has given His Word to His people on earth, for their profitability—“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). Therefore, it is imperative that the church must have all of God’s Word always. D. A. Waite writes along the same line, ‘Some people say, “Well, it is settled in Heaven but not on earth.” But God needs it less than we do; He knows His Word. We are the ones who need it. He is using this verse, Psalm 119:89, to show us that God has given us Words that are settled’ (*Defending the King James Bible*, 7). The Word that is settled in heaven is also available to the psalmist on earth and for that reason he commends the worth of God’s Word.

Conclusion

Several points can be observed from this verse: (1) this verse begins with an emphasis on the durability of God’s Word, “for ever;” (2) the psalmist then mentions the content, it is “thy word,” the Word of the

LORD, the written revelation of God; (3) the verb “settled” explains the nature, it is firmly set; (4) the location is the eternal habitat of the eternal God; (5) the ever settled Word is ever available to men on earth for His faithfulness is unto all generations; and therefore (6) the church on earth has the certainty of every Word of God. For God’s children, this is a comforting thought: they have all of God’s revealed words in their hands. Therefore, they should love His Word and treasure it in their lives by meditating upon it every day and building their lives in accordance with God’s holy oracles.

UNDERMINING GOD’S WORD BY SUBTLE STUDY BIBLES

Jeffrey Khoo

There are over 50 Study Bibles in the Christian market. Not all of them are good. Many of them are gravely mistaken in their commentary on Isaiah 7:14—“Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign: Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.” Of late, this prophecy of the virgin birth of Christ has come under attack. The view that Christ did not directly fulfill Isaiah 7:14 is gaining popularity, and this is reflected in the Study Bibles. Many commentators are saying that Christians in the past have misunderstood Isaiah 7:14. They argue against translating the Hebrew, *’almah*, as “virgin” in an effort to prove that Isaiah 7:14 is not directly Messianic. Isaiah 7:14 is considered to be literally fulfilled by a certain difficult-to-identify woman in the time when the prophecy was given.

Isaiah 7:14 Attacked in the Study Bibles

The majority of Study Bibles today teach that the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14 was fulfilled twice. Consider the following examples,

The Believer’s Study Bible, edited by W. A. Criswell,

7:14 *’Almah* (Heb.) is one of two words translated as “virgin.” The other term, *betulah* (Heb.), is very specific, only meaning “virgin,” whereas *’almah* is more general and can sometimes mean “a young woman of marriageable age.” The ambiguity of this term is reflected in its being translated “virgin” in some places and “maiden” in others. . . . it is puzzling why Isaiah chose the ambiguous term, *’almah*, over the more frequent and specific one, *betulah*. The answer may be related to vv.16, 22, which suggest a double fulfillment of the prophecy. The prophet may have used *’almah* instead of *betulah* because the impending birth which would be a sign to Ahaz would not be a virgin birth, but the future birth of Immanuel . . . would be the Virgin Birth.

The Evangelical Study Bible, edited by Harold Lindsell,

7:14 *a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son.* Before we can understand this verse, we need to consider two Hebrew words. One is *betulah* and the other *'almah*. The former means virgin, and the latter an unmarried female. *'Almah* is used here. Its use in this context covers two cases. One has to do with the wife of Isaiah and her newborn son (Isa. 8:1–4). Isaiah's wife was a virgin until she was married. She was no longer a virgin when married. Of course, one supposes that an unmarried female is a virgin. The second case covers that of the virgin Mary. She was a virgin before the conception of Jesus. And she remained a virgin then, because Joseph was not the father of Jesus. The Holy Spirit was [sic]. Stated another way, Isaiah's wife was no longer a virgin when she conceived; Mary was still a virgin after she conceived, for she had not yet known a male. Interestingly, the Septuagint translates *'almah* by the use of the Greek word *parthenos* which means virgin. And Matthew uses the word *parthenos* for Mary's case. The word *'almah* thus covers both births involved in this prophecy and we learn that Maher-shalal-hash-baz, the son of Isaiah, had a human mother and father and his birth was a natural one. Jesus, on the other hand, had a human mother but not a human father. His birth was supernatural. *'Almah* allows for both prophetic views.

Life Application Bible, edited by Ronald A. Beers,

7:14–16 The Hebrew word used here sometimes means “virgin” and sometimes “young woman.” Its immediate use here refers to Isaiah's young wife and her newborn son (8:1–4). This, of course, was not a virgin birth. God's sign was that before this child was old enough to talk, the two invading kings would be destroyed. However, Matthew 1:23 tells us that there was a further fulfillment of this prophecy, in that virgin (Mary) conceived and bore a son, Emmanuel, the Christ.

The NIV Study Bible, edited by Kenneth Barker,

7:14 *sign.* A sign was normally fulfilled within a few years (see 20:3, 37:30; cf. 8:18). *virgin.* May refer to a young woman betrothed to Isaiah (8:3), who was to become his second wife (his wife presumably having died after Shear-jashub was born). In Ge 24:43, the same Hebrew word (*'almah*) refers to a woman about to be married (see also Pr 30:19). Mt 1:23 apparently understood the woman mentioned here to be a type (a foreshadowing) of the Virgin Mary. *Immanuel.* The name “God with us” was meant to convince Ahaz that God could rescue him from his enemies. . . . “Immanuel” is used again in 8:8, 10, and it may be another name for Maher-shalal-Hash-Baz (8:3). If so, the boy's names had complementary significance. . . . Jesus was the final fulfillment of this prophecy, for he was “God with us” in the fullest sense (Matt 1:23; cf. Isa 9:6–7).

The Ryrie Study Bible, by Charles C. Ryrie,

7:1–16 God's sign to Ahaz was that of a virgin (when the prophecy was spoken, it probably referred to the woman, a virgin at that time, whom Isaiah took later as his second wife, 8:1–4) and whose son would not be more than 12 to 14 years old before Syria and Israel would be captured. The virgin of Isaiah's prophecy is a type of the virgin Mary, who, by the Holy Spirit, miraculously conceived Jesus Christ (see Matt 1:23). The Hebrew word that is here translated *virgin* is found elsewhere in the O.T. in Gen. 24:43; Exod. 2:8, Psa 68:25; Prov. 30:19; Song of Sol. 1:3, 6:8, and in these instances refers only to a chaste maiden who is unmarried.

Spirit Filled Life Bible, edited by Jack W. Hayford,

7:14 This prophetic **sign** was given to Ahaz as an assurance of Judah's hope in the midst of adversity. It therefore had an immediate, historical fulfillment. Its usage in the NT shows that it also has a messianic fulfillment. The Hebrew word for **virgin** (*'almah*) means either a "virgin" or a "young woman" of marriageable age. Isaiah's readers could have understood it to be either. Messianically, it irrefutably refers to the Virgin Mary (Matt 1:23; Luke 1:27), where the Greek *parthenos* (virgin) removes any question. The optional form of the Hebrew word was essential for the prophecy to serve the dual situation, relating both to the Messiah's birth in the future and to a more immediate birth in the kingly line. A Son to Isaiah's readers would have been an unidentified heir from Ahaz's house, perhaps his son Hezekiah. Messianically, it was fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

The Student Bible, edited by Philip Yancey,

7:14 A Famous Sign. Like so many prophecies, this one probably had two meanings: one for Isaiah's time and another much later. Isaiah urged King Ahaz to seek a sign from God about Judah's safety from its neighbors. Ahaz, notoriously stubborn and ungodly, refused.

Isaiah told the sign anyway: a young boy would be born, and before he grew out of childhood Judah's feared enemies would be destroyed. . . . The New Testament sees a further meaning in this prophecy, applying it to the birth of Jesus Christ (Matthew 1:23).

The Quest Study Bible, edited Marshall Shelley,

Is this a prediction of the Messiah? (7:14–16) Like many prophecies, this passage seems to have a double meaning. First, a child, perhaps another son of Isaiah, would be born to a virgin (which could simply refer to a young woman) during the time of Ahaz. By the time he was grown, Judah's two enemies (Israel and Aram) would be destroyed. The second meaning was later applied to the birth of Christ (Matt 1:23). The name *Immanuel*, *God with us*, became a title for the Messiah.

In summary, the above Study Bibles say that (1) the word *'almah* has two meanings: “a young woman of marriageable age,” and “a virgin”; (2) the virgin refers to either Ahaz’s wife or Isaiah’s second wife (who were virgins before marriage, but no longer virgins after that), and finally to the virgin Mary; and (3) the son to be born refers to either Mahershalalhashbaz or Hezekiah, and finally to Jesus Christ. Therefore, Isaiah 7:14 has two meanings, requiring two fulfillments: (1) an immediate fulfillment in a son born in the time of Isaiah, and (2) an ultimate fulfillment in the Messiah. The insistence that the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14 required an immediate fulfillment in the time it was written is symptomatic of a Kaiserian approach to Scriptural interpretation already discussed in the previous chapter.

It must be categorically stated that there was but one Virgin Birth fulfilled only in Christ. This is clearly revealed in Matthew 1:22–23: “Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.” Matthew 1:22–23 is the inspired commentary on Isaiah 7:14. Matthew meant exactly what Isaiah meant in his application of the Immanuel prophecy to Jesus Christ.

The wondrous story of the miraculous birth of the Lord Jesus Christ in the Gospel account records the fulfillment of the Immanuel prophecy to its minutest detail. The Messiah was born of a virgin of the house of David (Matt 1:18–25, Luke 1:26–38). It was the angel Gabriel who brought the message from God that all this happened in order that Isaiah 7:14 might be fulfilled. The incarnate Son of God was truly the Immanuel, for in every sense of the term, He was “God with us.” The grandeur of the Immanuel prophecy demands a strictly Messianic fulfillment of Isaiah 7:14.

The double fulfillment view of Isaiah 7:14 must be rejected. If a predictive prophecy can have more than one fulfillment, then the question of prediction and fulfillment is rendered dubious. If there can be more than one fulfillment in a single prophecy, why stop at two then?

Hosea 11:1 has often been cited as an example of Matthean typology as though the existence of such usage by the Apostle settles the issue concerning his use of Isaiah 7:14. It must be pointed out that the analogy is false. A comparison of Isaiah 7:14 and Hosea 11:1 reveals a significant

difference between the two passages. It should be noted that Hosea was not giving a prophecy in 11:1, but reminding Israel of her past in an attempt to prove that Israel had broken the covenantal relationship she had with Jehovah. Isaiah 7:14, on the other hand, is undoubtedly prophetic, and thus clearly demands a fulfillment. Isaiah 7:14 anticipated a literal fulfillment. Hosea 11:1, on the other hand, had no indications whatsoever that its statement was intended to be prophetic, and thus may be legitimately used by Matthew, under divine inspiration, to introduce a type.

Matthew 1:22–23 is the anchor text which determines the meaning of Isaiah 7:14. But some may question: Since the people in the time of Isaiah did not have the benefit of the information given in Matthew 1:22–23, could they have seen Isaiah 7:14 to be strictly Messianic? Does Isaiah 7:14 itself provide sufficient information for them to understand that the prophecy refers only to the coming Messianic Saviour? The answer is yes.

Isaiah, the prophet, was at this time told to deliver a word of hope to the distressed king (Isa 7:3–9). He declared to Ahaz that the plans of Rezin and Pekah would be thwarted. It is significant to note that the Lord told Isaiah to bring his son Shearjashub to meet Ahaz. The prophet's sons were meant for "signs" (Isa 8:18). Shearjashub's name meant "a remnant will return." It sought to confirm the promise of deliverance in the prophecy of the Virgin Birth. God had already promised that the Davidic throne would be permanent (2 Sam 7:14–17). The Judean throne was reserved for the Son of David, and not the Son of Tabeal. Thus, Isaiah 7:14 ought to be read in the light of the Messianic motif.

Who will this virgin-born Son be? Isaiah 9:6 tells us that this child is God Himself. His name is not only "Immanuel," but also "Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Verse 7 reveals that this child is David's greater Son, "Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever" (2 Sam 7:8–17, cf. Acts 15:14–17). Only the Lord Jesus Christ fits the description of the Child in Isaiah 9:6–7. This climatic text of the "Son" aptly closes the Immanuel section (Isa 7:1–9:7).

By virtue of the fact that God was going to give a miraculous sign to the house of David in involving a virgin-born Son who bears the divine title, “Immanuel,” it is necessary to conclude that this virgin-born Son of God can be none other than the Messiah Himself.

The main question raised by those who oppose the strictly Messianic view is this: What is the meaning of Isaiah 7:15–16 in the light of verse 14 if a strictly Messianic birth was intended?

In answer to this, it must first be said that there is no need to insist on an eighth century fulfillment of Isaiah 7:14 just because verses 15–16 had a contemporary significance. The chronology of prophetic oracles is not always sequential. To see a distant fulfillment of 7:14 and a near fulfillment of 7:15–16 posed no difficulty to the prophet’s bifocal foresight. Tow explains,

Like a man looking out of his window into the distance, the seer and the prophet, insofar as prophetic history is concerned, can see a panorama of four mountain ranges, as illustrated above.¹

The prophet was thus able to predict both immediate and future events in different sections of the same passage all at the same time. In a single vision, Isaiah saw the Virgin Birth of Christ in verse 14, and then the imminent destruction of Rezin and Pekah in verses 15–16.

Does Isaiah 7:14 need to be immediately fulfilled in order for it to have an eighth century relevance? J. Barton Payne’s insightful observation is noteworthy. A prophecy, he wrote,

may serve as a valid force in motivating conduct, irrespective of the interval preceding its historical fulfillment, provided only the contemporary audience does not know when this fulfillment is to take place. Even as the Lord’s second coming should motivate our faithful conduct, no matter how distant it may be . . . , So Isa 7:14, on His miraculous first coming, was equally valid for motivating Ahaz, 730 years before Jesus’ birth.²

Although this is reason enough, it still does not fully answer how Isaiah 7:15–16 is related to verse 14. Tow explains,

Though we know that the event of the birth of Christ through Mary did not occur until 700 years afterwards, the prophet in ecstasy saw it as an accomplished fact. In vivid sequences, he saw also the dissolution of the Syria-Israel coalition in a matter of a few years, the period of early infancy of a child when he should know between good and bad.³

This prophetic phenomenon was also observed by McClain, “The prophet sometimes saw future events not only *together*; but in expanding their description of these events, they seem occasionally to *reverse* the same sequence in their record of the vision.”⁴

The foreboding Syro-Ephraimic attack threatened to annihilate the whole Davidic dynasty. God will not allow this to happen because He is faithful to keep His promise to David, viz., through him will come the Messiah, and Jehovah “will establish his kingdom for ever” (2 Sam 7:13, 16). The privilege of knowing how the Messianic King will proceed from the line of David (2 Sam 7:12) was given to Isaiah and the faithful remnant of David’s household, “Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel” (Isa 7:14). God assured His people that the northern invasion would not happen. The prophet, in his vision-experience, used the infancy of the Messiah symbolically as a measure of time to predict the imminent destruction of Rezin and Pekah.

In opposition to the Study Bibles which attack the traditional view that Isaiah 7:14 is a strictly Messianic prophecy, we want to promote the few Study Bibles which remain faithful to the precious doctrine of the Virgin Birth by upholding the fact that it was only Jesus who fulfilled the Immanuel prophecy.

The Hebrew-Greek Key Study Bible, edited by Spiros Zodhiates,

7:14 The famous prophecy of Christ’s virgin birth is contained in this verse

Few passages have provoked such controversy as this verse. . . . Recent studies have a uniform tendency to downplay the miraculous aspects, and rationalize that this verse is a prophecy that some young woman would shortly bear a child in the normal way. . . . It is believed that these approaches do not do justice to the text,

The child born . . . cannot be just any child for . . . the “son” to be born . . . is clearly a divine Person. No child of normal parentage could be so understood; certainly not the child of Isaiah or Ahaz, as some commentators have suggested.⁵

The King James Study Bible,

7:14 **Therefore** is a transitional word used to connect verse 14 to the preceding statements. **The Lord** here is *Adonai*. **Behold** is used to call attention to the unusual birth that is about to be announced. (See also Gen. 16:11 and Judg. 13:5). A **virgin** is better read, “the virgin.” The Hebrew definite article *ha* indicates that a specific woman is in view. The word

virgin used here is the unique Hebrew term *'almah*. A comparison of the six other instances where it occurs (Gen. 24:43; Ex. 2:8; Ps. 68:25; Prov. 30:19; Song 1:3; 6:8) shows that it is the most precise term the prophecy could have chosen to indicate that the young woman in view was indeed a virgin. The more common word *betulah* is used twice to refer to a married woman (Deut. 22:19 and Joel 1:8). Thus the Septuagint translation of *'almah* as *parthenos* (virgin) is correct, as is Matthew 1:23. **Shall conceive** is a feminine adjective connected with an active participle (“bearing”) and should be translated “is pregnant.” Thus the scene is present to the prophet’s view, and he sees the pregnant virgin about to bear a Son. That this prophecy must refer to the virgin birth of Christ is obvious since the virgin is pregnant and is still a virgin! **Immanuel** is a symbolic name, meaning “God with Us.” He is the incarnate Son of God who is further pictured as the Child-Prince in 9:6, 7.⁶

The Defender’s Study Bible by Henry M Morris,

7:11 a sign. The Lord was willing to give King Ahaz a sign involving any great miracle, but Ahaz was unwilling even to consider God’s Word.

7:14 Lord himself. Since Ahaz refused the proffered sign, God would in due time give the whole “house of David” (Isaiah 7:13) a sign, a miracle unique in all of history.

7:14 a virgin. This should read “the virgin,” indicating a very specific virgin, long awaited by the entire human race. This could be nothing less than the primeval promise of the coming “Seed of the Woman” (Genesis 3:15), who would someday defeat Satan and redeem not only the House of David but all mankind.

7:14 virgin. Many critics have argued that the Hebrew word means simply “young, unmarried woman,” rather than “virgin,” and some translations have translated it such. This is nothing but a device to avoid the miracle of Christ’s virgin birth. The word is used six or more times in the Old Testament and in all instances the context favors (or at least does not preclude) its rendering as “virgin.” Conception by a “young unmarried woman” would hardly be a sign of anything except sin, for such events occur frequently. A virgin conception would require a mighty act of creation by God Himself. The quotation of this verse in the New Testament (Matthew 1:23) should remove any lingering doubt, for the Greek word *parthenos* used there can only mean “virgin” (Jeremiah 31:22).

7:14 Immanuel. “Immanuel” means “God with us”—that is, God incarnate in human flesh, the unique miracle implied by the Edenic promise of the conquering “Seed of the Woman” in Genesis 3:15. . . . A true virgin conception has only occurred once in human history, leading to the birth of Christ.”

The Kaiserian approach to Biblical interpretation which leads to a double-fulfilment view of Isaiah 7:14 ought to be rejected because it limits the meaning of the text to the human intent; the divine intent is dismissed. The Holy Bible is thus being treated like an ordinary book. Again, it must be stressed that in Biblical interpretation, it is not the mind of the human author that needs to be sought, but the divine. The divine intent is located in subsequent Scripture.

What is the divine intent of Isaiah 7:14? Gromacki has well answered,

the **divine intent** of Isaiah 7:14 involved true virginity. . . . The clear interpretation of Matthew 1:22–23 should explain whatever ambiguity one might find in Isaiah 7:14. This is the proper order of Christian exegesis.⁷

Isaiah 7:14 is, indeed, a very special Messianic prophecy. As such, only a strictly Messianic view of Isaiah 7:14 does justice to the language of the prophet. There is absolutely no necessity to spurn the traditional view that Isaiah 7:14 is exclusively predictive of the Virgin Birth of Christ.

In the light of Matthew 1:22–23, Isaiah 7:14 must be seen as strictly Messianic. The prophecy was fulfilled only in Christ. There is only one meaning to the text, and it calls for only one fulfillment. Buswell wrote,

It should be clear that we may accept Matthew's record of the supernatural revelation of the angel, which included a specific interpretation of the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14, without the slightest embarrassment either on linguistic or historical or literary contextual grounds. A frank examination of what Isaiah prophesied in its context shows that he gave a prediction of precisely such an event as took place in the virgin birth of Christ.⁸

The sign of Isaiah 7:14 is therefore the sign of the Virgin Birth.

Notes

¹ Timothy Tow, *The Gospel Prophets* (Singapore: Christian Life Publishers, n.d.), 11.

² J. Barton Payne, *Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecy* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), 292.

³ Tow, *Prophets*, 45. See also Machen, *Virgin*, 291; Young, *Isaiah*, 293–4; *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, s.v. "Isaiah," by R. Laird Harris.

⁴ Alva J. McClain, *The Greatness of the Kingdom* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1959), 138.

⁵ Spiros Zodhiates, ed., *The Hebrew-Greek Key Study Bible* (Chattanooga: AMG Publishers, 1991), 861–2.

Forever Infallible and Inerrant

⁶ *The King James Study Bible* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1988), 1028–9.

⁷ Robert Glenn Gromacki, *The Virgin Birth: Doctrine of Deity* (New York: Thomas Nelson Inc., 1974), 141.

⁸ James O. Buswell, *A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion*, two vols. in one (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1962), 2:44.

JUDGES 18:30: MOSES OR MANASSEH?

Quek Suan Yew

Text

Judges 18:30 reads, “*And the children of Dan set up the graven image: and Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh, he and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity of the land.*”

Problem

The textual problem here has to do with the word “Manasseh.” This word has an elevated *nun* (the Hebrew letter נ) in the text. Without the elevated *Nun*, the consonants read “MSH” which means “Moses” in Hebrew. The Hebrew text in Judges 18:30 with the elevated *nun* looks like this:

בֶּן-מִנְשֶׁה

Those who choose to translate the word as “Moses” and say that this is a scribal error or a mistake explain that since Moses’ grandson was such a wicked and idolatrous man, the scribes in an attempt to protect the good name of Moses inserted the letter *nun* into “Moses” (MSH) to make it read “Manasseh” (MNSH). “Moses” they conclude must be the correct inspired reading, not “Manasseh.”

This is reflected in the many translations of the Bible. Some have “Moses,” while others have “Manasseh.” The following is a tabulation of some versions of the Bible on Judges 18:30.

MOSES	MANASSEH
1890 Darby Bible	Die Bibel (Martin Luther 1545, 1912)
1901 American Standard Version	Young's Literal Translation
New International Version	Jewish Publication Society of the OT
New Revised Standard Version	King James Version
The New Living Translation	New American Standard Bible
The New Century Version	The New King James Version
LXX Family A (Codex Alexandrinus)	LXX Family B (Codex Vaticanus)

Manuscripts

Now, which reading is correct, “Moses” or “Manasseh?” Let us examine the manuscript evidence for Judges 18:30. The critical apparatus of the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (BHS) states:

- (1) The codex Leningradensis multi-manuscripts have *nun* elevated.
- (2) Many manuscripts/editions of the Hebrew Texts according to Kennicott, de Rossi and Ginsburg, do not raise the *nun*.
- (3) To be read with a few manuscripts—Greek Septuagint and Latin Vulgate—MSH—compare with the Syriac version from the Hexaplar Greek Text A.

Facts

In light of this, here are the facts:

- (1) There is not a single Hebrew manuscript which reads “Moses.” Only three versions, the Greek Septuagint (i.e. Greek translation of the Hebrew OT, or the LXX), Latin Vulgate and Syriac version have it as “Moses.” The critical Hebrew text—BHS—itself has “Manasseh.”
- (2) At least one of the Septuagint manuscripts (LXX Family B) has “Manasseh,” revealing that not all manuscripts of the Septuagint agree.
- (3) All the Hebrew manuscripts have “Manasseh,” some with the *nun* suspended and the rest have them on the same line.

Raised Letters in the OT

When we look at the other parts of the Old Testament, we find three other occurrences of suspended Hebrew letters. They are found in Psalm 80:14 [13]; Job 38:13, and 15.

- (1) In Psalm 80:14 [13], the letter *ayin* (ע) is elevated. This was to indicate that the letter *ayin* is the middle consonant of the 150 Psalms. The suspended *ayin* in Hebrew looks like this:

מִיעַר

- (2) In Job 38:13 and 15, the *ayin* is also raised. The raised *ayin* in Hebrew looks like this:

רִשְׁעִים (Job 38:13)

מִרְשָׁעִים (Job 38:15)

It is important to note that all the Hebrew manuscripts have the raised *ayin*, and none of the versions/translations omit this suspended letter.

Observations

All the textual evidences on Judges 18:30 point to “Manasseh,” not “Moses.” There is not a single Hebrew manuscript that has “Moses.” The priority of the traditional Masoretic Text should cause us to read it as “Manasseh,” but the modern versions like the New International Version (NIV), and New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) chose to follow the conjectural emendations of the ancient Greek and Latin versions. To elevate a translation above the Hebrew text is “Ruckmanism” (Ruckmanism is the heresy that says the KJV is more inspired than the original Hebrew and Greek texts). Those who say that the ancient translations and modern versions should change the Hebrew text are thus practising a form of Ruckmanism.

The New American Standard Bible (NASB) which was based upon the American Standard Version (ASV) has “Moses” changed to “Manasseh.” It appears that the NASB translators realise that there is no textual support whatsoever for “Moses” and so decided to change it back to “Manasseh.” By the way, the ASV was the American edition of the

English Revised Version (ERV). The ERV was the translation made by Westcott and Hort based on the corrupt text for the purpose of replacing the KJV and its traditional and preserved texts!

Why did the supporters of “Moses” choose to remove the elevated *nun* from “Manasseh” in Judges 18:30 and not do the same with Psalm 80:14 [13] and Job 38:13 and 15? If Judges 18:30 is a scribal error or mistake as they claim, why do they not call the other three scribal errors too?

The fact is that there is a special purpose for elevating a consonant. In the case of Psalm 80:14 [13] it is the central letter of the entire 150 psalms. The elevated consonant served as a marker for the scribes when they copy the Scriptures. This is to ensure no letters were lost or added. When they proofread the copy, they would count the letters of the texts and ensure that the central letter is the *ayin* of Psalm 80:14 [13].

In the case of Job 38:13 and 15, the word is “wicked” in both instances. The precise reason for the raised letter is not stated or known at this time. A possible reason could be for simple emphasis. Could not the elevated *nun* in Judges 18:30 be for this reason?

There are a number of ways to highlight the text in the Hebrew Scriptures. There is the enlarged consonant in Genesis 1:1 (the letter *beth*, ב); Leviticus 11:42 (the letter *waw*, ו, which is the middle consonant of the Pentateuch); Numbers 14:17 (the letter *yodh*, י). The consonant is sometimes reduced in size too as in Genesis 2:4 (the letter *he*, ה). There is the minimised consonant in Numbers 25:12 (the letter *waw*, ו), Exodus 32:25 and Numbers 7:2 (the letter *qoph*, ק). There is the large *mem*, מ, in Isaiah 9:6 and the open *mem* in Nehemiah 2:13. The inverted *nun* in Numbers 10:35, 36 and before Psalm 107:23-28, and 40. These are some examples where the raising or enlarging or reducing or minimising or inverting or opening of a letter is used to draw special attention to a word. Why should we be so quick to call them mistakes or scribal errors just because they do not conform to our way of emphasising a word or phrase? When we highlight a word by putting it in bold or in italics or by underlining it, we do not say they are mistakes do we?

Now, let us consider the names. Who was Gershom? Must he be necessarily linked to Moses? It is significant to note that there are at least three Gershoms in the Old Testament: (1) the eldest son of Moses by Zipporah (Exod 2:22); (2) a son of Levi (1 Chron 6:16; 15:7); and (3) a

descendant of Phinehas (Ezra 8:2). And who was “Manasseh?” There were at least four Manassehs in the Old Testament: (1) the elder son of Joseph (Gen 41:51); (2) the son of Hezekiah (2 Kgs 20:21; 21:1-20) and (3) two men who put away foreign wives (Ezra 10:30, 33). It looks like “Manasseh” and “Gershom” were common names in Old Testament days. Historically and textually, there is no necessity to link Gershom to Moses in Judges 18:30. There are also no compelling reasons to identify the Manasseh and Gershom of Judges 18:30 with any of the above-mentioned Gershoms and Manassehs. It is best to let the text be.

Furthermore, in 1 Chronicles 26:24, we are told that the grandson of Moses was “Shebuel” (meaning “O God, return”) not “Jonathan.” Shebuel was “ruler of the treasures” whereas Jonathan was despotic priest of the disobedient tribe of Dan. Those who insist on “Moses” say that Jonathan was Shebuel because he later repented and returned to God. It goes without saying that this is purely speculative.

It ought to be noted that Dan was the only tribe that broke off from the “land covenant” which God made with all Israel (cf. Lev 25:23-34; Num 36:7-9). The Danites were not to sell or move from their designated lot as given to them by God through the hand of Joshua soon after the conquest. But they despised God’s choice and sought a land after their own desire. Jonathan, as a Levite and teacher of the law, failed in his duty to rebuke them for their evil deed. Out of pure greed and self-interest, he supported the Danites in their disobedience. Perhaps his sin was so grave in the sight of God that it was highlighted by the use of a raised *nun*. The *nun* was used on his grandfather probably because he was the one to be blamed for moving his family out of the Levitical city into Bethlehem-Judah which was not a Levitical city. Bethlehem-Judah was located in the tribe of Judah (cf. Josh 21:9-16 for a list of Judah’s Levitical cities). Jonathan came from Bethlehem-Judah which was not God’s allotted city for the Levites (cf. Judg 17:7, 9). Manasseh broke God’s “land-covenant” by leaving the Levitical city. His grandson followed his bad example and joined the tribe of Dan which committed the same sin.

Conclusion

There is no convincing biblical nor textual basis for the conjectural emendation of the traditional and preserved Hebrew text in Judges 18:30 which reads “Manasseh” as accurately translated in the KJV, and not

“Moses” as found in the NIV and some of the modern versions. It is thus pure speculation to call the elevated *nun* of Judges 18:30 a scribal error.

THE NUMBERS IN EZRA 2 AND NEHEMIAH 7

A Solution in Favour of the Inerrancy of the Verbally and Plenarily Preserved Text

Nelson Were

In Nehemiah 7 we are given a list of returnees that Nehemiah found. It is almost identical to the list in Ezra 2. The repetition of this list confirms God's faithfulness in preserving His chosen people and His loyal love in bringing them back into the land that He had promised their ancestors. Nehemiah (445/4 BC) is the second witness to God's covenant faithfulness and love to Israel, Ezra (537/6 BC) being the first.

The total number who returned was 42,360 (Neh 7:66, Ezr 2:64). However the sum total of the individuals mentioned in Nehemiah 7 is 31,089 whereas in Ezra 2, it is 29,818. This has led some to question the inerrancy of the Bible. Opponents of the Bible have found in these two chapters "a sceptical goldmine" and many "Christian apologists" in addressing this chapter have opted to attribute these distinctions to "scribal errors." Those who have used these lists to attack the Verbal Plenary Inspiration (VPI) and Verbal Plenary Preservation (VPP) of the Holy Scriptures have pointed to the (1) disagreement in the numbers of people given in the lists of Ezra 2 and Nehemiah 7, and (2) disagreement in the total number from the lists with the total number as given in Ezra 2:64 and Nehemiah 7:66.

It is obvious from the table (next page) that there are many statistical differences between Ezra and Nehemiah. These are not contradictions. Before we address and explain the differences, we must first remember that every word of God is important. Hence, these long lists of names are as equally the inspired Word of God as the other more familiar Scriptures, such as John 3:16 and as such they contain no errors whatsoever, and are to be accepted as inerrant just as John 3:16 is inerrant.

List of the 17 Verses that Do Not Match Between Ezra 2 and Nehemiah 7		
Ezra 2	Nehemiah 7	Diff
⁵ the children of Arah, 775	¹⁰ the children of Arah, 652	123
⁶ the children of Pahath-moab ... 2,812	¹¹ the children of Pahath-moab ... 2,818	6
⁸ the children of Zattu, 945	¹³ the children of Zattu, 845	100
¹⁰ the children of Bani, 642	¹⁵ the children of Binnui, 648	6
¹¹ the children of Bebai, 623	¹⁶ the children of Bebai, 628	5
¹² the children of Azgad, 1,222	¹⁷ the children of Azgad, 2,322	1,100
¹³ the children of Adonikam, 666	¹⁸ the children of Adonikam, 667	1
¹⁴ the children of Bigvai, 2,056	¹⁹ the children of Bigvai, 2,067	11
¹⁵ the children of Adin, 454	²⁰ the children of Adin, 655	201
¹⁷ the children of Bezai, 323	²³ the children of Bezai, 324	1
²⁸ the men of Bethel and Ai, 223	³² the men of Bethel and Ai, 123	100
³³ the children of Lod, Hadid, and Ono, 725	³⁷ the children of Lod, Hadid, and Ono, 721	4
³⁵ the children of Senaah, 3,630.	³⁸ the children of Senaah, 3,930.	300
⁴¹ The singers: the children of Asaph, 128	⁴⁴ The singers: the children of Asaph, 148	20
⁴² The sons of the gatekeepers: ... 139	⁴⁵ The gatekeepers: ... 138	1
⁵⁹ and ⁶⁰ list several names with one total of 652	⁶¹ and ⁶² names with one total of 642	10
⁶⁵ 200 singing men and women	⁶⁷ 245 male and female singers	45

When reading through Ezra 2 and Nehemiah 7, sceptics point out first, the discrepancies in the number of people in the various clans listed both in Ezra and Nehemiah; second, the discrepancy between the

numbers that would be arrived at by adding up the individual numbers and the total given at the end of the list. But strangely they do not point out or comment on the words used.

In addressing this, firstly we need to take into consideration that both Ezra and Nehemiah are referring to the same event here, namely, the return of the Jews to Palestine after the Babylonian Captivity (Neh 7:6-7 cf Ezr 2:1-2). In addition to this, it ought to be noted that there is a difference in time between Ezra 2 and Nehemiah 7. Therefore, the dates of writing are different and the statistical differences can be accounted for by the death of people and the growth of families during the intervening years. Thus, it is possible that the lists in Ezra and Nehemiah reflect the different counts at different times of the Jewish return to Palestine. Higher totals might reflect clans who added people along their journey, and lower totals might reflect deaths or certain types of attrition on the journey and thus reasonably explain the differences.

Many Christian scholars attribute the differences in numbers to “scribal errors.” In explaining why both Ezra 2:64 and Nehemiah 7:66 agree that the total for the whole congregation was 42,360, and yet disagree after the totals are added up, Ezra having 29,818 and Nehemiah 31,089, one Christian apologist says:

The original texts must have had the correct totals, but somewhere along the line of transmission, a scribe made an error in one of the lists, and changed the total in the other so that they would match, without first totaling up the numbers for the families in each list. There is the suggestion that a later scribe upon copying out these lists purposely put down the totals for the whole assembly who were in Jerusalem at his time, which because it was later would have been larger.

This is not an acceptable explanation in light of God’s verbal and plenary preservation of His inspired words (Matt 5:18). The Bible also teaches that God does not lie or bear false witness (Num 23:19). So how do we explain these very real differences without denying the inspiration, preservation, and inerrancy of Scripture? Study the text itself!

First of all, the introduction to the two lists specifies the contents. The lists specifically mention that they contain the “number of the men of the people of Israel” (Ezr 2:2 cf Neh 7:7). When recording the total, both texts also state that the total number given in the texts is the number of the “whole congregation together” (Ezr 2:64 cf Neh 7:66). It is clear from the text that first of all, those who were recorded in both lists were only

the men – the Hebrew word used here in both lists is “*ish*” which means “a man,” “a male,” or “a husband” (Exod 35:29, Gen 3:6). The word connotes maleness, as opposed to femaleness.¹

The word for congregation is also the same in both lists and is taken from the Hebrew word “*qahal*” which means “a convocation, a congregation, an assembly, a crowd, a multitude, an army (Ezek 17:17; 23:46, 47), the Hebrew community, an assembly of nations.”² From this, the question of the numbers not adding up to the total given at the end of each list may be reconciled by taking the number to be that of the men, without including the women and children, though the total was given to mean the whole congregation.

The question that needs to be asked in our attempt to settle this issue of the sum total is this: Are there other biblical accounts which employ this method of numbering? And the answer is yes. See for instance Exodus 12:37 where only the men were counted who journeyed from Rameses to Succoth (Exod 12:37), and Matthew 14:21; Mark 6:44; Luke 9:14 where only the men were numbered who ate the bread and fish miraculously multiplied by Jesus. In all three Synoptic Gospels, the word for “men” is “*aner*” which distinguishes man from woman like the Hebrew “*ish*” which may also be rendered as husband.

Secondly, having reconciled the apparent discrepancies with regard to the total amount, there still seems to be other “discrepancies” for as one reads through the lists, the breakdown of numbers in the lists also do not tally. How can this be reconciled? Is it possible that these lists though referring to the same event were compiled at different times? Returning to the texts, as one carefully studies them, one would notice that it is not only the numbers that are not the same, but certain names are also different—having alternate forms. There are instances where the numbers agree but the names are different; for example Ezra 2:18 and Nehemiah 7:24 which have 112 for the number of the children of Jorah/Hariph; Ezra 2:44 and Nehemiah 7:47 which have among the Nethinims the children of Siaha/Sia.

Another observable distinction concerns the same information but given in different forms. For example, Ezra 2:24 and Nehemiah 7:28 where the same group of people are referred to as children (“*ben*” ie son, boy, young one) and men (“*ish*”) (compare also Ezr 2:20-21 with Neh 7:25-26). Thus, considering the differences, we can say that there were

two lists, and taking into account the time that had elapsed since the period of Ezra 2 and the time when Nehemiah found the register in Nehemiah 7, and the additional fact that the “children” were referred to as “men,” it seems that there could be another census taken after the people arrived so as to update the register. This could very well be the case for in Nehemiah 7:5, Nehemiah testified how God had put a burden on him to conduct a census and the first step he took was to look for the former register which he found and he noted the details of it in the remaining part of that chapter. This would mean that both the lists in Ezra 2 and Nehemiah 7 were accurate records with no errors whatsoever; the list found in Nehemiah being a list that was written after the one in Ezra 2, taking into account the changes that would have taken place within the time that had elapsed between the two writings.

Notes

¹ *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament*, sv “ish,” 2300.

² *Ibid*, sv, “qahal,” 2360.

34

NIV TURNS “LAND OF SINIM” INTO “REGION OF ASWAN” BY A TWIST OF THE BALL-PEN!

Timothy Tow

The translation of KJV of Isaiah 49:12, “Behold, these shall come from far: and, lo, these from the north and from the west; and these from the land of Sinim” from the Hebrew text,

הנה-אלה מרחק יבאו והנה-אלה מצפון ומאחור סִינִי;

is correct. How does the NIV differ to translate סִינִי מאחור into “from the region of Aswan”?

The word “Sinim” in Hebrew is סִינִי. And the word for “Aswan” according to the NIV in Ezekiel 29:10 and 30:6 is סֹנֶה. Now סִינִי is pronounced “Sinim” but סֹנֶה which is pronounced “Seveneh” is translated “Aswan.” But why is סִינִי at Isaiah 49:12 by a twist of the NIV’s ball-pen also become “Aswan?” Even the non-Hebrew reader can see that Sinim (סִינִי) and Aswan (סֹנֶה) are two different words. Perhaps the NIV translators think they can palm off their ware to the unwary non-Hebrew English reader.

Another difference between the KJV and NIV translations is the NIV rendering of אר into “region” whereas אר has almost always been translated “land,” “earth,” or “ground.” Now if the NIV translates “the land of Zebulon and the land of Naphtali from the word אר (Isa 9:1) and Zebulon and Naphtali are small tribes, why does not NIV use the word “region” here? The right word for “region” in Hebrew is חבל according to the Hebrew lexicon.¹ There is no valid reason to translate אר as “region” except for the sinister purpose of demoting the Land of Sinim into some Egyptian outback.

The land of Sinim, according to Hastings’ *Dictionary of the Bible*, from the context, must have been the extreme south or east of the known world.² The LXX favours the view that a country in the east is intended, and some modern commentators have identified Sinim with China, the

land of the Sinae. The ancients’ view that Sinim refers to China is attested overwhelmingly by continuing modern Hebrew usage. My English-Hebrew, Hebrew-English lexicon by Prof M Segal and Prof M B Dagut, says China is סִין (Sin) and Chinese is סִינִי.³ The root of “Sinim” is “Sin,” so “Sinim” points most assuredly to China and not to Aswan, which is translated from a different word סִנָּה as stated above. Thus, one who is well-versed in Chinese is called a sinologue and sinology is the study of Chinese language, history, customs, etc; and the war between China and Japan was called the Sino-Japanese war.

Let me quote from Dr Allan A MacRae my teacher on the above subject under discussion. In his *Studies in Isaiah*, Dr MacRae says as a matter of fact:

In verse 12 the remarkable extent of the work of the servant is clearly indicated with people coming to his light from the north and from the west and even from the land of Sinim (China). What a marvelous prediction of the extension of the gospel of deliverance from sin through the servant of the Lord to the very ends of the world! How wonderfully it has been fulfilled in these days when groups of believers have come to the Savior from so many sections of the earth, even including this very land of China, which must have seemed in the days of Isaiah to be the utmost fringe of civilization. Truly He has become “a light to the Gentiles.”⁴

Furthermore, let us see how the translators of the Chinese Bible (和合本) treat the Hebrew text. They translate the land of Sinim as 秦国, the Kingdom or Country of Chin, and “Chin” is a root word for China, verily, as it was Chin Shih Hwang Ti the first Emperor who united the many ancient states into one China. This is a good translation in the tradition of the LXX, and in line with time-honoured Hebrew usage to this day.

Speaking from my experience as a Certified Chinese Interpreter of the Supreme Court, Singapore in my young days, whenever there was any doubt in the translation of a Chinese document into English, the Judge would know exactly and objectively what the original says, and not some dynamic equivalent, the subjective NIV style. The KJV renders the Hebrew and Greek of the Bible without subtraction or addition, least by juggling, when מֵאֶרֶץ סִנִּי can be twisted to read “from the region of Aswan.” Let us have an answer from the learned NIV translators.

Notes

¹ BDB, 286.

² *Dictionary of the Bible*, ed James Hastings, s.v. “Sinim.”

³ מלואתני-ברי *English-Hebrew Dictionary*, s.v. “China,” “Chinese.”

⁴ Allan A MacRae, *Studies in Isaiah* (Hatfield PA: Interdisciplinary Biblical Research Institute, 1995), 237. See also MacRae's *The Gospel of Isaiah* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1977): 109-12. Edward J Young wrote likewise, “In any attempt to identify the land of Sinim we must look for a place far from Palestine. An ancient interpretation would identify it with China, . . .” (Edward J Young, *The Book of Isaiah*, NICOT [Grand Rapids: Wm B Eerdmans Publishing Co, 1972], 3:282, 294).

ARE THE LAST TWELVE VERSES OF MARK REALLY MARK’S?

Jeffrey Khoo

“The most reliable early manuscripts and other ancient witnesses do not have Mark 16:9-20” so says the NIV superscript. Its Study Bible goes on to say, “serious doubt exists as to whether these verses belong to the Gospel of Mark. They are absent from important early manuscripts and display certain peculiarities of vocabulary, style and theological content that are unlike the rest of Mark. His Gospel probably ended at 16:8, . . .” Here is another NIV attempt at scission. Practically every modern English version would insert this doubt over the authenticity of Mark 16:9-20. It is only the KJV which accepts it without question.

We affirm the authenticity of the last 12 verses of Mark together with Dean J W Burgon who wrote a scholarly 350-page defence of those celebrated verses. Burgon argued that the codices Sinaiticus and Vaticanus which are said by many to be “most reliable” are actually “most corrupt.” Burgon wrote, “Recent Editors of the New Testament insist that these ‘last Twelve Verses’ are not genuine. . . . I am as convinced as I am of my life, that the reverse is the truth. . . . I insist, on the contrary, that the Evidence relied on is untrustworthy,—untrustworthy in every particular. . . . I am able to prove that this portion of the Gospel has been declared to be spurious on wholly mistaken grounds.”

Furthermore, there is abundant manuscript evidence supporting the authenticity of Mark 16:9-20. E F Hills wrote, “They [Mark 16:9-20] are found in all the Greek manuscripts except *Aleph* [i.e. Sinaiticus], and *B* [i.e. Vaticanus], . . . And more important, they were quoted as Scripture by early Church Fathers who lived one hundred and fifty years before *B* and *Aleph* were written, namely, Justin Martyr (c. 150), Tatian (c. 175), Irenaeus (c. 180), Hippolytus (c. 200). Thus the earliest extant testimony is on the side of these last twelve verses.”

How about the allegation that the last twelve verses are non-Markan because of the difference in literary style? Metzger, for instance, argues against the last twelve verses because there are therein 17 words new to the Gospel of Mark. Such an argument is often fallacious because it wrongly assumes that an author has only one uniform style of writing. In any case, Burgon, after a careful comparison of Mark's first twelve verses with his last twelve verses, concluded, "It has been proved . . . on the contrary, the style of S. Mark xvi. 9-20 is exceedingly like the style of S. Mark i. 9-20; and therefore, that *it is rendered probable by the Style* that the Author of the beginning of this Gospel was also the Author of the end of it. . . . *these verses must needs be the work of S. Mark.*"

Recommended Reference: John William Burgon, *The Last Twelve Verses of Mark* (Oxford, London: James Parker, 1871, reprinted in 1983 by The Bible For Today); D A Waite, *Dean John William Burgon's Vindication of the Last Twelve Verses of Mark* (Collingswood, NJ: The Bible For Today, 1994); and Edward F Hills, *The King James Version Defended* (Des Moines, IA: The Christian Research Press, 1984), 159-68.

THE WOMAN TAKEN IN ADULTERY (JOHN 7:53-8:11)

An Inspired Account of John's Gospel Proving Jesus Christ as Light of the World

Jeffrey Khoo

The story of the woman taken in adultery in John 7:53-8:11 is called the *pericope de adultera*. Modernistic scholars have attempted to remove this whole passage from the Bible. According to Westcott, "This account of a most characteristic incident in the Lord's life *is certainly not a part* of John's narrative." Not only has it been said that the *pericope de adultera* was not a part of John's Gospel, both Westcott and Hort insisted that the story "has *no right to a place* in the text of the four Gospels."

The Westcott-Hort based NIV has this misleading statement concerning the authenticity of John 7:53-8:11: "[The earliest and most reliable manuscripts and other ancient witnesses do not have John 7:53-8:11]." What are these so called "earliest" and "most reliable" manuscripts which do not have the *pericope de adultera*? They are Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus, both 4th century manuscripts. Those who reject the *pericope de adultera* do so on a presuppositional bias that these 2 codices which omit it are superior manuscripts.

Are the above codices really reliable? According to Dean Burgon, a godly and renowned Bible defender of the last century, the codices Vaticanus and Sinaiticus are among "the *most corrupt* copies in existence." Burgon wrote, "I am able to demonstrate that every one of them singly is in a high degree corrupt, and is condemned upon evidence older than itself" (for a full discussion, refer to John William Burgon's *The Revision Revised* [Collingswood NJ: The Bible For Today, 1981 reprint], 548 pp). Although the above two codices may be "earliest" they are by no means "most reliable."

There is abundant evidence in support of the authenticity of the *pericope de adultera*. John 7:53-8:11 is found (1) in many Greek uncials and minuscules mainly of the Majority or Byzantine text-type, (2) in the ancient versions or translations: Old Latin, Vulgate, Syriac, Coptic, Armenian, and Ethiopic, and (3) in the writings of the Church Fathers: Didascalia, Ambrosiaster, Apostolic Constitutions, Ambrose, Jerome, and Augustine.

Jerome (AD 340-420), the translator of the Latin Bible called the Vulgate, said this about the *pericope de adultera*: “. . . in the Gospel according to John in many manuscripts, both Greek and Latin, is found the story of the adulterous woman who was accused before the Lord.” Jerome considered the pericope genuine, and included it in his Vulgate.

Self-styled textual critics who arrogantly say: “This text has no place in Scripture; I will never preach from it!,” should rather heed these wise words of Calvin: “it has always been received by the Latin Churches, and is found in many old Greek manuscripts, and contains nothing unworthy of an Apostolic Spirit, *there is no reason why we should refuse to apply it to our advantage.*”

It must be noted that if John 7:53-8:11 is removed from the Gospel, it leaves a vacuum between the words “out of Galilee ariseth no prophet” (7:52), and “Then spake Jesus again unto them” (8:12). In 7:40-52, we find the private dialogue and debate among the Jewish populace, and between the temple servants and Pharisees over Jesus’ identity; whether He was the Moses-like Prophet (Deut 18:15) or not. Jesus was out of the picture at that time. It is thus quite awkward to introduce Jesus so abruptly in 8:12 where it is recorded that He spoke to them “again.” Jesus in verses 12-16 was teaching what is righteous judgment. The *pericope de adultera* provides the link between the two episodes. Jesus taught them “again” because He had already begun teaching the people before he was interrupted by the scribes and Pharisees (8:2-3). Jesus’ “light of the world” discourse clearly fits the context of the *pericope de adultera*. The Jewish religious leaders had failed to exercise righteous judgment because in condemning the adulteress, they failed to judge themselves for they were equally sinful (8:7-9). Jesus’ judicial and yet merciful treatment of the adulteress clearly demonstrates that He alone as the light of the world is the true and perfect Judge (8:12).

The Woman Taken in Adultery (John 7:53-8:11)

The divinely inspired account of the woman taken in adultery rightfully belongs to the Gospel of John. Let us not hesitate to use it for our encouragement and comfort.

Recommended reading: John William Burgon, “The Woman Taken in Adultery: A Defense of the Authenticity of St John 7:53-8:11,” in *Unholy Hands on the Bible* (Lafayette: Sovereign Grace Trust Fund, 1990), F1-16; and Edward F Hills, *The King James Version Defended* (Des Moines: The Christian Research Press, 1984), 150-9.

A PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION OF THE ANTIQUITY AND AUTHENTICITY OF THE JOHANNINE COMMA

Does a Clear, Biblical Proof Text Exist for the Doctrine of the Trinity?

Jeffrey Khoo

1 John 5:7-8 in the King James (Authorized) Version reads, “*For there are three that bear record (witness) in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.*” The italicized words constitute the Johannine Comma (Gk: koptein, “to cut of”). The Comma proves the doctrine of the Holy Trinity that “*There are three persons in the Godhead: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory*” (Westminster Shorter Catechism, Q 6).

Why is this verse seldom used to teach the doctrine of the Holy Trinity? Other references are often cited, but why not **1 John 5:7f**? One will often reply, “How can I when my Bible does not have it?” Therein lies the problem. With **1 John 5:7f** missing in so many of the modern Bible versions such as the New International Version, the Revised Standard Version and the New American Standard Bible, it is no wonder that many Christians are ignorant of this verse. And even if they do know that this verse exists, they hesitate to use it because they have been deceived into thinking that it is not part of God’s Word. The NIV Study Bible, for instance, says that **1 John 5:7f** “is not found in any Greek manuscript or New Testament translation prior to the 16th century.” On account of this they argue that **1 John 5:7** is spurious.

It is not true that **1 John 5:7** is absent in all pre-16th century Greek manuscripts and New Testament translations. The text is found in eight

extant Greek manuscripts, and five of them are dated before the 16th century (Greek miniscules 88, 221, 429, 629, 636). Furthermore, there is abundant support for **1 John 5:7** from the Latin translations. There are at least 8000 extant Latin manuscripts, and many of them contain **1 John 5:7f**; the really important ones being the Old Latin, which church fathers such as Tertullian (AD 155-220) and Cyprian (AD 200-258) used. Now, out of the very few Old Latin manuscripts with the fifth chapter of First John, at least four of them contain the Comma. Since these Latin versions were derived from the Greek New Testament, there is reason to believe that **1 John 5:7** has very early Greek attestation. There is also reason to believe that Jerome's Latin Vulgate (AD 340-420), which contains the Johannine Comma, was translated from an untampered Greek text he had in his possession and that he regarded the Comma to be a genuine part of First John. Jerome in his Prologue to the Canonical Epistles wrote, "Irresponsible translators left out this testimony [i.e., **1 John 5:7f**] in the Greek codices." Edward F Hills concluded, "It was not trickery that was responsible for the inclusion of the Johannine Comma in the *Textus Receptus*, but the usage of the Latin speaking church."

This leads us to **the so-called "promise" of Erasmus**. Westcott and Hort advocate Bruce Metzger made this claim, which became the popular argument against the Johannine Comma. He wrote, "Erasmus promised that he would insert the *Comma Johanneum*, as it is called, in future editions if a single Greek manuscript could be found that contained the passage. At length such a copy was found or made to order." This view against the authenticity of **1 John 5:7f** is parroted by many even today. Is this what truly happened? H. J. de Jonge of the faculty of theology, Leiden University, an authority on Erasmus, says that Metzger's view on Erasmus promise "has no foundation in Erasmus work. Consequently it is highly improbable that he included the difficult passage because he considered himself bound by any such promise." Yale University professor Roland Bainton, another Erasmus expert, agrees with de Jonge, furnishing proof from Erasmus own writing that Erasmus inclusion of **1 John 5:7f** was not due to a so-called "promise" but the fact that he believed the verse was in the Vulgate and must therefore have been in the Greek text used by Jerome. **The Erasmusian "promise" is thus a myth!**

It has been suggested that the Johannine Comma did not come from the apostle John himself but from an unknown person who invented and

inserted it into **1 John 5** so that Christianity would have a clear Trinitarian proof text. Up until this point in time, no one has been able to identify this mysterious person who tried to “help” the church. In any case, it is highly unlikely that **1 John 5:7f** is the work of a well-meaning interpolator. When we look at the text itself, the phrase, “the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit,” naturally reflects Johannine authorship (cf. **John 1:1, 14**). An interpolator would rather have used the more familiar and perhaps stronger Trinitarian formula “the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.” “The Word” or “The Logos” of **1 John 5:7f** points to the apostle John as its source, for it is distinctively John who used the term “the Word” to mean “Christ” in all his writings.

There is nothing in the Johannine Comma that goes against the fundamentals of the Christian faith. It is thoroughly Biblical and theologically accurate in its Trinitarian statement. There is no good reason why we should not regard it as authentic and employ it as the clearest proof-text in the Scripture for the doctrine of the Holy Trinity.

THE WORD OF GOD FOR ALL NATIONS

Phil Stringer

Every major language group in the world faces the same challenge—modernist Bible societies trying to corrupt the Word of God in that language. (For more information write and ask for my article “Should Fundamentalists Trust Modernist Bible Societies?”). As a result, national pastors and missionaries often have to choose between conflicting translations of the Bible. This is an extremely important issue for national pastors, missionaries, Bible printing ministries, Bible colleges, and mission boards and organizations.

The preserved Word of God will be found in translations based upon the Received Text (also known as the Traditional Text). These could be based upon the Masoretic Hebrew Text and the Greek Textus Receptus. They could also be translated from major, long established Received Text translations like Luther’s German Bible, the Italian Diodati Bible or the King James Bible.

We believe that the original Bible has been maintained to this day by the verbal, plenary, preserved, inerrant, infallible, inspired Traditional Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek words that underlie the King James Bible. When a translation uses exclusively these preserved Words as its basis, and pays close attention to the verbal and formal translation technique, it can be said that it represents the Words of God in that language, just as we can say that the King James Bible represents the Words of God in English.

Corrupt translations will be made from Alexandrian texts like Westcott and Hort or Nestle-Aland. Sometimes long-established Received Text translations will be “revised” based upon Alexandrian texts.

Sound translations will be based upon the verbal and formal translation technique. The proper text alone is insufficient because of the influx of translations based upon dynamic equivalency based translations

which use interpretation rather than translation. These are often called “meaning-based” translations.

The following is a current status report on Received Text Bibles around the world. We understand that this is a “starter report” and that much work remains to be done.

We would be happy to receive any additional information about these translations or about translations that we have missed or languages we have not addressed. E-mail Phil Stringer at philstringer@att.net.

We have sent communications to many translators, printing ministries and missionaries concerning the text of Scripture. Fewer than one half have been answered.

AFRIKAANS (South Africa—a form of Dutch)

Ta Biblia Ta Logia was released in 1933. It is the first Bible in Afrikaans. It was very clearly Received Text and was often compared to the King James Bible. It was revised in 1953 but was still clearly based upon the Received Text. The 1983 revision is based upon the Critical Text.

The 1933-1953 Afrikaans Bible is still in print and is actively used by fundamentalists in South Africa. It is published by the Bible Society of South Africa, which owns the copyright. It is often called the Old Afrikaans Version.

AKUAPEM TWI (Ghana)

German missionary Johannes Christaller led the effort to translate the Bible into the Akuapem Twi language. The translation was printed in 1871. According to modern missionaries it is very similar to the Received Text but needs work in a few areas. Christaller and other German missionaries first had to turn Twi into a written language in order to produce the Bible. Christaller produced a grammar and a dictionary in Twi. In 1933, a revision was produced which introduced many Critical Text readings into that Twi Bible. There are two more recent “meaning-based” Bibles. Independent Baptist missionary Billy D Carter, Jr (billycarterjr@yahoo.com) is trying to put together a translation team dedicated to the Received Text. Their purpose is to revise the 1871 Bible.

AKEI

Rex Cobb writes:

Michele Bass is working with two national pastors, native speakers of Akei and a lady, Rose, in the village who is very helpful. Rose is somewhat educated. Michele also works with one of the pastor's wife to check the translation. I'm not sure if you could say that Michele is heading up the translation, but the pastors listen to her. Michele follows the King James, for the most part, and the pastors use both the KJB and the French Ostervalt. They may learn a little more on the French because their primary education was in French, I believe. One pastor speaks English better than the other one. They are working on the Gospel of John and probably have a rough translation of most of it by now. There is another young woman about 30 or so named Honorine who is very interested in helping with the translation. Akei is her first language but she is fluent in Bishlama (the trade language, a type of Pidgin English/French), French, and English. Hono is a very spiritual person and she is very interested in helping her people have a good Bible. She will graduate from a Baptist Bible College in Fiji in November. The school is run by some native men who were trained at Heartland BBC in OKC. She loves the KJB. We are in the process of trying to get her to BBTI for at least the Bible Translation course in the spring. We are trying for a R-I visas, but they are much harder to get than in the past. I think the course will help her, but it will also give her more clout with the pastors on the translation team. They would be more likely to listen to her opinion if she has some training in translation. I am very optimistic about the Akei project.

ALBANIAN

The Albanian 1994 Diodati Bible is the Received Text Bible in Albanian. It is translated from Giovanni Diodati's Italian Bible, referenced to the original Greek text and compared with the King James Version. Part of the preface reads, "This version of the Bible is not a paraphrased translation that gives only an understanding of the mind of God, but is a translation word for word of the text from the breath of God." This Bible is printed by some of the Bearing Precious Seed branches.

ALEUT

Russian Orthodox missionary Ioann Veniaminov (Saint Innocent of Alaska) turned the Aleut language (also known as Fox) into a written

language (finished 1079). He translated part of the Russian Synodal Bible into the Aleut language.

AMHARIC (Ethiopian)

The *Biblia Amharica* was translated by Ethiopian pastors and British missionaries and published in 1886. The source text was the ancient GE'EZ Bible which was translated from ancient Greek and Hebrew texts. These texts largely conformed to the Received Text type. This Bible is available from some branches of Bearing Precious Seed today.

ANGAVE (Papua, New Guinea)

Baptist missionary Ray Gibello is doing a translation from the King James Bible into the Angave language. He can be contacted at rgibello@aol.com.

ANIWA

Missionary John Gibson Paton (1824-1907) was instrumental in mission work in several South Pacific islands. He translated the New Testament from the King James Bible into the Aniwa language. It was released in 1899.

ARABIC

The Van Dyke Arabic Bible (sometimes known as the Smith-Van Dyke Bible) is based upon the Received Text. The translation of the Arabic Bible began in 1848 in Beirut, Lebanon, by Dr Eli Smith using the Hebrew and Greek texts. After Dr Smith's death in 1857, the translation work was taken up by Dr Cornelius Van Dyke. He completed the work in 1864 and it was first printed in 1865. Smith normally used the Received Text, but occasionally departed. In 1910, Henry Jessup, (Fifty Years in Syria), writes about Van Dyke's work: "As the American Bible Society required a strict adherence to the Textus Receptus of Hahn's Greek Testament, Dr Van Dyke revised every verse in the New Testament taking up the work as if new." He was aided by Sheikh Nacif al-Yaziji.

BASQUE (Spain)

Basque is an isolated language used in the northern mountains of Spain. Linguists say that it is unrelated to any other language. In 1571, Joannes Leizarraga translated the Received Text into Basque. He was a converted, former Roman Catholic priest. His translation was republished by the British and Foreign Bible Society in 1824. It was revised in 1830 by Henry Pyt who used the French Ostervald as a source for revision. This revision is available to be downloaded on the internet. A Roman Catholic translation was released in 1976. The United Bible Societies has recently released an ecumenical translation.

BATAK (Indonesia)

Missionary Ludwig Ingwer Nommensen is called the “Apostle to the Bataks.” Dutch missionary Dr Herman Neubronner Van Der Turk turned Batak into a written language and translated part of the Dutch Bible into Batak in 1858. Nommensen translated the German Lutheran New Testament into Batak in 1878. The Old Testament from the German was released in 1894. This Bible is still in use and is credited with turning the Bataks away from being a cannibal tribe.

BELORUSIAN

Francysk Skaryna (1485-1552) translated the Bible into Belorussian. This is often listed with the great translations of the Reformation but Skaryna was a Roman Catholic. The base text was the Latin Vulgate. A facsimile translation was released in 1990. Vasil Syomuba began a translation into Belorussian in 1988. It was sponsored by the Orthodox Church. He used the Lutheran Bible and the Russian Synodal Bible as source texts. The Bible Society of Belorussian is doing a new translation based upon the New Latin Vulgate translation. It is an ecumenical translation.

BRAILLE (The Written Language for the Blind)

J Robert Atkinson (1887-1964) was a Montana cowboy. As a young man he was blinded in a gunshot accident. He devoted his life to translating books into Braille. He founded the Braille Institute of

America. He translated the King James Bible into Braille. It was released in 1924. Keith Reedy of Bibles for the Blind makes King James Bibles available in Braille. He can be contacted at Bibles for the Blind, 3228 E Rosehill Avenue, Terre Haute, IN 47605, (812) 466-4899. King James Braille Bibles can also be obtained from Braille Bibles International, 1908 Plumbers Way, Suite 100, Liberty, MO 64068, (1-800) 522-4253.

BULGARIAN

This Bulgarian Constantinople Bible was produced by Protestant translators and released in 1821. A more authoritative Bulgarian Bible was produced by American missionaries Elias Riggs and Albert Long and Bulgarian pastors Christodul Kostovich and Petko Slaveikov. Riggs spent sixty years in Bulgaria. This Bible was released in 1864. It is often called the Old Bulgarian Bible. It was revised in 1871. The Bible was produced under the auspices of the American Bible Society. At that time the American Bible Society required strict adherence to the Received Text. This is available from the Russian Bible Society. In 1989 a translation from the King James Bible into Bulgarian was released. The Slavic Gospel Association is working on a new translation of the Bible in Bulgarian. It is scheduled for release in 2009. There are reports that the New Testament is based upon the Nestle-Aland. Missionary Jeff Krontz is working on a revision of the old Bulgarian Bible, Jeff Krontz—krontz@mwbm.org. His doctrinal statement and statement about the Textus Receptus are encouraging. Missionary Krontz writes:

Dear Dr Stringer, Here is the info that I have on the Bulgarian Bible and what we are doing on the translation that we are working on.

I went to Bulgaria in 2001. Before going I was informed that Bulgaria had a good Bible translation. After several months of being in the country I was confronted by a preacher in the church I was attending. He had asked for a good verse on the Trinity to give someone that he was dealing with. I told him to turn to 1 John 5:7. When he looked for the verse it was not there. I was then confronted by the missionary that said if I wanted to start trouble to get on a plane and return home. I was not needed in Bulgaria.

I began to search and look for information on a Textus Receptus translation. After several months of praying, looking and asking, I was introduced to a man that was working on several different translation projects. There was a translation done in 1871. I have a copy of this translation. It is from the Textus Receptus. The White Brotherhood, a cult in Bulgaria for many years, produced it. If you search in bookstores or on the streets where books

are sold you can find an original 1871. I have searched through it and have found many verses that are there including 1 John 5:7. I am not sure if this one is the same as the 1864 that you have spoken of. It may very well be the same, just printed by two different printing houses and therefore dated differently.

I know of no other Bulgarian Bible that is from the Textus Receptus. There are several groups that have said that they produced a Textus Receptus Bulgarian Bible, but they are not doing it to a high standard. The reason that I say this is for example: “Born Again” is changed to “Born from on High” or “Born from Above.” They take out verses such as 1 John 5:7. They may be using the right text, but they are so critically changing things that the end result is junk. There are many different Bulgarian Bibles but none that I know that are from the Textus Receptus. Only this one that is dated 1871 (1864?).

I worked on this project with “Gospel Publishers” in Sofia, Bulgaria. I was put in touch with them through a lawyer friend. I discussed what I wanted to do in REVISING the old 1871 to be used and published today. They were very interested in the project (maybe because of the money). We took this translation and made all the alphabet changes. I fought them through this whole project to get it done. We finally finished this project in 2005. It was published, but there was still more that needed to be done. The reason for the alphabet changes was because in the 1940s the Bulgarian alphabet was changed to two different letters. So the change in the alphabet has been done. This was printed and I have copies of it.

Then another issue came up. The grammar was not correct with modern Bulgarian. So this had to be done. Also words that were used in the translation are no longer found in dictionaries. We began to work on the grammar and the words. I said that only words that have a 100% match could be changed. The rest would be left alone and a dictionary put in the back of the Bible. The grammar changes would be made without changing the integrity of the Scriptures. Well this was when the trouble began. Gospel Publishers wanted to argue on what each verse meant that was being worked on. For two years we would meet once a month and get nowhere at all. After much ado we finally got John and Romans finished. I asked two other missionaries to meet with me to go through each verse and pick out problems comparing to the King James. We found 18 problems that we wanted changed. I took them back and told them I wanted to change these 18 things. I thought that was very well with only 18 problems. They thought I was being ridiculous. So they made the changes (I thought). A few months later I needed the text to send to Bearing Precious Seed to print 295,000 copies for us so we could have a campaign. I got the files from them and

sent them to Bearing Precious Seed. We campaigned in September, 2007. I and another missionary were looking through the John and Romans and none of the 18 changes were done. I was sick. I called Gospel Publishers back and told them that I was tired of all the arguing and would not be using their services any longer. I told them that I would pray until I found someone that had a burden for a good translation of the Bulgarian Bible. Until I found someone I would do no more work on the project.

Since then I was given another Bulgarian Bible that was supposed to be from the Textus Receptus, but searching through it, much was changed and verses left out. If they used the “Old Bulgarian Bible” or the 1871 those verses are there and correct.

As of now, I am still waiting to continue with the project. The changes that have to be made are not difficult changes, but I also don’t want to work on it alone or with people that do not understand the importance of the issue. I will be returning to Bulgaria in March, 2009. I am praying I will be able to continue with this project when I return.

I know that a Bulgarian man from the United States was working on a project, but when I met with him in Sofia a few years ago he said that he was leaving the 1871 because he had been told it was not from the Textus Receptus. I told him the verses are there to verify that it is, but he was talking about using something completely off. If you google Bulgarian Bible you usually can come to his website. I can’t remember his name. Sorry.

So this is my story. I do want to continue with the project or find someone that has correctly drawn from the 1871.

CAMBODIA

We have received this information from Ray Shull, missionary to Cambodia. This information has been confirmed by other missionaries.

In Cambodia we have two translations that are currently being used. The first one was started in 1923 by a Christian Missionary Alliance missionary by the name of Arthur L. Hammond. After 21 years of translation work, the first Cambodian Bible was printed in 1954. This is the current translation that missionaries who adhere to the King James Version would use.

It does have translation problems in some portions, but from what I can find out it was translated from the Textus Receptus, but Mr Hammond also used the American Standard Version for clarification. Some portions, therefore, will read like the American Standard Version. But the Hammond Bible does not leave out any verses at all, and it includes no side notes next to any of the verses that the new versions leave out. The biggest problem for us here with this Bible is that it is out of print.

The second Bible that we have in Cambodia is called the Modern Language Bible. It basically reads and was done in a manner like the Good News for Modern Man Bible. We do not use it at all, and it is very shallow in its language. This Bible was started in France in January of 1985 with the help of the French Bible Society. This Bible was headed up by a Father Francois Ponchaud and three other Cambodians, one of which was a pastor. The New Testament was finished in October of 1993. Four years later the same Father Francois and three women along with a Cambodian pastor finished the Old Testament. It has also been revised recently.

As far as other translation work that is now in progress, there are none that are using the Textus Receptus as their base.

CEBUANO

Cebuano is one of 169 living languages spoken in the Philippine Islands and is spoken as a first language by more than 1.5 million people. The Philippines consist of more than 7,100 islands clustered in the South Pacific Ocean and is home to more than 76 million people. The Cebuano Received Text New Testament was translated by a small group of pastors in the southern part of the Philippines. The translation was based on the King James Version of the English Bible. Their translation was the completion of work begun by missionary Colin Christensen. Further work is headed up by Filipino Pastor Ruben Sulapas. A 1988 ecumenical translation is based upon dynamic equivalence.

CHEYENNE (American Indian)

A New Testament in the Cheyenne language was released in 1934. It was translated by Rodolphe Petter. He used the Westcott and Hort text as his base (*The Bible in America* by P Marion Simms).

CHINESE

Robert Morrison was the first Protestant missionary to China. In 1821, he and Robert Milne published the Holy Bible in Chinese. This was a Received Text Bible. Morrison was considered a Hebrew and Greek scholar. On the monument at his grave it reads, "... for several years labored alone on a Chinese version of the Holy Scriptures, whom he was spared to see complete and widely circulated among those for whom it was intended." This Bible was reproduced by the Bible Society of Singapore in 2007.

The American Presbyterian Press produced the New Testament in English and Mandarin in 1865. The Wenli Reference Bible, originally produced earlier, was reproduced by the Taiwan Bible Society in 2006. According to Dr Jeffrey Khoo, both are based upon the Traditional Text.

Pastor James Sun, of the Bethany Christian Church in New York is working to revise the Chinese Union Version. Along with Pastor Joshua Lee and David Tsai, under the guidance of D A Waite (William Carey Bible Society board member), they are seeking to bring the Chinese Union Version into conformance with the Received Text. A first draft has been completed. Pastor James Sun can be reached at jamesmhh@yahoo.com.

CHOCTAW (American Indian)

The New Testament in Choctaw was translated by American Bible Society missionaries Wright and Byington. It was released in 1848. Portions of the Old Testament were also released. At that time the American Bible Society required translations from Traditional Texts. They also required that a translation conform to the King James Bible.

Global Baptist Mission is producing a bilingual English-Choctaw Bible. Working with Raymond Johnson of Talihina, Oklahoma, they are producing a complete Choctaw Old Testament using a team of computer experts. The New Testament has already been printed. Global Baptist Mission can be contacted at: PO Box 6088, Asheville, North Carolina, 28816—(828) 681-0370. *CHOCTAW—The Global Baptist Trumpet* (September 2009) includes this report about their English-Choctaw Bible printing:

Choctaw Translation—Rev John Wright states in his book, *Early Bibles in America*, printed in 1894: “From 1825 onwards until in 1848 when the American Bible Society published the entire New Testament, various books and portions of the Scriptures were translated and printed either in individual books or booklets, extending to the year of 1886 when the translation of the book of Psalms was completed. There was such an interest in the Old Testament portions that as they were completed they were immediately printed” (page 290). Four missionaries associated with the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (the same mission organization which sent Adoniram Judson to India/Burma) carried the gospel first to Choctaw Indians in Mississippi and Alabama, and then with their removal to Oklahoma, continued their ministry in evangelism, church

planting, and translation of the Holy Scriptures. First, Cyrus Kingsbury, who had previously established the Brainerd Mission to Cherokee Indians near Chattanooga, Tennessee, established the Eliot Mission among the Choctaws in Mississippi in 1818 and then supervised the founding of Spencer and Armstrong Academies and other churches and schools in Indian Territory. Kingsbury is fondly remembered as “the Father of the Missions” in Indian Territory. Then Cyrus Byington joined the ministry around 1820 and invested 48 years of his life laboring for the Choctaw Indians, being the first missionary to learn the Choctaw language sufficiently to preach in it. Rev Byington was a lawyer converted to Christ during the revival of 1813 and called to preach. He studied theology at Andover Theological Seminary, and a wise professor there introduced him to missions. The Lord used another missionary from Georgia who introduced him to Indian missions. Rev Byington said, “My heart caught fire and I said, ‘Here am I, send me.’” After the Trail of Tears from Mississippi and Alabama in the early 1830’s Byington and his family arrived in Oklahoma in 1835, settling where Eagletown is now located. A Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma history reports: “From the new site he supervised the seminary, continued his work on the language, founded several churches and served them on his one hundred mile circuit. He also was frequently called upon to treat his Choctaw parishioners medically, there being no physician in the area. During the early part of his mission tenure, he also farmed to help support his family and raise feed for his stock. Byington and his family were frequently ill with fevers and respiratory ailments, which afflicted the Choctaws. Both Byington and his wife were critically ill on several occasions. Their eleven year old son died after a short illness in 1840. Their youngest son, only two and a half years old, died of a throat ailment in 1846. Byington’s sister joined his mission in 1839 and only lived a few weeks after arrival. Byington’s family in the North tried to persuade him to give up the mission and join them there. He was a trained lawyer and could have expected a fairly affluent and comfortable life had he been willing to join them. Instead, he stayed, responding to their entreaties by saying, “I came for life.”

Rev John Wright said Rev Byington possessed “a great aptitude for languages” and that he was “pre-eminently a man of scholarly attainments.” Byington was key in translating the Scriptures from the early 1820’s with the publication of the Lord’s Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and John 3 in 1825, until his completion of the Pentateuch, published in 1867 a year before his death.

Rev Alfred Wright graduated from Andover Seminary and then was ordained in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1819. Shortly, thereafter he received his assignment to establish a Presbyterian mission with the

Choctaws in Mississippi. There he met and married Harriett Bunce, who shared his desire for mission work and education of the Choctaws. Wright labored in Mississippi until the removal of the Choctaw west to Oklahoma, moving to the new Choctaw country in 1832. He established the Wheelock Mission school for the education of Choctaw children, and in 1844-46 built the Wheelock Church, which remains the oldest church building still in use in Oklahoma today. A letter from Mrs Byington summarizing the ministry indicates that “Mr Wright had feeble health and was not able to ride among the people as much as Mr Byington, so he devoted more time translating the Bible with the help of a very able interpreter.” Wright was responsible for much of the New Testament and the Old Testament books of Joshua, Judges, and Ruth. Upon his graduation from Princeton Seminary in 1851, Rev John Edwards received an appointment as evangelist in the Indian Territory under the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions and became superintendent of Wheelock Academy in 1853. He fled to California in 1861 to avoid taking up arms with the Southern confederacy. He was recalled to the Indian Territory in 1883 and remained there until 1896. Edwards had a good understanding of Hebrew and Greek, translating II Kings and completing the book of Psalms. Three outstanding Choctaw men labored as interpreters and translators alongside the various missionaries. In the early 1800’s Colonel David Folsom, the first elected Choctaw Chief, and his family, particularly his brother Israel and his nephew McKee, assisted Cyrus Byington and Alfred Wright. Joseph Dukes also served as an interpreter and translator for the early missionaries, associated with Cyrus Byington at the Mayhew Mission in Mississippi. He moved with his family to Indian Territory when the Choctaw were removed and became a Presbyterian minister. He continued to labor with both Cyrus Byington and Alfred Wright for twenty-five years in translating most of the nine Epistles, the book of Revelation, the first books of the Old Testament, and Psalms.

CROATIAN

Early editions of the Croatian Bible appear to have been translated from the Latin. The first complete Bible was not published until 1838. The primary translator was Matija Petar Katancic. Ivan Vrtaric has published a Traditional Text based New Testament in Croatia. It was printed by the Bearing Precious Seed ministry in Oshkosh, Wisconsin and endorsed by Couriers for Christ. William Carey Bible Society board member, Rex Cobb says that, “Ivan is a well-educated man in several languages, including Greek ...”. He is working on a translation of the Old Testament based upon the King James Bible. Missionary Johnny Leslie

(Trinity Baptist Church, Arlington, Texas) and national pastor Rajko Telebar are also working on a Croatian Bible Project. Johnny Leslie writes:

Our philosophy is simple. We believe that we are not Greek nor Hebrew Scholars. We believe that the translators of the King James Version were and that they got it right. We believe that the King James Version is God's Word and that it not only contains the Word of God, but that it is the Word of God. That every Word is preserved of God. The King James Version is the basis of our translation. It is, and will be, the final authority! The men are using Greek helps and Hebrew helps. We are using other Croatian Bibles as helps, but not authorities. Our goal is that when this Bible is finished people will criticize us and say that it is only the King James Version in the Croatian language. The men are trying their best to use the King James Version terminology.

John Leslie can be reached at: johnnyleslie@croatia4Christ.com. John Leslie reported that the New Testament has been printed.

CZECH

The Czech Bible, *Kralicka Bibe* 1613, is the standard Received Text Bible in the Czech Republic. It is one of the great Protestant translations of the Reformation era. It was translated by the Bohemian Brethren. It is available from many sources, including free downloads from the internet. A new translation is based upon the New American Standard Bible.

DAKOTA **(Sioux Indian)**

Dr Thomas S Williamson began translating the Bible in the Dakota language in 1837. At that time the policy of the American Bible Society (which sponsored him) was to translate from the Received Text. The translation was his primary ministry for over forty years. He was aided by Dr Stephen Riggs. Dr Riggs also began to minister to the Sioux in 1837. A final revision was completed by John Williamson (Dr Williamson's son). The New Testament was published in 1865 by the American Bible Society. The whole Bible was published in 1879. According to P Marian Simms (*The Bible in America*) this is the most important American Indian translation ever completed. Rev Cook, a Sioux preacher, wrote: "May God abundantly reward in the day of reckoning his two faithful servants, Dr Williamson and Dr Riggs, who gave us the Holy Scriptures in our own

tongue, thus helping to make us what we are and what in the future we shall be through his grace.” Unfortunately, this Sioux Bible is now out of print.

DANISH

In 1607, a Danish Bible was printed. It was translated by Hans Paul Resen from the Received Text. A revision of this Bible was released in 1819. It remained the standard Bible of the Danes until the 1930s. Fundamental missionaries, Touny and Susan Mollerskov write that the 1819 is close to the Received Text but that more work needs to be done. They are beginning work on a Danish New Testament. The “Authorised Version” of the Danish Lutheran Church is a translation released in 1931. It is clearly Critical Text.

DUTCH

The first Dutch translation from the Received Text was in 1637. It became known as the States-Bible (*Statenvertalling*). It was influenced by the King James Bible. This is often known as the Dutch Authorised Version. It is credited with standardising the Dutch language. It was revised in 1657 and this revision remained the standard Dutch Bible until 1951. The 1657 version is still in print and used by some Dutch believers. There are also aborigine tribes in Taiwan that use this Bible—the influence of Dutch missionaries in the 1800s. It can be downloaded from the internet. There are a number of Critical Text Dutch Bibles available. A new Dutch Bible promises to be more “attractive and market oriented.”

ENGLISH

The King James Bible was released in 1611. It is the most successful Bible translation of all time. The King James Bible translators are the greatest translation committee ever gathered for any translation work of any kind. The King James Bible has withstood every attack from its critics for almost 400 years. The King James Bible is widely available. It has been the base text for translations in many languages. According to Winston Churchill it has been translated into 760 languages (Churchill’s *History of the English-Speaking Peoples*, one volume edition, p 160).

ESTONIA

The first New Testament published in the Estonian language was in 1715. A replica of the 1715 Estonian Bible is now available for the Estonian people. The first translation was finished by Hohann Hornung (1660-1715) and Adrian Virginius (1663-1706). Over 60 years translation work had been done. This translation was from Traditional Text Greek and Hebrew. The translators were German pastors and Luther's German Translation was also a source text. The complete Bible was published in 1739. The Old Testament was completed by Anton Thor Helle (1683-1748). He united two Estonian dialects in his translation. There are several modern Critical Text based Bibles available in the Estonian language. The Russian Bible Society is studying the available Estonian texts to see which is closest to the Received Text.

EWE

(Ghana, Togo)

The first missionaries to the Volta River region of Ghana were from the Bremen (German) Mission. They produced a translation of the Lutheran Bible (New Testament in 1877, Old Testament in 1913). They were aided by a national pastor, Andreas Aku (1863-1931). After the Germans were expelled from the area during World War I, Aku became the leader of the Presbyterian Church in the region. In 2003, a Ewe translation based upon the New International Version was released. According to the translators, "This translation uses an informal language style and applies a meaning-based translation philosophy."

FALAM-CHIN

(Chin State, Myanmar)

The Falam-Chin translation of the Bible based on the KJV was initiated by the Rev Joseph Thang Hup, BD, STM (Dallas Theological Seminary) in 1980. He completed translating the New Testament in 1987.

The Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Myanmar then took over to proofread and revise it for accuracy. A new translation committee was formed in 1989 comprising a good number of elderly and experienced Christians from different backgrounds and denominations. The work was done using the verbal equivalence method and was finally completed in 1993.

In early 1999, the faculty of the Far Eastern Fundamental School of Theology in Yangon did a final check on the translation and prepared it for publication. The Falam-Chin NT (*Thukam Thar*) was finally published in October 1999. First printing: 10,000 copies.

FAROE ISLANDS

The Faroe Islands (north of Norway) are an independent country. There are two Bibles in their language. One was released by Jacob Dahl in 1961. Both are Critical Text based. Non-denominational preacher, Sjurder Hojgaard has finished a translation of the King James Bible into Faroese. He can be reached at sjurdar@krea.fo.

FARSI (Iran-Persian)

Henry Martyn (1781-1812) translated the Received Text New Testament into Farsi. He coined the term “Theology in Philology.” This term refers to the challenge of translating theological terms into national languages. When Martyn died, he was remembered as “... defending the Christian faith in the heart of Persia against the united talents of the most learned Mahomedans.” Robert Bruce published a revision of Martyn in 1895. This departed seriously from the Received Text. It was further revised in 1904. This is normally the Farsi Bible used by evangelicals today, but is seriously flawed. A common language version was produced in 1976. Some faithful underground believers have produced their own translation of the Bible in Farsi, the *Ketabet Almoqadasat*. It is privately printed. For more information, contact philstringer@att.net. Pooyan Mehrshahi, an Iranian-born Irish Presbyterian is working with the Trinitarian Bible Society to produce a Received Text Farsi Bible. Currently they have published the Gospel of John.

FINNISH

The *Fineish Biblia* was released in 1776. This Bible is the fourth edition of the 1642 translation by the Lutherans. It is a Received Text Bible. It is often called the “old Biblia”. This was the official Bible of the Lutheran Church until it was replaced in 1933 by a Critical Text Bible. An 1852 revision remains in use in Finland by small conservative groups within the Lutheran Church. Wikipedia compares it to the King James Bible. The Bible Literature Foundation of Shelbyville, Tennessee is

printing a bilingual parallel Bible using the 1776 Finnish Bible and the King James Bible. It contains 1 John 5:7 and many similar KJB readings. Teno Hamalainen reports that there is no problem understanding the 1776 Bible today and that it is still used by the Laestadius branch of the Lutherans. In 1992, the Lutheran church released a “meaning-based translation.”

FRENCH

The French have a great history of Received Text Bibles, including the Olivetan Bible and the Ostervald Bible.

There appear to be two Received Text French Bibles available today.

The David Martin French Bible was released in 1699. It was based upon the Received Text and the English Geneva Bible 1588. An 1855 revision is available today. It can be obtained from the Association of the Biblique International, Box 225646, Dallas, Texas, 75222.

A 1996 revision of the Froussard edition of the Ostervald edition of 1881 is in print today. It can be obtained from Bearing Precious Seed-Milford and Bethel Baptist Church of Lambeth, Ontario. The 1996 revision was done by Missionary C H Boughman. Both versions still need a final purification process.

Many Baptist missionaries use the French Louis Segond translation. This is far from being a reliable Received Text translation. The Trinitarian Bible Society publishes a “revised” Louis Segond—a few verses have been changed to reflect the Received Text. According to a 2006 email from Paul Rowland, the Trinitarian Bible Society is working on a revision of the David Martin Bible comparing it with the King James Bible.

The website www.kingjamesfrancaise.com contains a translation of the King James Bible into French. This translation is not in print yet.

Nadine Stafford sends this note about this translation:

In 1994, I was told by a French pastor that the word “enfer” (hell) was not to be found in the French Bibles. I was shocked to hear that! I immediately consulted the 1910 Segond and a few other French Bibles. What he said was true. Using *New Age Bible Versions*, by Gail A Riplinger, I started checking the many problem passages mentioned in her book and found that over 90% of those passages were also mistranslated in the French Bibles. It

was then that I began work on translating the King James Bible into French for my own personal use. To my great dismay, even the 1885 Martin and the 1996 Ostervald Bibles, which are being promoted as the French equivalents of the King James version, were far from it and not even entirely faithful to the Textus Receptus and the Masoretic Text as is proclaimed.

In 1999, I met Sister Gail Riplinger at the King James Conference at Mt Airy. After I showed her how far the 1996 Ostervald had strayed from the King James Bible, she encouraged me to continue my translation. In 2001 I was led providentially to a French Christian website, where the webmaster had just acquired a 1669 Bible de Geneve (Geneva Bible in French). I introduced him to the 1885 Martin Bible, the 1996 Ostervald Bible, the King James Bible, and the book, *New Age Bible Versions*. When I mentioned to him that I was translating the King James Bible into French, he asked for permission to post it on his site. I also translated parts of Gail Riplinger's book for him.

I have been researching and collating, verse by verse, the 1669 Bible de Geneve, the 1744 Martin and 1855 Martin, as well as the 1894 Ostervald, 1852 Ostervald New Testament, 1938 Ostervald New Testament and Psalms and of course, the 1996 Ostervald, and compared them to the King James Bible. The many differences lead to confusion, especially in the Old Testament passages with references to the Millennial Kingdom, where the present tense of the verbs are used instead of the future tense. It is hard to teach correct eschatology using these Bibles which present Reformation theology. Don't forget that Olivetan was John Calvin's cousin!

French Canadian missionary, Dr Yvon Geoffrion is basing most of his ministry working upon a new translation of the Bible into French. He is a doctrinally sound fundamental Baptist preacher. He is using a French translation done in the early 1800s as a base. It was translated by 30 men over 40 years. It was the product of an evangelical revival. It was printed in Lousanne, Switzerland and is sometimes called the Lousanne Version.

The Dean Burgon Society is involved with a new French Traditional Text Translation. H D Williams describes the project this way.

The DBS published 60 copies of the initial French edition for Pastors Mario Monette and Serge Leclerc of Quebec. We uploaded the French Bible for printing on 7/29/10. After receiving the copies, they distributed them around the world to competent appropriate French speaking individuals. We have asked for a report related to the responses, issues, corrections, etc. from the reviewers, but we have not received it to this date. However, they have inquired recently about the cost of a finished edition to be printed in Korea.

I might add that the French pastors visited in NJ with Dr Waite prior to the DBS agreeing to publish the initial edition. At that time a conference call was set up with Dr Waite, myself, and Daniel Waite. We quizzed the pastors for about 2-3 hours on their theology, translation principles, proper texts, etc. We reviewed how they handled many passages that had been translated inappropriately in the past in various translations, including many CT readings. Their answers were very satisfactory and it seemed they had corrected the incorrect passages in the Ostervald French Bible related to CT readings.

FRENCH CREOLE

French Creole, also known as Haitian Creole, is primarily spoken throughout Haiti. It is considered to have a lower social status than standard French and is spoken by 7.4 million in Haiti and another 400 thousand in other countries.

A French Creole translation was done by Baptist missionary Daylon Hicks in the early 1980s. It was translated from the King James Version by Hicks and several Haitian pastors and laymen.

This version is available from some Bearing Precious Seed chapters.

FULFULDE (Fulani, Cameroon)

Missionary Sam Sanderlin writes:

Here is a paragraph regarding West/Central Africa Fulfulde spoken by several million unreached Fulani Muslims. If you want, you can add it to your list.

Fulfulde is the language of the Fulani tribe that lives in Cameroon, Chad, Nigeria, and the Central African Republic. There are several dialects spoken by these several million Fulani, who concerning the gospel are virtually an unreached people group. The Lutherans are largely responsible for the current translation of the Bible called the “Deftere Allah.” This translation is based on the critical Greek text, using dynamic equivalency, and was translated and published by ecumenical groups. Wycliffe Bible Translators are currently revising this translation and plan to publish it in Arabic script. Wycliffe Bible Translators also uses the critical text and the dynamic equivalent method of translation. While there are some groups out there reaching the Fulfulde speaking Fulani, there are very few missionaries who are fundamentalist in nature.

There is a veteran missionary in Cameroon who along with his family speaks fluent Fulfulde. He is prayerfully assembling a team to translate the Bible into Fulfulde from the Masoretic and Received Text using formal equivalency.

GEORGIAN

A Georgian Bible was translated from the Russian Synodal Bible in 1743. It is available from the Russian Bible Society.

GERMAN

Luther's German translation, *Biblia Germanica*, was released in 1534. It was done directly from the Masoretic Hebrew text and the second edition of Erasmus Greek text. He also consulted the Latin text of Paganinus. The original Lutheran Bible is still available.

It has been said that no other translation of the Bible, apart from the King James Bible, has had a greater impact upon its people and culture than the German Bible of Luther.

A Swiss-German version of the Lutheran Bible, the Zurich Bible, was produced in the late 1530s. It was compared to the Greek and Hebrew by Leo Judd and a revision was released in 1542.

Judd disagreed with Luther and his close associate Zwingli and advocated the separation of church and state.

The Zurich Bible is still in print.

Luther's Bible has been revised dozens of times. The revisions differ dramatically in their faithfulness to Luther's original translation and to the Received Text. Versions of Luther's Bible are available from many sources including Independent Baptist Publishers. It is often very hard to identify which version is being printed. According to Lutheran sources, the 1868 revision is the last "conservative" edition.

There was another German Received Text Bible, the Elberfelder, which was released in 1871. It is not in print today, though it can be viewed on the internet.

In 1998, La Buona Novella, Swiss publishers published an edition of the Lutheran New Testament designed to remove Critical Text influence. It is not recognized by the Lutheran denomination. It should not be confused with the 1992 Lutheran Bible (which is completely Critical Text) published by the Lutheran Church.

Another German translation, the Schlachter 2000 is known as a Received Text Bible. The Dunelin Road Archive, July 2007, confirms this as a Bible for German speakers who honor the Received Text.

Franz Schlachter released his translation in 1905. A major revision was released in 1951. The 2000 edition is available from BEAMS, PO Box 10200, Gulfport, Mississippi, 39505, (228-832-1055).

According to missionary Jim Garrison, the Schlachter 2000 is translated from the Received Text (New Testament) and the Masoretic Text (Old Testament). It was compared to the Old Lutheran Bible, the Zurich Bible and the King James Bible. It is printed by the Geneva Bible Society.

GIO

The Gio are a tribal people in Liberia. The Trinitarian Bible Society has produced a New Testament in their language.

GSUNGRAB

The Bible is being translated into Indian language by the Gsungrab Team. They are using the United Bible Societies 4 (Critical Text) and comparing it to the NRSV, NASB, TEV, and NET.

GREEK **(Modern Greek)**

The first modern complete Greek translation was completed in 1630 by Maximus Callipolites under the sponsorship of the reforming patriarch of Constantinople, Cyril Lucar. The New Testament was translated from the Received Text. Lucar was greatly opposed to the idea of making the Bible available to the common man in his language. He was strangled to death by his opponents.

In the early 1700s there was another attempt to print the Maximus Bible. The sponsor was exiled to Siberia, where he died in prison.

During the 1800s the Maximus Bible was printed and distributed several times. In 1823 and 1836, the patriarch of Constantinople ordered all copies seized and burnt.

In 1850, Neofitos Vamvas issued a complete translation of the Bible into modern Greek. He was labeled a Protestant and expelled from the Greek Orthodox Church. His critics claimed that he very closely followed

the King James Bible in his translation. The Greek Orthodox Church burned many copies of this Bible.

In 1901, there were riots over the publication of another translation into modern Greek.

Since 1850, the Varvas (also known as Bombas) translation has been published by the Trinitarian Bible Society. *The History of the American Bible Society* (p 272) refers to Professor Varvas as an “eminent Greek scholar.” His work has been widely praised for consistency with the Traditional Text and the King James Bible.

However, some fundamental Greek preachers have stated that the Bombas Bible is “high literary” and is of increasingly less use with the average Greek citizen.

A more recent New Testament, the Vella, is said to be translated from the Traditional Text.

GULLAH **(Southeastern United States)**

Gullah is a language originally spoken on Africa’s west coast. It was brought to the southeastern United States by slaves. It is still spoken in the coastal islands off the shores of the Carolinas, Georgia and Florida.

Claude and Pat Sharpe, with many Gullah volunteers translated the King James Bible into Gullah. The project was sponsored by Wycliffe Bible Translators. The complete Bible was released in 2005.

The Gullah Bible is available on line. In January 2007, Congressman James Clyburn took his oath of office with his hand on the Gullah Bible.

HAUSA **(Nigeria, Niger, Sudan and Cameroon)**

Walter Richard Samuel Miller (1872-1952) spent fifty years as a missionary from England to Nigeria. He has often been called “the apostle to the Hausa.”

There was an early missionary translation of the New Testament in 1880. Miller revised this and produced a translation of the Old Testament into Hausa in 1932. This is referred to as the Miller Hausa Bible.

This translation is referred to as “Protestant” and “conservative.” We have not been able to find information on the textual base for this translation. The Miller Hausa Bible has been widely used by evangelicals in the tribal areas of Nigeria.

HAWAIIAN

Missionary Hiram Bingham released a Bible in the native Hawaiian language. He spent fifteen years on this effort. It was sponsored by the American Bible Society. Their policy at that time was to translate from the Received Text.

The translation fell out of use, and out of print as the Hawaiian language fell out of use.

HEBREW

The Society for Distributing Hebrew Scripture makes complete Hebrew Bibles available. They state that they used the Masoretic Old Testament and a Hebrew New Testament that was edited to correspond to the Greek Textus Receptus. The New Testament is known as the Salkinson-Ginsburg Hebrew New Testament.

They can be contacted at: Joseph House, 1 Bury Mead Road, Hitchin Herts SG9 1RT, England, UK or email @5DHS1940@aol.com or they have Bible depots in several countries. In the United States they can be contacted through Light for Israel, PO Box 80652, Charleston, SC 29416 or email @info2@lightforIsrael.org.

Daniel Fried of the Hope of Israel Baptist Mission provides this report.

The Salkinson-Ginsburg edition is actually corrupt and based on the critical text. Their English side of their Old Testament is full of problems; e.g. they have changed the font on the italic words to be the same as the rest of the fonts; also they were very careless when it came to ‘LORD’ vs “Lord,” and many more examples of which I have not complied.

That is why Hope of Israel Baptist Mission was lead by the Lord to publish our Hebrew-English New Testament Prophecy edition. It is based on the only faithful Hebrew translation of the Textus Receptus which is put out by the Trinintarian Bible Society—by Franz Delitzsch.

The Hebrew Society messed around with that good text and ever since has been trying to appease those of us who complained that they had departed from the Textus Receptus. There have been feeble attempts to correct the

problems—we could not recommend the corrupt Salkinson-Ginsburg. Even the Israel Bible Society recognized that Franz Delitzsch to be more faithful to the Textus Receptus. In my research over 30 years I have discovered that Franz indeed like many of his contemporaries were being pressured and influenced by higher criticism; however he was a strict Lutheran unmatched for his time. My study of his text along with many that have gone before me, would conclude that his was very faithful to the Textus Receptus in his translation into Hebrew, even Orthodox Jews concur with his accuracy of Biblical Hebrew. The contemporary leaning of the Hebrew Society was to compromise that text by using the critical text in order to make the Hebrew more like the NIV style, etc. You can get more accurate, substantive documentation from the Trinitarian Bible Society.

Currently only the Trinitarian Bible Society and the Hope of Israel Baptist Mission are publishing Hebrew bibles based on the Textus Receptus—that I'm aware of. Whole Hebrew Bibles can be gotten from the Trinitarian Bible Society.

HERERO **(Nambia—Botswana)**

Gottlieb Viehe (1839-1901) was a German missionary to the Herero people. He translated the Bible into their language from the German Lutheran Bible. His work was released in 1872.

This Bible was replaced in 1987 by a Critical Text Bible.

HILIGAYNON **(Philippines)**

There is a Hiligaynon text that was done by Bro Roger Vournas on the island of Guimaras. His text is a complete Old and New Testament. Hiligaynon is the dialect of the Visayan Missionary Vournas writes.

An ecumenical translation was released in 2007.

For some additional information about our Hiligaynon (Ilonggo) Bible translation. Pastor Winston White, a native Filipino (Ilonggo) Baptist pastor, and I translated the entire Hiligaynon Bible from the Authorized King James Version, 1611. The Hiligaynon language is one of the major languages of the Philippines and is spoken by millions on Panay Island, half of Negros Island, Guimaras Island, and parts of Mindanao island. We translated as close as we could according to formal.

Translation using the grammar of this language; however, there are times, for example regarding an English idiom, where we needed to make it

understandable in the language here and we did so. We printed the New Testament in 1998 and kept on translating the Old Testament. It took the span of about seven years to translate the entire Bible. Allowing time to request and receive donations to print the Bible, we were able to print the entire Bible in 2006 in Korea. My wife, Bing Bing, also a native Ilongga, did general checking of the translation which included checking for grammar, which she is good at. Our translation has given fruit in the souls saved and of course for use in Bible studies, which has been a real blessing because we can trust what we are reading. There are other translations in Hiligaynon, but they are corrupt, being translated from corrupt Bible versions such the New International Version, the American Standard Version, and the New American Standard Bible. There is one other New Testament Hiligaynon translation which says it was translated from the King James Version, and they corrected many verses, but there were still many verses which were not checked or corrected at all. I do not know if there is a further revision of their translation but when I checked their second and third printing editions, it still had bad corruptions in it.

Email address: biblekjb1611@yahoo.com.

HMONG (Vietnam, China, Laos and Thailand)

The only Hmong Bible available was translated from the Today's English Version.

Pastor Randy King—(First Light Baptist Mission) writes with this update on the Hmong language:

In the Hmong language. A Hmong man who got saved, served in our ministry, went to Hyles Anderson and then to Empire Baptist Temple (South Dakota) for seminary is currently working with the Hmong up in Minneapolis—St Paul. He is real strong Baptist and KJV, and he is working on translating the Bible into HMONG. He has been doing it for more than 10 years, as time allows. He has tracts he gives out and I think he has completed the NT. We support him as a missionary. He is married with about 10 kids now. You may contact him at:

Dr (Pastor) Ko Yang (We call him "Ko", but really his name is "Naoko" and his Hmong wife's name is "May").

First Hmong Independent Baptist Church, 1365 Westminister Street, St. Paul, MN 55101, USA (Tel: 651-704-0903, 651-271-5130).

HUNGARIAN

The Karoli Version, also known as the Vizsoly Bible, was published in 1590. The translation effort was headed up by Pastor Gaspar Karoli. It is one of the great Protestant era Bibles. A 1908 revision is the standard Hungarian Bible today for evangelicals.

According to the Hungarian Bookstore (which also sells Catholic Bibles): “Many Hungarians who read English have compared the language to that found in the King James Version.”

The Karoli Version is available from many sources.

ICELANDIC

The Gudbrands Biblia was published in 1594. It was named after its editor Gubrandur Thorlaksson. It is one of the Protestant Era Received Text translations. This translation was financed by the King of Denmark.

This Bible is still published by the Icelandic Bible Society.

IGBO

(Sierra Leone, Nigeria)

Thomas J Dennis served as a missionary to the Igbo people. He translated the Bible into Igbo. This translation was released in 1913.

Dennis translated from the Greek and Hebrew and used the King James Bible as a standard of comparison.

Dennis died in a shipwreck in 1917. This translation was in use until 2007, when it was replaced by a Critical Text translation from the Bible League.

ILLONGO

(Philippines)

A number of Filipino pastors, working with missionary Rick Marten have produced an Illongo New Testament. It has been checked against the King James Bible.

Work is beginning on an Old Testament translation.

ILOCANO (ILOCO)

(Northern Four Provinces of the Philippines)

The current translations of Ilocano are Critical Text based.

The UBS translation was headed up by Petrocinia Tayaban. According to a personal letter from him, the textual base for this translation was English versions including the Revised Standard Version, Today's English Version and the Moffat Bible. The team of translators, including Protestant preachers and Catholic priests, were trained in Dynamic Equivalence.

Independent Baptist missionary Clemente Quitevis is offering a bilingual Ilocano-English Bible. He is out of Bible Baptist Church of Vallejo, CA.

Brother Quitevis writes this account of his work:

Here's a very brief history about myself and the P.I.E. (Parallel Ilocano English) King James Version Bible Project. I was born in the Philippines in 1944 and am a true and pure Ilocano. I came to the United States in 1962, got saved in the United States in 1973. I was burdened at first about the salvation of my relatives in the Philippines, therefore we (my wife and three children) went to the northern Philippines in 1977 where I was born, sent out as local church missionaries of Calvary Baptist Church of San Francisco, California. In 1988 we moved to Vallejo, California, and since then became members of Bible Baptist Church of Vallejo, California where I am serving as their layman missionary to the Philippines. I have been teaching and preaching in the Ilocano dialect since 1977, and I speak the dialect fluently.

While in the Philippines (1977-2000) I used extensively the original Ilocano Bible published by the Philippine Bible Society in preaching, teaching, and studying. I have been told that this Ilocano Bible was translated from the King James Bible. I believe some pastors here in the Ilocandia region have the same thoughts also. In 2000-2001 while I was in the United States I read that the United Bible Societies were publishing those corrupted versions, even in the foreign languages, and I saw also that the parent company of the Philippine Bible Society is the United Bible Societies. Further research, found out the Ilocano Bible we were all using seems to be translated using the Revised Standard Version. I was very much bothered about these things, especially when I checked that some verses were missing and many words omitted and added. This became a heavy burden on my heart to make and present to my Ilocano countrymen a true Ilocano Bible translated after the pure and preserved Word of God in English (the King James Version).

In 2002-2003 I started to type in my computer the New Testament Ilocano using my King James Version Bible. The Parallel Ilocano-English concept type of work, still at this time did not get into the picture. On July 19, 2005,

this New Testament Ilocano (King James Version) was completed and printed and bound locally in Ilocos Sur, Philippines. It was done also like the red-letter edition of the King James Bible.

In 2005-2006 another heavy burden put on my heart to produce this time a Parallel Ilocano-English King James Version New Testament Holy Bible. In December of 2007, I completed the New Testament portion and some copies of the New Testament Parallel Ilocano-English King James Version with red letters that were produced by a local print shop in Vigan, Ilocos Sur. Then afterwards, another burden was moving in my heart to produce the complete Old Testament and New Testament Parallel Ilocano English Bible.

Now in 2009, I completed the electronic copy of the King James Version of the Old Testament and New Testament Parallel Ilocano-English Holy Bible with the words of the Lord Jesus in red letters.

Brother Quitevis died in an automobile accident on August 3, 2010. Dr Steve Zeinner is now working with this text.

Brother Quitevis has produced a second draft of the NT (correcting several errors) and the first draft of the OT. He has stated his willingness to correct anything that is not consistent with the King James Bible. He further makes this statement.

1. I believe that the so called Authorized Version in the English language is the King James Version (KJV) Bible.
2. I believe that God has given us the infallible Scripture by divine inspiration in the original Greek and Hebrew writings, and that God by divine preservation has preserved that in the Hebrew Masoretic Old Testament and the Greek Received Text New Testament underlying the KJV Bible and other Reformation Bibles, and that the KJV Bible is an accurate translation of the pure Words of God in the English language.
3. I believe that the Hebrew Masoretic Old Testament and Greek Received Text New Testament when translated properly into any language is the preserved Word of God in that language, whether it is Chinese, Korean, or a Philippine dialect.
4. I believe that the KJV Parallel Ilocano English (P.I.E.) Bible is intended for the use of those “whosoever will” draw near and love God particularly to those Philippine Ilocano dialect speaking people, and that permission is hereby granted to those “whosoever will” to make copies of it, and that permission is also granted to those “whosoever will” to publish it as long as it is published with my consent and without any modification.

5. I believe that anyone is welcome to make comments, suggestions, improvements, modifications, and that you can contact me with the information below.

There is also an Ilocano parallel Translation of the Good News Bible and a translation of the New Good News Bible.

INDONESIAN

Missionary Louis A Turk has spearheaded an effort to translate the Received Text into Indonesian. Their goal is to print the New Testament in 2009. He can be contacted at louisaturk@bible-way.org.

We have received information from Louis A Turk that he is in complete agreement in the purpose, standards, doctrine and translation principles of the William Carey Bible Society.

Bro Turk is doing translation work based on the Textus Receptus, the Masoretic Text and the King James Bible. All of the New Testament is done except for Luke and Revelation.

INUKITUT (Greenland)

Norwegian Lutheran missionary Hans Poulsen Egede is remembered as the “Apostle to Greenland.” He went to Greenland in 1721. He turned the language of the Inuit people into a written language.

With his son Paul, he translated the Bible into Inukitut. In 1933 Moravian missionaries revised this translation. The work was heavily influenced by Luther’s German translation.

IRISH (Gaelic, Irish-Gaelic)

William Daniel (Ulliam O’Domhnaill) released a New Testament in Irish in 1602. This was clearly Traditional Text based and designed to convert Roman Catholics. According to Daniel it had been delayed by Satan and “Romish seducers.”

William Bedell produced a Traditional Text Old Testament which was not immediately released. It was revised under the sponsorship of Robert Boyle and released in 1685.

The British and Foreign Bible Study began printing the Daniel-Bedell Irish Bible in 1817.

In 1858, a Roman Catholic translation was released. In 1981, a new Catholic version was released.

In 1970, the Revised Standard Version was translated into Irish.

There is a current project devoted to a Traditional Text based revision of Daniel-Beaune. Information can be obtained at irishbible@biblebc.com.

ISAN (Thailand, Makong)

The Bible has never been translated into the Isan language before—a variant of Central Thai—spoken by one-third of Thailand’s total population (21 million as of 2008). The “official” Thai Bible is controlled by the Bible Society. Besides being Alexandrian based (American Standard Version, Revised Standard Version, New International Version), it is directly mistranslated in numerous important passages. Various new Thai translations have been done, some better than others, but all are Alexandrian based (except for one).

Veteran church-planting missionary, Ron Myers, is translating the King James Bible into Isan and referencing the Received Text as a textual authority.

Ron Myers has an excellent website explaining the process and principles involved in this translation. It would be worthy of study by anyone involved in Bible translation—look up www.IsanBible.com. Ron can be contacted at ronmy0@gmail.com.

ITALIAN

The Diodati Italian Bible was released in 1603. It is one of the great Reformation era Bibles translated from the traditional texts. Giovanni Diodati was a professor associated with Calvin and Beza in Geneva.

There are more recent revisions of the Diodati that are not faithful to the Received Text.

JAPANESE

Karl Gutzlaff, a German missionary, made an early attempt to translate the New Testament from the Received Text into Japanese in the 1830s. American missionaries made several attempts to translate parts of the Received Text into Japanese. The New Testament was translated into

the AINU (northern Japan) language in 1897. Several translations influenced by the Critical Text were done in the 20th century.

A translation from the King James Bible (referenced to the Received Text) was published in the late 19th century. A revision of this translation was done in 1917 and the New Testament was referenced to the Critical Text.

In 1928, a Japanese scholar translated the New Testament from the Received Text. It was reprinted in the 1990s.

There are several Critical Text based Japanese Bibles available.

Missionary John Hime (Baptist World Mission) is heading an effort to produce a Received Text based New Testament. They have just finished a first draft.

John Hime has written a tremendously thorough history of the Bible in Japanese, “By Every Word of God.” In it he writes, “Translating the Word of God from a pure heart of faith is a massive job, and not one for the quitter. Only those who have been gifted by God with ability in languages and called of God to the task should attempt it, and it should only be done for the glory of God and to uplift Jesus Christ.”

Unfortunately, missionary Hime rejects the Verbal Plenary Translation method and speaks harshly of it. His standard for translations is unknown. John Hime may be contacted at johnofjapan@hotmail.com.

Missionary Randall Smith reports that this project is using the Received Text underlying the KJB.

KAMEA **(Papua, New Guinea)**

The Kamea language has never been put into writing. Thirty-thousand people live in a region without roads. Missionaries must fly in.

Jason and Cherith Ottosen are on their way as missionaries to these people. They are committed to put the Kamea language into writing and to translate the Received Text into this language.

KURMANJI **(Kurdish, Turkey)**

There has never been an Old Testament in Kurmanji. The International Bible Society New Testament is Critical Text.

Faithful underground believers have translated Scripture portions and have them printed privately. For more information contact Phil Stringer at philstringer@att.net.

KIRIBATI (Gilbertine Islands)

Hiram Bingham, Jr and several Hawaiian preachers arrived in Kiribati in the 1860s. Bingham was the son of pioneer missionary to Hawaii, Hiram Bingham. They turned the Kiribati (also called Gilbertese) language into a written language. They released the entire Bible in 1893. It was originally a Traditional Text Bible. Critical Text Revisions were introduced in 1954 and 1977.

This language is still the first language in their area. The Received Text Bible is no longer in print. There are people praying that one of the Bible printing ministries would take this up as a project.

KOREAN

The first Korean Bible translation was not published until 1882. It does not appear that there was ever a serious attempt at a Received Text Bible in Korean until the last twenty years.

There appear to be several Received Text Bible projects in Korea.

Dr Seo Dal Seok has produced the King James Version Korean edition. It is a bilingual Bible with the King James Bible and his translation of the King James Bible into Korean, printed side by side. For more information please contact Dr Ron Tottingham, Great Plains Divinity School, Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

The Received Text Bible Society is offering a new translation in Korean that it says is based upon the Hebrew Masoretic Text and the Greek Received Text. However, this translation seems to have a strong sectarian base (Presbyterian). It refers to John the Baptist as John the Sprinkler.

Dr Dongsoo Jung produced a Received Text Bible in Korean. He was encouraged in this process by Dr D A Waite (William Carey Bible Society board member). A copy can be obtained from the Dean Burgon Society (see their website DBS@DeanBurgonSociety.org).

For the past three to four years there has been interest in a new translation of the Korean Bible. Recently a committee was formed and

organized with Missionary Pastor Jim Taylor and Pastor David Eum as the head translators. The committee consists of nine members which are divided into two groups. One group because of their Greek and Hebrew abilities is translating from that source. They also confer with the King James Bible, as well as other good, faithful and accurate translations. The other group is translating from the King James Bible. These men are fluent in English and Korean and are capable of using many helps to do their work. Upon completion of a particular chapter the two groups come together comparing their works and make the appropriate changes. If by some reason they cannot come to agreement, it is presented to the group for a vote and at that time a decision is made. Consulting help is also given by Korean nationals and Korean speakers outside of Korea. They have finished several books of the New Testament: Matthew, John, Romans, Philippians, Colossians, Jude and Revelation and they hope to finish the first edition New Testament in two to six years.

LADINO **(Spoken in Turkey and Israel)**

Ladino is known as Judeo-Spanish. The Bible was first translated from the Ferrara Spanish Bible in 1553. It was edited by Moshe Loyar. The New Testament was revised in 1743. The Old Testament in 1829.

LAOS

To the best of my knowledge, there has not been a conservative (Textus Receptus based) Lao translation in the current era (quite possibly one in bygone decades that is now long out of print). However, there are presently two Textus Receptus based translation projects underway.

One is the Isan translation being done by Baptist missionary Ron Myers in the Isan language of Northeast Thailand. Isan is closely related to Lao, and Ron has transposed Luke, John, and Ephesians into Lao script on a trial basis and sent it into Communist Laos. Word came back that it was enjoyed by the Lao believers who received it, saying it was very understandable, having been done in their everyday, spoken language.

Another, more recent attempt at a Textus Receptus based Lao translation, is presently being done by a Baptist missionary stationed in Vientiane, Laos. Ron Myers was recently given John and Romans, and said that what he read seemed quite good.

The United Bible Societies' most recent "meaning-based" Lao translation update was done in 2004. In the Societies' own words, "... some conservatives are still reluctant to accept this new translation." In actuality, it is being rejected by Lao believers in general, who say it is weak and difficult to comprehend.

LATVIAN

Part of the Bible was first published in Latvian in 1637. Johann Ernst Gluck (1654-1705) a Lutheran Pastor led the Reformation era effort to translate the Bible with Latvian. The NT was released in 1685 and the OT in 1689. He clearly used Received Text original languages and checked his work against the Lutheran Bible. He was financially supported in this effort by the King of Sweden.

The place where Gluck worked is now the Aluksne Bible Museum in Alukne, Latvia. This museum records the history of Bible translation in Europe. It is the only museum of its kind in Europe. His step-daughter became the wife of the Czar of Russia—Katherine the First. He moved to Russia dying in Moscow.

A "revised Text" translation was released in 1965 and is still available—The Izdevuma Revidetois Teksts. An ecumenical translation was released in 1997.

The Russian Bible Society (Ashville, NC) has a Latvian Bible available. They are not sure of its origin or derivation but it contains the verses normally omitted in a Critical Text Translation.

LITHUANIAN

The first complete Lithuanian Bible was published in 1735 in Karaliaucius, Lithuania. It was a Protestant translation based on traditional texts.

A charismatic group, The Word of Faith Bible Center, published a Bible in 1996. Their statement is that it was a revision of the 1735 Bible.

This Bible is made available by the Russian Bible Society. Missionary Ron Peldin has said: "This is the Bible that has been agreed upon by the independent Baptist national pastors, missionaries, missionary pastors, lay workers and the general public as the best translation currently available in the Lithuanian language."

LSIU

(Southwestern China, Northern Burma and Thailand)

In 1915 a Lsiu alphabet was developed by China Inland Missionary missionary James O Fraser. This alphabet was officially adopted by the Chinese government in 1992.

Fraser (1886-1938) was from Britain. He spent fifty years in Yunnan (southern China). In 1936 he and Allyn Cooke released a translation of the New Testament. The base text was the King James Bible. They compared their work with the first edition of Westcott and Hort (thus missing their textual sources).

In 1968, Allyn Cooke and Alan Crane released an Old Testament. The base text was the Revised Standard Version.

In 1976 Orville Carlson released a Lsiu translation from the King James Bible. It was published by the Trinitarian Bible Society.

In 1979 another Lsiu Bible was released by the Bible Society of Thailand. The New Testament was based on the United Bible Societies' third edition Greek New Testament. The Old Testament was based upon the New American Standard Bible and the New International Version.

A revision of the 1968 translation is underway.

MALAY

Dutch Protestant missionaries translated the Received Text into Malay in 1734.

It was replaced in 1929 by a Critical Text based translation. In 1971, an ecumenical translation was released. This was based upon Good News for Modern Man and translated upon principles of Dynamic Equivalence.

MALAYALAM

(Kerala, India)

German missionary Dr Herman Gundert (1814-1893) produced the first Malayalam grammar (1868) and dictionary (1872). He translated the Lutheran Bible into Malayalam. He was highly regarded as a linguist. A statue of him was erected in Tellicherry. Novelist Herman Hesse is his grandson.

MAORI (New Zealand)

The Maori language had never been placed in writing before the arrival of missionaries. A New Testament translated by William Yates was released in 1837. Under the leadership of Rev Maunsell, William Henry Williams and Elizabeth Colenso the entire Bible was printed in 1858. It was Traditional Text based.

In 1889 a Critical Text translation was released. It faced strong opposition from the national people.

MOHAWK (American and Canadian Indian)

The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel published a translation of the Bible into Mohawk in 1787. At that time their stated policy was to use the King James Bible as their source text.

The Bible was translated by missionary John Stuart and Mohawk Indian, Joseph Brant. Brant was a famous warrior (for the British) during the American War for Independence.

Captain John Norton, a Cherokee Indian, produced a Mohawk translation in 1804. It was the first non-English Bible ever printed by the British and Foreign Bible Society.

MARATHI (Maharashtra, India)

William Carey first translated the Bible into Marathi in the early 19th century. The Bible Society of India made a number of revisions.

Ratnakar Hasi Kelkar (1901-1985) translated the New Testament into Marathi. His work has been known for strong linguistic ability.

M S Mantode made arrangements to translate the Thompson Chain Reference Bible into Marathi. This necessitated translating the King James Bible into Marathi. The Bharatrya Suwarta Mission exists to promote this reference Bible. The mission can be contacted at arvindmantode@yahoo.com.

MONGOLIA

The Mongolia Bible Society has withdrawn from the United Bible Societies in protest over modernism in the United Bible Societies. They

are at work on a Bible translation to replace the current Critical Text United Bible Societies Bible. I have not been able to obtain any specific information on the specific base text or translation principles for this project.

A second Bible translation project in Mongolia is the Mongolia Mission team. This project involves two Baptist missionaries and four nationals working full time. They have a sound doctrinal statement.

The Mongolia Mission team makes this statement about their translation source: “The source of translation will be the King James Bible, known as the authorized version (AV). We consider this Bible to be the preserved Word of God in the English language. There are no experts in the Mongolian language and the Greek and Hebrew languages; however, they are skilled translators from English to Mongolian. Therefore, the decision was made to translate from the King James Bible as much as possible and within the limits of ability constant references will be made to Greek and Hebrew using available references and resources.”

Dr Charles Keen of First Bible International has announced that First Bible along with the Trinitarian Bible Society are sponsoring a translation in the Mongolian language. This project is supervised by missionary Bill Patterson. Missionary Roland Gay is in Mongolia heading up the translation effort there. They have released a translation of the Book of John.

MONTAGNARD

The Montagnard tribes exist in Laos and Vietnam. They were strong allies of the United States in the 1960s and 1970s. Christian and Missionary Alliance missionaries translated the Bible into their language in the 1930s. In 1975 the Communists ordered all copies of this Bible to be burnt! There are several Montagnard churches in the United States. The 1930s Bible is still printed on occasion for missionary distribution. We are not aware of any current availability.

MYANMAR **(Also Called Burma)** **The Judson Version**

This very helpful letter was sent by missionary Tom Gaudet:

Background: Like many others we assumed the Judson text of the Burmese New Testament, first printed in 1832, translated by A Judson, was translated from the Greek Textus Receptus. Because of the assumption that the text was reliable, only an abbreviated text check was made inside Burma with national pastors. This was an omissions check, designed to identify texts which have been translated with other than the Textus Receptus. Within the first couple of hours of working on this, we identified a small number of verses which had been translated from something other than the Textus Receptus.

Since the Bible being checked was the last printed by the Myanmar Bible Society, we assumed that there had been revisions on it, incorporating the readings of the Critical Greek Texts. Our research showed that there had been a revision in 1933 so that was where we started. We thought to go backwards until we found where the spurious readings were inserted. We located a Bible printed in 1907 and had it checked. Essentially the same changes were in that text.

Next we located an 1832 New Testament which would have been the first printed edition. That edition was checked and the same changes were in it. By this time we had ruled out someone else changing the text since Judson was very much alive when that New Testament was printed. He would have been the one who edited the New Testament he had finished in 1826.

After the first check, we had another more thorough check done on several hundred verses. Most of the verses checked were quite accurate, with only a handful of problem verses. This held true in the early as well as the more recent editions of the Bible. The same problem verses are in the earlier editions that are in the latter. We had verified that most other changes made in later editions did not indeed take into account Critical Text readings, rather than made spelling changes. A total of four editions of the Judson Bible were compared.

It was about this time that a researcher in America pointed out a book, *Memoir of Adoniram Judson Being a Sketch of His Life and Missionary Labors*, by J Clement, published in New York by C. M. Saxton, Baker & Co., 1860. A quote from that book on pages 237-239 cleared up a lot of the confusion.

“In the first edition of the Old Testament, I paid too much regard to the critical emendations of Lowth, Horsley, and others. In the present edition, I have adhered more strictly to the Hebrew text. In my first attempts at translating portions of the New Testament, above 20 years ago, I followed Griesbach, as all the world then did; and though, from year to year I have found reason to distrust his authority, still, not wishing to be ever-changing, I deviated but little from his text, in subsequent editions, until the last; in

preparing that which I have followed the text of Knapp, (though not implicitly), as upon the whole the safest and best extant; in consequence of which the present Burmese version of the New Testament accords more nearly with the received English.

“As to the merits of the translation, I must leave others to judge. I can only say that though I have seldom done anything to my own satisfaction, I am better satisfied with the translation of the New Testament than I have then ever expected to be. The language is, I believe, simple, plain, and intelligible; and I have endeavored, I hope successfully, to make every sentence a faithful representation of the original. As to the Old Testament, I am not so well satisfied. The historical books are, perhaps, done pretty well; but the poetical and prophetic books are, doubtless, susceptible of much improvement, not merely in point of style, but in rendering of difficult passages, about which of the most eminent scholars are not yet agreed.

“I commend the work, such as it is, to God, to the church in Burma, and to my successors in this department of labor, beginning them to spare my errors, and yet not prematurely to correct a supposedly era, without consulting the various authors which I have consulted, and ascertaining the reasons of my position; and especially not to adopt a plausible correction, in one instance, without inquiring whether it is admissible and advisable in all parallel and similar passages.

“In prosecuting the work, I have derived a valuable aid from several of my missionary brethren, especially from brother Wade formally, and Brother Jones, now of Bangkok—laterally from the brother and Mason, Comstock, and Stevens. Of the several hundred suggestions that have been sent me from different quarters, I have sooner or later adopted by far the greater part, though in many cases with some modification. Nor ought I to forget my native brother, Mong En, my faithful fellow-laborer for many years, even before the present revision was begun—one of our most judicious and devoted assistance.”

I am no Greek text expert but am told that even the Critical Text of Griesbach was actually based on the Textus Receptus. This explains the deviations where we found them, but overall the reading very accurate.

It will be necessary for a complete and thorough examination of the text to be done before anything to correct the problems. From what we have seen so far, it is estimated that over 90% of the text as it was last printed by the Bible Society is fine.

What to do for now? The Bible Society only publishes the Judson Bible sporadically. The indication that there were even any needs was that the brethren in Burma asked if there was any way that we could get Judson

Bibles for them. We checked with the Bible Society and indeed during those days there was no stock and no plan to reprint.

Only 5,000 have been printed by the Bible Society since that time. Of course, they push a common language Bible they are printing.

The plan that makes sense is to simply reprint the existing text to meet immediate needs. Indeed, BEAMS ministry has printed 10,000 copies of the Bible. We have obtained around 4,000 of these and most of them are in the hands of brethren in Burma. Literally many tens of thousands more are needed at this time.

As these are being printed and distributed, plans are underway to have brethren in Burma do a thorough examination of the text and identify the problem areas. We have not met any pastor inside Burma who realized the problems existed until they were pointed out. However, there is a multitude of men who are highly educated and only lack the encouragement to take this matter as their own. It will be Burmese brethren who correct these problems. We need to encourage and equip them.

NAGA (Northeast India)

In 1872, American Baptist missionary Edwin Winter Clark began to translate the Bible into the Ao language of the Naga people (they have other languages—this is often referred to as the “jungle language”).

He was aided by several nationals and by this wife, Mary. In 1929 they printed the New Testament. They translated from the King James Bible and used a literal translation method.

Later editions introduced Critical Text readings and dynamic equivalence.

This translation effort created a written language for the people of Nagaland.

NAMA (Nambia, Namabualand, Union of South Africa)

The first translation of the New Testament into the Nama language was done by German missionary, Johann Schmelen and his wife, Sara (a national). It was released in 1825.

Missionary G Kronlein (also German) undertook a new translation in the 1860s. By his specific statement his New Testament was based upon the Textus Receptus. He also consulted the German Lutheran Bible,

the King James Bible, the French Olivetan Bible and the Italian Diodati Bible. He also translated the Old Testament. His work was published by the British and Foreign Bible Society.

The currently published Nama Bible is a Critical Text based revision of Kronlein's work.

NAVAJO

A bilingual, Navajo-English Bible has been released by missionary Ron Corley.

Over 60 Navajo believers worked at translating the King James New Testament into Navajo. It was published by Bearing Precious Seed, Milford, Ohio.

Ron Corely can be reached at PO Box 747, Bloomfield, NM 87413.

NEPAL

David Cloud began a translation of the King James Bible into the Nepali in the 1980s. The New Testament is in its third revision. The Old Testament is nearing completion. Prior to the publication of this New Testament, there was no Received Text based translation in Nepali.

David Cloud gives this account of the Nepali translation.

January 14, 2009 (David Cloud, Fundamental Baptist Information Service, PO Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org).

From the time that we first arrived in Nepal in 1979, my wife and I had a burden to produce sound Bible literature in the Nepali language. There were no Bible study tools such as a concordance, Bible dictionary, or commentaries. We began looking into the possibility of making a concordance, but as we discussed the matter with Nepali pastors they were unanimous in the opinion that the Bible itself needed revision before a concordance was made. In the process of examining the Nepali Bible in 1979-80, I learned that it was based on the English Revised Version of 1885, that much of the language was seriously outdated, and that the translation overall was poor.

It was during the research that I learned about the textual side of the Bible version issue. I was particularly impressed with the books, *The King James Bible Defended*, *A Space-age Defense of the Historic Christian Faith* by Edward F Hills that I had picked up somewhere. The first edition of this was published in 1956. Hills had a doctorate in textual criticism from

Harvard, but he approached the issue from a Bible-believing, faith position rather than from the modernistic position of the fathers of textual criticism. I wrote to the address on the book hoping that I could communicate with him, but his widow replied and said that he had died earlier that same year (1981). She was very kind and gave me some copies of Hills' book for distribution in South Asia. Another man that helped me a lot in those days was Bruce Lackey. He was the head of the Bible School at Tennessee Temple when I was a student there, and he graciously answered many questions for me on the Bible version issue. I also corresponded in those days with David Otis Fuller. He kindly replied to each of my frequent letters and to the many questions I had on the issue. (Lackey and Fuller died the same year, in 1988.)

The most impressive thing I learned was the textual issue. I came to understand that the modern versions since the Revised Version of 1881 have been based on a Greek text that was invented through the 'science' of modern textual criticism and that favors manuscripts that originated in Egypt in the early centuries when it was a hotbed of theological heresy. The critical text shows clear signs of doctrinal tampering (we give more than 50 examples in our book, *Faith vs. the Modern Bible Versions*) and was not used by Bible-believing churches for 1,500 years of church history. It differs radically from the Received Text underlying the old Protestant versions.

After much prayer, I came to a conviction that the Received Text is the preserved Word of God and that the King James Bible is a lovely translation thereof in English, and I was very sad that no such translation existed in Nepali. The first missionary translations in South Asia (e.g. India, Burma) in the 19th century were based on the Received Text, but in the 20th century these were replaced by versions based on the critical text, the Bible Societies being the chief culprits in this change.

I discussed the issue with the head of the Bible Society of Nepal and showed him the materials that I was studying, and he gave me the impression that he, too, was convinced that we needed a new translation of the Nepali Bible that was different in character from the old. I was therefore shocked when I learned that even while he was discussing the issue with me, the Bible Society of Nepal was printing a 'common language' edition of the Nepali Bible based on the deeply corrupt Today's English Version (also called Good News for Modern Man). The chief translator of this version in English was a modernist named Robert Bratcher, a Southern Baptist missionary who does not believe that Jesus is God and has refused to give a testimony of his salvation in his seminars. Not only did he use the corrupt critical Greek text, but he also incorporated the 'dynamic equivalency'

method of translation that takes amazing and frightful liberties with God's words. He further sullied the Bible by changing the word 'blood' to 'death' in key doctrinal passages such as Romans 3:25. He corrupted practically every passage dealing with the deity of Christ. For example, in Philippians 2:6, the Today's English Version reads, "He always had the nature of God, but he did not think that by force he should try to become equal with God."

I was so disturbed about the new version that I published a pamphlet in Nepali to warn the Christians.

About this time a team of young evangelists from Switzerland arrived in the country. They drove overland from Europe in Mercedes trucks and were very enthusiastic. For their gospel literature distribution program they purchased a quantity of the new Nepali common language New Testaments. We met soon thereafter and they spent some time at our home in Kathmandu. When they told me about their goals, the issue of the new Nepali New Testament came up and I told them some of the things I had discovered in my research. They were shocked. They were so shocked, in fact, that they went back to the Bible Society man and asked for their money back. When he refused, they burned the copies, being convinced they were of the devil.

When this happened, we were in India getting new visas, and such a thing as burning Bibles (even corrupt ones) was something that had never crossed my mind. I had absolutely nothing to do with it, but the Bible Society head falsely blamed me without even talking to me about it. He got some of the ashes from the fire (allegedly) and photocopied a picture of them on a letter that he sent to all of the churches, claiming that 'David Cloud burned the Bible.' To this day there are people that believe this lie. Soon thereafter the Bible Society leader was at the forefront of an attempt to get us to leave the country. He and leaders of other organizations (including the Nepal Christian Fellowship, Campus Crusade, Youth for Christ, the Assemblies of God, and United Mission to Nepal) met together and formulated a letter charging me with 'dividing the body of Christ in Nepal' and demanding that we stop all our works and leave the country. So much for non-judgmental tolerance!

It was at that point that I knew that there was no hope that the Bible Society would produce a pure Bible for the needy people of that land, and I began to pray earnestly for God to raise up men for that work. I prayed for three years, and to my knowledge, I was the only person in the country that was seeking to do something about the need for a pure translation of the Nepali Bible. It was a lonely vigil. I prayed until I met a man named Daniel Rai. He was an evangelist with the El Shaddai group in Darjeeling, and I met him on one of his visits to Kathmandu. Upon our first meeting I was

impressed that he was the man for the Bible translation work, and I asked him to pray about it. I also gave him materials on the Bible version issue to help him understand the textual issue and the fact that the existing Nepali Bible was corrupt.

There are three major qualifications for Bible translation work. The man must know Christ savingly and be Spirit-filled, he must be equipped educationally; he must understand and be committed to godly principles of Bible translation. I was convinced that Daniel was such a man. He had been a school teacher before God called him into evangelism. I was so burdened about the translation that I made a long, difficult trip all alone from Kathmandu to the border of Bhutan to meet Daniel and try to impress him with the urgency of such a project.

The trip was by bus, jeep, taxi, rickshaw, and foot. It began with an overnight bus trip across the mountains from Kathmandu to the southern part of Nepal. It is only 50 miles as the crow flies, but requires many hours on a bus because of the steep mountains and treacherous roads. The buses are ill-maintained, to say the least, often with bald tires and bad brakes. The roads are barely wide enough for two vehicles to pass, and the one on the outside is dangerously near the edge of a sheer precipice. When maneuvering a hair pin turn, the drivers take the middle of the road and there is always the danger of meeting another bus coming full bore down the steep mountain, also taking the middle. Such journeys are made worse by the screechy Indian cinema music that blares out of cheap speakers, by the constant swaying and shaking from the monster potholes, by the overcrowded conditions (not only with people but also goats and chickens), and by the smell, which is a mixture of vomit, diesel fumes, and the stench of long unwashed bodies and cheap tobacco. And the drivers drink.

Daniel was preaching in Bhutan and I could not enter the country because of visa restrictions, but I got someone from his church to fetch him to the border, where I met him one evening in a small room lit by a kerosene lantern. I begged him to pray seriously about the possibility of giving himself to the task of Bible translation, and he asked me to talk to his church leaders. The senior elder was his father-in-law, Brother Fudong, so I went to Kalimpong and met with him and other leaders of El Shaddai and poured my heart out to them. (I also went to Darjeeling on that trip and purchased a batch of Christian literature to use in our correspondence course ministry, and I was miraculously able to bring them through the customs shed at the eastern border of Nepal even though such a thing was illegal then.)

The result was that Daniel had peace about the project and his leaders gave him permission to come apart from his other responsibilities in order to

pursue this new vision. He moved to Kathmandu in 1984 with his family and began the work.

I laid out the principles of translation as follows, and Daniel agreed to them. They were first printed on March 22, 1984.

1. Our goal is to produce a standard Nepali Bible with notes and cross references, plus a companion concordance and dictionary.
2. The new Nepali version will be based upon the King James Version and other accurate translations of the Textus Receptus, with reference to the original languages when necessary. Translations have been made into Hindi and Bengali from the Textus Receptus. These languages are kin to Nepali and will be helpful, especially Hindi.
3. The exact meaning of the original must be preserved.
4. Account must be given to every word and to the smallest detail of the original.
5. Even the sentence construction of the original should be maintained when possible.
6. If the translator feels a passage or word of the original will not be understood, he must use explanatory footnotes rather than change God's words.
7. As far as possible, the translation should be majestic in its reading.
8. The translation will be reviewed from three main angles—accuracy (the primary consideration), readability, and understandability. We want to use the simplest Nepali words possible which express the exact meaning of the original language, but we will not sacrifice accuracy for the sake of understanding. When it is not possible to find a Nepali wording which does justice to the original, we will use Hindi or Sanskrit. Footnotes will be used for explanations. We are preparing a Nepali Bible dictionary which can help define any difficult or non-indigenous words used in the translations.

Eventually Thomas Kaufmann joined the Bible translation project and was a major contributor. Other Nepali men also helped, but Daniel and Thomas were the main translators. The first edition of the New Testament was printed in the 1990s. As of this writing (2008) the Old Testament is nearing completion. Many things have happened to slow the work down, including sickness and the death of Daniel's wife, not to speak of demonic oppression and various strange troubles that are always a part of such a venture.

This New Testament is far from perfect. In fact, it needs a lot of future revision, but it is textually sound and is a good foundation for others to build upon. Daniel and Thomas have labored in the heat of the day and given the Nepali people a great treasure. They are true pioneers. Those who

Forever Infallible and Inerrant

follow and revise their work are traveling a road that has already been well prepared and is therefore much easier trod. The trees have been cut down, most of the stumps removed; the rivers bridged.

The perfecting of the English Bible took 200 years (from Wycliffe's version of 1380 to the King James of 1600).

The Trinitarian Bible Society produced a Nepalese New Testament, Psalms and Proverbs based upon a revision of David Cloud's work. The main translator is Thomas Kaufman who lives in India. He and the TBS share the copyright. They print in India and have one distribution in Nepal.

The Jagerna Translation Project is producing a Received Text Translation of the Bible in Nepali. It states: "It is crucial that an accurate translation of the Holy Bible in the common Nepal tongue be produced—a translation that unerringly mirrors the Scriptures as originally inspired by God, faultlessly preserved with historical continuity in the context of Bible-believing Christianity, and clearly manifested in the English authorized King James Bible. The Nepali people deserve the option of a pure Bible in their common tongue."

They can be reached at jboyd@fpgm.org.

NORWEGIAN

The Norwegian AV Bible was published in 2000. Morten Gjemlestad and Tom Vandenberg led the translation effort with help from Norwegian and Danish men and American missionaries.

Dr Howard Nelson of Scandinavians for Christ was instrumental in supporting this project. The base source text was the King James Bible. It was compared diligently with old Danish Bibles. It is published by some of the Bearing Precious Seed branches.

OJIBAWA

(Chippewa—American Indian)

The American Bible Society released a translation of the Bible in the language of the Ojibawa in 1845. It was translated by Rev H H Spaulding. At that time the policy of the American Bible Society was that all translations must be made from the Received Text and must conform to the King James Bible. Mr Spaulding issued a revision in 1883.

OROMO
(Also Called Northern Galla)
Ethiopia, the Sudan

Onesimus Nesib (1850-1931) translated the Bible from the Amharic language into Oroma. He was a former slave who had been purchased and set free by the Swedish Evangelical Mission. He was aided by Aster Ganno, a young, female ex-slave.

The translation was released in 1893. It is credited with destroying polygamy and slavery among the Oromi people and creating a written language for the Oromi people.

This translation was used for over 100 years. It was replaced in 1997 by a Critical Text translation from the Bible Society of Ethiopia. This was replaced in 2006 by another Critical Text translation.

PATOIS

Also known as Patwa Jamaican Creole or Jamaican.

The Bible Society of the West Indies is sponsoring a translation of the Bible into the Patois language—the language developed by the Jamaican slave culture of the 17th and 18th centuries. The project is expected to take 12 years and cost \$60 million dollars. Many in Jamaica oppose the translation because virtually everyone in Jamaica speaks English and Patois is considered “slang”. Some are concerned that Patois is such a limited language that much Bible truth cannot be accurately translated into this language. Bruce Goldberg, the Prime Minister opposes the project on the grounds that it detracts from the proper grasp of English. Several English translations serve as the source text for the translations.

OSSETIAN

In 1848 a Bible was translated into Ossetian. The source text was the Russian Synodal Bible. It is available from the Russian Bible Society.

PEQUOT

The first Bible printed in the United States was the 1663 translation by John Eliot into the language of the Pequot tribe. He first had to put the Pequot language into writing. He translated from the Received Text.

Thousands of Pequot Indians made professions. Since 1887 the language has been dead—no living person still speaks it.

PIDGIN

Papua, New Guinea is one of the most unique and diverse countries that can be found in the world. Papua, New Guinea is a conglomeration of peoples and cultures located just north of Australia. Papua, New Guinea has a population of more than 4 million and has between 700 to 800 tribal languages—almost 1/5 of all the languages in the world. Pidgin is one of the main languages known throughout the islands.

A New Testament translation of the English King James Version into the Pidgin language was done by a group of missionaries and nationals in Papua, New Guinea. Missionary Scott Carrier was instrumental in the translation process.

A bilingual Pidgin and King James Bible is available. This may be obtained from some Bearing Precious Seed branches.

POLISH

In 1632, the Gdansk (Danzig) Bible was produced by Polish Protestants. The primary translator was Daniel Mikolajewski. It was clearly a Received Text Bible. It is still being published in Poland and is often called the Old Gdansk Bible.

Missionary Brent Riggs has produced a New Testament based upon the Old Gdansk Bible. It is still in the purification process. This New Testament does not take the Verbal Plenary Translation approach that the William Carey Bible Society endorses. He can be reached at Brent Riggs mitexas@yahoo.com The NT has been printed and is now available.

The Trinitarian Bible Society of England also has a Polish New Testament in print. This was first published in 1830.

Missionary Joe West is working on an update of the old Polish Bible. He can be reached at jnwest@webmedia.pl.

PORTUGUESE

A Biblia Sagrada—Almeida Corrigida—Fiel (ACF). Translator: Joao Ferreira de Almeida. The New Testament was completed in 1679. Old Testament, Genesis through Ezekiel 41:8, before his death in 1691. The whole Bible was completed by Jacobus Op den Akker (1753).

Translated in Indonesia where Almeida fled to escape the Inquisition, working with the Portuguese colony there, and supported by the Dutch Reformed Church. It was based on the Hebrew Masoretic and Greek Textus Receptus, using formal equivalency method of translation.

Trinitarian Bible Society of London printed the Almeida New Testament in 1837 and the entire Bible in 1847 but ceased printing in the 1940s when orthographic revision became necessary and two Brazilian organizations began publishing. Doctrinally conservative Brazilians became alarmed that undue modifications had been made in the text, further radical changes were underway, and the two publishers declared they held the copyright and would not permit any other organization to print the Bible. Thus, the Sociedade Biblica Trinitariana do Brasil was formed in 1968, in cooperation with Bearing Precious Seed, to resume the work of TBS of London and guarantee publication of the Almeida translation in the most exact text possible. Since its first printing (New Testament, 1976; entire Bible, 1994; further corrections, 2007), the ACF has been considered by friend and foe the most accurate in the Portuguese language.

The Bible may be obtained wherever Portuguese Bibles are sold, or through Trinitarian Bible Society, Tyndale House, Dorset Road, London SW19 3NN, England, telephone: 011-4420-8543-7857, e-mail: trinitarian.bible.society@ukonline.co. Website: www.trinitarianbible.org.

Various Bearing Precious Seed groups print and send ACF Bibles to missionaries and pastors of their groups.

Some serious Bible scholars believe that there are still some Critical Text readings in this Portuguese Bible and that a final purification process is needed.

PUNJABI

One of the major Indian languages (covering the border region of India and Pakistan) Punjabi is now the fourth most common language in Canada. In 1815, William Carey was the editor for a team that translated the New Testament into Punjabi. Various portions of the Old Testament were translated by later missionaries associated with Carey's mission. The entire Bible was published in 1852. In 1868 the Bible was published in Gurmulshi Punjabi. This was the same language as Punjabi but with a

different script. This was the script of the Sikkh people. This Bible was revised in 1949. It is often called the old Punjabi Bible and is still available today. This work was supervised by a national leader in the Anglican Church, Chandy Ray. It is not clear what source text was used in the work. In 2007, a “Easy to Read Version” was released. It is clearly Critical Text.

ROMANIAN

Fidela, a Romanian translation from the Received Text has been done by a group of Romanian men from a church in Romania. Missionary Brian Nibbe is leading the translation effort. Their statement for the Received Text is crystal clear.

New Testaments can be obtained from Bearing Precious Seed chapters. Brian Nibbe can be contacted at bjnibbe@aol.com or at Misiunea Baptista Internationala Romania, Filiala Cluj-Napoca, Str. Livezeni, Nr.—12, 400229, Cluj-Napoca, Romania. Also involved in the Romanian project is Pete Heisey poheisey@gmail.com.

The entire Fidela Bible is now available in Romanian. These testimonies are given to this Bible. A Romanian Baptist pastor said: “I really like the FIDELA Bible, it reads perfectly. I used to preach on the street using the Cornilescu translation and nobody ever bothered me. Since I switched to the FIDELA people spit on me, hit me, yell at me and oppose me. I wonder if it is because the FIDELA is the Bible and the Cornilescu is something else?”

A Romanian pastor of a Baptist Union Church said: “The FIDELA Translation as a whole is excellent...I can hardly wait for it to be printed!!!”

A Romanian teacher said: “The grammar is excellent. It is the best Romanian I have read in any Bible. Anyone who says that it is not excellent Grammar has a hole in his head.”

Veteran independent Baptist missionary Jim Morgan writes: “Since I arrived in Romania in 1995 we have had to use a Bible that was based on the critical text (Cornilescu). The Fidela Cluj translation is a TR and Masoretic based translation. I have been using the Fidela Cluj New Testament for about 4 years and I am looking forward to having the whole Bible for our Church soon (possibly next week). I am behind this translation 100%. There is some opposition to it. Even from Independent

Baptist Missionaries that don't want to rock the boat. The biggest opposers are the major evangelical denominations (Baptist Union, Pentecostal, Brethren, etc.)”.

Also we received this encouraging note about the Fidela Bible from missionary Patrick Boyle: “We are using the FIDELA translation of the Bible. We know Bro Nibbe well and support his work. There are a few areas we have disagreed on in cases where he corrected the KJV with the Greek. The difference between the Cornilescu (a paraphrased CT translation) and the FIDELA is incomparable! The Fidela Bible is translated from the Textus Receptus and reads like the KJV 99% of the time. Our people began using the NT when it came out 1 year ago. We have been looking forward to the completion of the OT!”

The opposition to Traditional Text Bible Translations is the same everywhere. So is the challenge that the Lord has given us to reach the whole world with the pure Word of God.

The Russian Bible Society is now printing the Fidela Translation.

Bro Nibbe reports the Fidela Bible is still being very well received.

ROMANSCH (Switzerland)

A Romansch New Testament, translated from the Received Text, was released in 1648. An Old Testament was released in 1718.

RUNYANKORE (Uganda)

Missionary Dan Olachea is working on a Received Text Bible in the Runyankore language.

He describes the translation effort this way:

Believing that God is the One who must work through us to do this work, we have a prayer chain going on in Africa and in America with multiple churches. We use a report form to keep these churches informed of our progress and what specific areas of prayer are needed.

The translators are all Banyankore men. They are nationals who live here and work within the local church. Two of the men are pastors of the churches in the villages here, one is starting a church in a village, and the other three are active in their local church.

Forever Infallible and Inerrant

The translation is done verse by verse from the Greek using the translation worksheet to parse the Greek words and to bring a literal translation. The parsing is done mainly by means of Perschbacher's analytical concordance of the Greek New Testament. The men use other reference works as well to understand the Greek, including the King James Bible to arrive at the nearest formal equivalent word in Runyankore.

They will then work with the literal translation to bring a natural translation while retaining the Greek word and format as much as possible in the native language. The work is recorded on the translation record as to the translator and the dates of translation.

On the worksheet a second translator will go through and check the work of parsing to make sure there are no clerical errors that would have come into the text. On the second check another translator will make sure that the form of the Greek word as indicated has been brought into the receptor language correctly and that the final text includes each detail of the Greek. The worksheet then goes to a committee who will review the entire process again to make sure the Greek has been followed as well as possible.

The text is then typed and sent out with three of the men who will review it for comprehension with four people in their respective villages. These reviews are brought back and examined to find any areas of misunderstanding or problems. The review techniques include having the person restate the verse in their own words, having the person read the passage aloud and marking any areas where they stumble or hesitate, asking questions about the passage, and letting the person proofread the passage themselves.

The text is then back-translated for checking against the King James and for translation consultants.

RUSSIAN

The Russian Synodal Bible is often called the standard Received Text Bible in Russian.

It was translated between 1813 and 1855 by four Russian Orthodox theological academies. Several historical references say that they specifically rejected the Septuagint and Slavonic translations to use the Masoretic Text and the Textus Receptus. It was revised in 1876.

This Bible can be obtained from the Russian Bible Society, PO Box 6068, Asheville, North Carolina 28816, (828) 681-0371.

According to its newsletter: "The Russian Bible Society has been at the frontline of providing Bibles for Russia and its people since 1944. We

believe that the greatest gift we can give to any people is the pure Word of God in their native tongue. Therefore, we are committed to continually providing word-for-word translations based on reliable manuscripts, such as the Received Greek Text.”

The Synodal Bible is also available from the Trinitarian Bible Society. However, there are several reasons to question the Traditional Text nature of the Synodal Bible, especially the 1876 Revision. It is clear that the 1876 Revision was greatly influenced by the Septuagint.

Also, several independent Baptist preachers believe that unsound translation principles were used in the Synodal translation. They believe that Orthodox theology of salvation by works has been inserted into passages that teach salvation by faith.

Missionary John O’Brien states, “Our church plants include a statement regarding the Textus Receptus and the fact that while the 1876 Synodal does not constitute the inerrant Preserved Word of God in Russian, it “is” however the very closest “at this time” in both its text base as well as in its translation method.”

Missionary Perry Demopolis and several national Ukrainian preachers (many Ukrainians use the Russian Bible) have completed a new Russian New Testament. They have met weekly for over ten years. They are proofreading their work now.

They have used the King James Bible as their base. According to the newsletter of missionary Demopolis, they do so because of the advanced revelation that they believe is contained in the King James Bible.

SAMOAN

Samoan is the language of Western Samoa. Samoa is a group of islands in the South Pacific Ocean, about one-half of the way from Hawaii to New Zealand and has a population of more than 200,000. Over 93% of this population speak Samoan and world-wide there are more than 425,000 Samoan-speaking people.

The Samoan New Testament was translated in the mid-1800s by missionaries from the London Missionary Society. The translation was done from the Textus Receptus and was first published by the British and Foreign Bible Society.

SETSWANA
(Also Called Tswana and Botswana)
Zimbabwe, South Africa

Missionary Robert Moffatt (1820-1870) spent fifty years in the town of Kuruman. His daughter Mary married fellow missionary, David Livingstone. The church that he pastored is still in existence.

In 1826, Moffatt produced the first spelling book in Setswana. In 1838, he printed a New Testament in Setswana (the first purely African language to have printed Scriptures). In 1854, he released the Old Testament. The printing press used in these printings is still in use at the church.

Moffatt turned Setswana into a written language.

In 1857, the Wooley revision of Moffatt's work was released. It is still in print.

In 1970, a Critical Text Bible, the Central Version, was released.

SHONA
(Zimbabwe)

Missionaries Bill and Janet Eubanks report that they are working with a Revised 1949 Shona New Testament. The King James Bible is the basis for the revision.

SIANG
(Indonesia)

Duane and Chrislei Cleghorn are on deputation raising support to go as missionaries to Indonesia. One of their goals is to translate the Bible into the Siang language. Their source text will be the King James Bible.

SINASINA
(New Guinea—Simbu Province—Highlands)

Missionary Charles Turner spent thirty years with the Sinasina people in New Guinea. He translated the New Testament into their language. He used the Textus Receptus and the King James Bible as base texts.

He completed a revision in 2009. He can be contacted at 518-642-0578.

SINHALI **(Ceylon, Sri Lanka)**

The first dictionary for the Sinhali language was produced by Protestant missionaries in 1892.

Missionary Charles Henry Carter (1828-1914) was a Baptist missionary to Ceylon. He was fluent in several languages including Greek and Hebrew. He devoted himself to learning Sinhalese and was later called by the Anglican Primate of India as “the foremost Sinhalese scholar of this age.”

Carter translated the Bible from the Traditional Greek and Hebrew texts. The New Testament was released in 1861 and the Old Testament in 1881. He revised both and released the revision in 1914. A 1938 revision is still in print and is often called the Old Version.

In 1982, a Critical Text based New Version was released. In 1990, it was replaced by the Revised New Version. In 2007, this was replaced by the New Revised Version.

The Old Version is still used by many evangelical churches.

SLOVENIAN

Lutheran theologian Juriz Dalmatin translated the Bible into Slovenian. His work was released in 1584. It was printed in Germany and smuggled into Slovenia. This Bible standardized the Slovenian language.

This was a Received Text translation from Greek and Hebrew. It was influenced by Luther’s German Bible.

A copy of the Slovenian Traditional Text Bible has been located by Norman Johnston. Plans are being made to put it into print.

Rok Banko is doing a new Slovenian translation based on the King James Bible and the Traditional Text. He has finished Matthew and most of Mark. He can be reached at rokbanko@gmail.com.

The Slovenian Standard Version (1996) is a “meaning-based” translation based upon the Critical Text.

SORIANI **(Kurdish, Syria, Iraq, Iran)**

There has never been a Soriani Old Testament of any kind. Faithful, underground believers have produced a New Testament which they print

privately. This should not be confused with the International Bible Society New Testament, which is Critical Text and based upon dynamic equivalency.

SPANISH

Cassiodore Reyna produced a predominately Received Text Spanish Bible in 1569. Cypriano de Valera revised it in 1602. They did not have the opportunity to gather teams of scholars as was done in Protestant countries. Roman Catholic persecution hindered their efforts.

Beginning in 1865, the American Bible Society began to produce revisions of the Reina-Valera. The first edition of 1865 was an improvement upon the 1602 revision of Valera, however, it still contained several departures from the Received Texts as well as some translational issues. Since the 1865 edition, each new revision departed further away from the Received Text. By 1960, the Reina-Valera was mixed with many Critical Text errors.

In the late 1990s, Humberto Gomez, a Mexican missionary and church planter, began to work on restoring a Received Text version of the Reina-Valera. He used the Received Text and checked every translation with the time-honored King James Bible.

Rather than having a translation committee, he invited input from everyone. He received input from hundreds of sources and he served as the editor.

In 2004, the Reina-Valera Gomez was released. The purification process continues as Dr Gomez welcomes input from everyone. Dr Gomez may be contacted at: humberto__gmz@yahoo.com.

Several William Carey Bible Society board members were involved in encouraging this process.

The Grace Bible Baptist Church of Santa Catarina, Nuevo Leon, Mexico has also produced a Received Text based Bible. Under the leadership of Pastor Raul Reyes and missionary Bill Park, they have worked for several years on this project. It is known as the Antigua Valera 1602—Purified. Missionary Park and Pastor Reyes are no longer working together. Each appear to be distributing this Bible. For more information contact Pastor Raul Reyes at gracia209@hotmail.com. Promoters of this version have hurt its credibility with wild attacks on the RVG. There is no resemblance between their fantastic rumors and the truth.

SRANANTONGO (Suriname)

Missionary Bob Patton began a project to translate the Received Text into Sranantongo in 1991. He was aided by seven national helpers. It was completed in 1998. It is the best selling Bible in Suriname. He can be reached at bobpatton@sr.net.

Missionary Patton states:

Dear Dr Stringer, I thought I would drop you a note concerning my story of translation, hoping that it might prove helpful in the future. As a small child, I accompanied my missionary parents to China just before World War II. We were interned in a prisoner-of-war camp in the Philippine Islands for over three years. At age 11, after being in the United States a few years, I believed that the Lord would have me to be a medical missionary to Africa. I proved an excellent student in Science and Math, but not outstanding in languages. While in college, I had to take the elementary course in French followed by two additional years; as I had taken only Latin in high school. Language was OK, but certainly not my best area.

Through scholarships I went to college, and then with more scholarships graduated from medical school with honors. This was followed by eight additional years of graduate training in internal medicine and cardiology, culminating in becoming a board certified internist.

We then went to Liberia, West Africa, where I was professor of medicine under USAID. I set up a successful program over five years, and was decorated for my work by the Liberian government. During our time in Liberia, I was saved. I returned to the United States in private practice in a Christian group, giving up my academic career in teaching medicine. I joined an Independent Baptist Church, was involved as a bus captain, counselor, taught the adult Sunday School class, was deacon chairman, and then was called to Suriname in 1986.

In Suriname, we were confronted with two languages, Dutch, the language of education and Sranantongo, the common language of the people we were working with. I taught in the medical school part time to keep a presence in the medical area to be able to work in church planting and medicine in the interior. I worked on both languages and started a church during our first five years. I was frustrated while training nationals because the only Bible we had was the New Testament and Psalms done about 1820, with a lot of language changes since. I had decided to retire from medicine when I reached age 60 (I was age 53) and start translating. The Lord had different ideas.

Through a sickness, the Lord made it clear that I should retire at age 53, giving up medicine totally, which was a very difficult decision for me. Instead of teaching medicine, I started translating the Bible mornings, and continued the church planting work the rest of the time. That year we also started a radio ministry (now 22 broadcasts weekly on 4 stations), a Bible Institute, initially using Dutch while awaiting Sranantongo, now 18 years old with about 65 graduates, started a second church with a national pastor (now 4 with 10 pastors), and started translating the Bible.

The first problem was what text to use. I was not trained in Greek or Hebrew. After studying the text issue, I decided that I must use the King James Version although my former pastor in the United States was a strong advocate of the Critical Text. However, the Lord arranged that a number of our supporting churches were strong King James Version churches.

The use of the King James Version was difficult in Suriname after I assembled a team of seven nationals to help me (I also received some helpful assistance from fellow missionaries as they were able). The nationals would tend to initially use Dutch as their text base, which was the NGB translation from the Critical Text, rather than the King James Version in English. It was only years later that I discovered the Stantenvertalling, which is the Dutch equivalent for the King James Version. However, after I showed them the difference in the text, they did follow the King James Version successfully, although English was their third language.

About three months after I started work, I discovered that SIL had just decided officially to translate the entire Bible, and not just the New Testament. When I went to them, I found out that they were using the New International Version in English as their base text (not the Greek Critical text). They gave me a 500-page plus text from Eugene Nida who promulgated dynamic equivalence. And I had on my team a key lady who had previously worked for SIL, but she had started attending our church, and was saved. She was an invaluable help.

My national team was otherwise mostly pastors or pastors in training. I would make a rough translation, and two would correct it. I would incorporate their corrections, and pass it to a second team of two, who would then correct the corrected copy. This was repeated a third time. Before translating, I would read a commentary or two to make certain that I was not giving some “off the wall” idea and look up Greek or Hebrew words as necessary to get a better grasp of the meaning of the words. Following this process, in three years, we had completed the entire Bible. We then spent another four years cross-checking it, working on consistent spelling (there is not an established spelling which is accepted by everyone in Sranantongo), working on accuracy, smoothness and clarity.

Because Bearing Precious Seed ministry came out of one of our supporting churches, their ministry covered the cost of the first printing. My sister-in-law asked me what I would be doing about layout (computers were just developing), and offered to do the entire Bible free of charge as a service to the Lord. She did layouts for books as a side job, and did a superb job for us. In 1997, we were done, and in 1998, the Bibles were printed and in Suriname.

Initially our translation was not accepted by the Suriname Bible Society. However, we received help from the local Baptist book store owner, who was willing to take the brunt of distribution despite opposition, and has become a close friend.

Results: We are now in our third printing after having sold out the first two printings of 5,000 copies (Suriname is a small country). The Sranantongo Bible is now the best-selling Bible in Suriname in any language, including Dutch. The SIL New Testament was completed about 3 to 4 years later, and was written more in the style of “the man on the street.” They had a big initial promotion, and nearly sold out their stock of 10,000 New Testaments the first night. However, virtually no one uses the translation any more. SIL is still working on the Old Testament in 2009, but it is not complete.

Since this report, a fourth printing of 10,000 has been done.

SWAHILI

The Swahili language was first put into writing by missionaries who wanted to translate the Bible into Swahili. Portions of the New Testament, translated by William Taylor, were published in 1889. This was clearly based upon the Traditional Text.

In 1909 the Church Missionary Society published the whole New Testament. In 1914, they published the whole Bible. It is hard to find out the textual basis for these translations.

The Union Swahili Bible was published in 1952. It is clearly a Critical Text Bible.

For the past ten years a man by the name of Allen Lear has been working on a translation based upon the TR. He was born in England and married a missionaries' daughter. They have spent time in Africa and both are fluent in Swahili. About Mr Lear's qualifications, I will let Mr Lear speak for himself.

I am truly thankful to God for his help and guidance in my life. While living in Africa, God gave my wife and me a strong and growing love for the African people and country. God also gave me a strong desire for them to

have a Bible translated into their own language that was as accurate as possible, translated from the original words of God. The desire for accuracy was enhanced by scientific and other training, which the Lord enabled me to do. I am thankful to God that He has enabled me to obtain a Master of Health Science Degree (MHS), and Master of Arts in Translation Studies (MA) (TS).

May of 2009 Mr Lear passed on to heaven but not without having the John and Romans finished and printed by some of the Bible printing ministries in the US. Other missionaries have checked his work and they have given positive response to its accuracy and faithfulness to the TR. He has finished other books of the NT but they are in handwritten form. There is another missionary that has stepped forward desiring to finish the New Testament translation.

SWEDISH

In 1540-41, the Gustavus Vasa Bible was published in Sweden. It was named after the reigning king. It was printed in Upsala and is sometimes known as the Upsala Bible.

This Bible was translated by Laurentius Petri, Laurentius Andrae and Claus Petri. All three were Lutheran preachers. It was clearly translated from the Received Text and referenced to the Lutheran Bible. It was revised in 1618, but with the same textual basis.

P Marion Simms (*The Bible in America*, 1936, p 107) wrote about the 1618 Upsala Bible: “This remained the standard church Bible of Sweden for almost 400 years, or until 1917.” He has said that this Bible, “occupying the place in Sweden, that the King James Version occupied among English-speaking Protestants.” This Bible is still in print, along with many later unreliable revisions.

Bro Hagstedt writes this about the Swedish Reformation Bible Society Project.

We are happy that also Christian brothers in the United States would like to get information about our project.

Since 1994 we are working with a new translation to Swedish. Our Bible Society is using the Greek text “Textus Receptus” for the New Testament and we revise the old Swedish Bible Carl XII's Bible from 1703, which is a translation of Luther's Bible. But when there are differences we are following Textus Receptus. But the King James Version is also a very important translation which we use to compare in the New Testament. We

finished the New Testament in 2003 and if you are interested you can download this translation free, without cost from our homepage www.bibel.se.

In the Old Testament it is different. We cannot follow the old Swedish Bible because they have sometimes followed the Septuagint and many times Latin Vulgate Bible. So we are making a translation of the King James Bible. Now we have finished the five books of Moses. These books can also be found on our homepage and it's possible to download them without cost.

We have between 15-20 people who have worked with this project. Mostly we work free of charge. That is the reason that the whole Bible will not be finished soon.

If you would like to inform others about this project, we will be happy. We need much prayers.

They can be reached at post@bibel.se.

TAGALOG (Philippines)

Tagalog is the most common of several Filipino languages.

Missionary Roger Riley led a team of national pastors in producing a New Testament in Tagalog, (*Ang Bagong Tipan*). According to their statement, "It is taken from the Textus Receptus manuscripts using the King James Bible 1611 as a proof of text from one language to another." Missionary Riley has the copyright to this New Testament. It is printed by some of the Bearing Precious Seed chapters.

However, even the translators do not recommend the use of this New Testament. They state that this text was simply a rough draft and was published long before it was ready.

TAHITIAN

Henry Nott arrived in Tahiti from England in 1797. He and other missionaries spent years trying to master the language and put it into writing. Some missionaries were killed and others fled. Nott published the book of John in 1818. The New Testament was published in 1829, the complete Bible in 1838. Nott used the King James Bible as a textual base.

TAIWANESE (Min Nan Chinese)

Early Dutch missionaries brought the Dutch Bible to Taiwan in the 1600s. Nationals were taught Dutch by the missionaries.

Scottish missionary, James Laidwell Maxwell produced a Traditional Text Min Nan New Testament in 1873 and an Old Testament in 1884. He was a medical missionary and the first missionary to Taiwan from the English speaking world.

This translation was revised by Thomas Barclay (New Testament, 1916; Old Testament, 1933). The Barclay revision is still in print and used by Taiwanese evangelicals.

An ecumenical translation was released in 1973. A 2008 translation of the New Testament was based upon Today's English Version and dynamic equivalency.

TELEGU (India)

Telegu is one of the sixteen different official languages of India. In 1993 Indian national Joel Scripalli led a team of several nationals in a translation of the New Testament. Their textual base was the King James Bible. Their work was completed in 2003.

According to Dr Solomon Saripalli, translators are currently working on Old Testament. Their New Testament is published by some Bearing Precious Seed chapters.

A Telegu translation of the Bible was released by associates of William Carey in 1854.

The Telegu Bible in common use among evangelicals is based upon the Critical Text and was heavily influenced by the New International Version.

TENЕК (Mexican Tribe)

Missionary Fernando Angles is working on a translation of the New Testament in this tribal language. He is aided by several national Tenek speakers. The work is based upon the Greek Received Text and is checked by Ross Hodsdon of Bibles International.

THAI

Philip Pope (BIMI missionary to Thailand) began translating the Bible into Thai in 1983. The project was printed in 2003. He used the King James Bible and the Received Text as his base.

His translation is officially known as the Thai Bible, King James Version. It is available from several Bearing Precious Seed sources, and it can be downloaded from several sites on the internet.

He can be contacted at philippope@thaipope.org.

TONGA

Tonga is a Polynesian language. Missionary John Thomas arrived there in 1826. He printed a translation of the Bible into Tongan in 1837. According to the Journal of John Thomas, his translation work was based upon the Traditional Text. Thomas was a Wesleyan missionary. Soon there were a number of Wesleyan churches on the island.

Missionary James Egan Moulton (1845-1909) released a new translation of the New Testament. It was based upon the work of Westcott and Hort. At first Wesleyan headquarters (in New Zealand) rejected the translation and Moulton had it printed privately. Eventually denominational headquarters was persuaded to adopt this translation as the official one for the churches in Tonga.

Several pastors protested out of loyalty to the Traditional Text.

Eventually the king, George Tupon, declared that the churches in Tonga were free from control outside the country. Two denominations developed—one using the Thomas Bible, the other the Moulton Bible. The two denominations eventually merged—with the understanding that congregations could use either Bible.

Both Bibles are in print today but the Moulton Bible is in more common use. In 1966 it was revised. According to the introduction, the revision was based upon the principles of translation taught by Eugene Nida.

TURKISH

The first Bible in the Turkish language was translated by Wojciech Babowski (1610-1675). He was a Polish slave being held in the Ottoman empire. He was also known as Ali Ufki. He was also a prominent

musician. His handwritten manuscript was stored in a library until it was published in 1821. Ali Ufki knew 16 languages. He clearly used the Received Text.

A new Turkish Bible was published in 2002.

William Goodall worked on a Turkish Bible in a different dialect, Turko-Armenian. He translated from 1823 until 1833. It was also Received Text. It was revised in 1868 and 1878.

Another Turkish Bible was translated and released by 1901. This was in “Greco-Turkish”—a compilation of modern Greek and Turkish. This was Received Text based. In 1941, the American Bible Society revised this Bible with many Critical Text readings.

History of Bible Translation in Turkey:

Imagine a population of, say, English, Greek and Egyptian communities who all speak English (though with a range of vocabulary and dialect) but who write it using their own separate scripts. Imagine, further, that some of the English people want to embellish their literary and official writing with French and German vocabulary and stylistic devices. How would you set about preparing a new translation of the Bible for them all?

Ottoman Turks for the most part wrote a Turkish that was interspersed with Arabic words for religious purposes and Persian for literary finesse. Armenians and Greeks, on the other hand, who had been absorbed so fully into the Turkish empire that they had lost the use of their mother tongues, spoke versions of Turkish but wrote it in their own national scripts without any particular literary interest. How could Bible translation work accommodate this range of Turkish used in speech and writing? Would one translation be intelligible to everyone? What script(s) would you use? At what ‘level’ would you try to pitch the version?

1600’s: A Dutch ambassador at the Sultan’s court persuaded a Polish slave there known as Ali Bey to translate the Scriptures into Turkish. That translation was unused in Leyden University until an Englishman Dr Pinkerton, asked a Turkish-speaking Russian called Baron von Dietz to work on it in Berlin. The Baron was elderly and died before he could finish.

1821: First Bible Published. Scholars were raised up from outside Turkey and in the 19th century, Jean Daniel Kieffer, a Frenchman took up

the baton; and a translation of the Bible was published in 1827 by the Bible Society.

1843: Armeno-Turkish Bible. In 1823 an American called William Goodell arrived in Beirut and started work on another translation (Turkish in language, Armenian in script), producing a New Testament in Malta in 1831. He then went to Constantinople, where he finished the Bible, in spite of losing all his dictionaries, grammars, commentaries and manuscripts in the great fire of 1833.

1862: 2nd Turkish translation of Gospels and Acts. Moslem Turks became interested in the Scriptures of the ‘infidels’ because of Anglo-French support in the Crimean war, an interest which provoked a search for a more accurate version of the Bible than Kieffer’s. A German scholar-missionary called William Schaffler, who had been in Turkey for 25 years, worked on a fresh idiomatic, producing the four Gospels and Acts in 1862.

1878: 2nd Turkish Bible. In 1878 a Dr Pratt did start work in Constantinople on producing a version in Turkish characters of Goodell’s Armeno-Turkish Bible. There were ideas of combining the work of these two scholars but it came to nothing so the Bible Societies established a committee of translators with gifted Turkish advisors to try to produce a Turkish rendering intelligible to all Turkish speakers. They started in 1873. The work of the committee was greatly eased by major political changes. The bloodless revolution of 1876 that put the liberal Sultan Murad on the throne provided an opportunity for language reform and a brief lifting of censorship. Written Turkish became clearer and bolder, the work of the committee was intense and rapid, and in five years a fresh Turkish version of the Bible had been produced (1878).

1901: Major revision. 3rd version. There was still a third version to absorb, however, the Greaco-Turkish version which Henry Leevess had been instrumental in first producing. By 1901 this version and the 1878 version had been combined into yet another translation, which had about 25 years to run before major changes were forced on the Bible Societies.

1941: Current version. In 1923 Ataturk started on his reform programme, seeking to restore the Turkish language to something of its pristine nature, give it its own phonetic script, and rid it of eastern influences. Clearly the Bible had to be produced in this renewed Turkish language, and so it was, through the work of Dr Frederick MacCallum,

and his son Lyman, in 1941. Turkish believers read it still. This is called the old Turkish Bible.

2002: New version. A Critical Text based Bible is now being promoted by the ABS and UBS Bible Societies.

URDU (Pakistani)

Henry Martin translated the New Testament into Urdu. It was published in 1814 by the British and Foreign Bible Society. An Old Testament was released in 1870. These translations are still used by evangelicals today.

A John-Romans Urdu printing is made available by Local Church Publishers. This is an 1837 revision of the 1816 Martyn translation.

A Critical Text Urdu Bible was released in 2004.

Raheel Shakeel (Pakistan rakeel@cleargospel.org) is heading up a project to provide a Received Text Urdu Bible.

UKRAINIAN

The people of the Ukraine have often used Russian Bibles. The first Ukrainian Bible was published in 1581. It is known as the Ostrog Bible. It was sponsored by Prince Konstantin Ostrogski (hence the name).

According to Wikipedia, the Ostrog was unique among Slavonic church translations because it was not based upon the Received Text. It was translated from the Greek Septuagint.

In the 1860s, a Ukrainian Bible was produced from the Received Text. The project was led by Panteleymon Kulish.

By 1962 the standard Ukrainian Bible was a Bible Society Bible translation based on the Critical Text.

In 1992, the Baptist Union produced a new translation. This translation corrected many of the mistakes of the 1962 translation, but not all of them.

Yura Popchenko is a national Ukrainian married to an American, Wendy. He is heading up a new translation project in the Ukraine. He makes this statement about the text.

We believe that the Bible is the verbally inspired and infallible, authoritative Word of God and that God gave the words of Scripture by

inspiration without error in the original autographs. We believe that God had promised to preserve His Word and that He has kept that promise by preserving His infallible Word in the Hebrew Masoretic Text and the Greek Textus Receptus and that the King James Version is an accurate English translation of the preserved Word of God.

To get ready for this project, Yura studied Biblical languages in Russian universities (such training was not available in the Ukraine). The Popchenko family is sponsored by the Bible Baptist Church of Marysville, California. They have an excellent website entitled, "Translating the Bible into Ukrainian."

VIETNAMESE

The earliest Bibles in Vietnamese were Catholic Bibles.

The first complete Protestant translation of the Bible came in 1926. It was translated from the Chinese language by missionaries William and Grace Cadman.

In 1954, the British and Foreign Bible Society released a translation of the Bible into Vietnamese from the King James Bible. It is often called the Old Vietnamese Bible or the Vietnamese Bible of 1952. It was the standard Bible of the Protestants and Evangelicals.

Several Catholic and ecumenical translations have been released, including a revision of the 1926 version done by the United Bible Societies.

A translation of the New International Version is being prepared.

WARAY

Waray is one of many languages found throughout the islands of the Philippines which are located between the Philippine Sea and the South China Sea, east of Vietnam. There are more than 76 million people in the Philippines, most of whom claim to be Roman Catholic. Of this population there are more than 2.4 million Filipinos who speak Waray-Waray.

A group of Filipino pastors in northern Samar have translated John and Romans into this language. They are continuing to work on the New Testament. They are led in this work by missionary Layne Jones.

XHOSA **(South Africa)**

The Xhosa language was first placed in writing by missionaries.

Under the leadership of Albert Kropf and John Appleyard a written language, grammar and dictionary was produced. A Received Text Bible was released in 1859.

A Critical Text Bible was released in 1889.

YIDDISH **(Eastern Europe, Russia, Israel, the United States)**

Yiddish is the language of the Ashkenazi Jews of eastern Europe. It is a combination of German, Hebrew and Slavic.

The first two Yiddish Bibles were released in 1678 and 1679. One was released by Uri Foyvesh Halevi. It was heavily based upon the Traditional Text Dutch Bible and the Traditional Text German Bible. The second was based upon the Traditional Text Dutch Bible. The chief translator was Isaac Blitz.

Since many Bible terms did not have a Yiddish equivalent, Dutch words were inserted.

Joseph ben Alexander Witzzenhausen released a translation at about the same time. It was also heavily influenced by the Dutch Bible.

YORUBA **(Nigeria)**

Samuel Ajayi Crowther (1807-1891) was the first native African to translate the Bible into an African language.

In 1821, he was sold into slavery but was eventually rescued by the British and sent to Sierra Leone. Three years after his freedom he trusted Christ. He later wrote: “about the third year of liberation from the slavery of man, I was convinced of another worse state of slavery; namely that of sin and Satanism.”

He returned to Nigeria and produced a dictionary that turned Yoruba into a written language.

He spent many years translating the New Testament from the Received Text into Yoruba. His translation was compared to the King James Bible as a check for accuracy. He later translated the Old

Testament from the King James Bible into Yoruba. The entire Bible was released in the 1880s.

“The quality of Crowther’s translation was acknowledged even by his critics and the Yoruba Bible has won universal approval by the Yoruba themselves for communicating the message of the Gospel and starting a literary tradition and in effect initiating a renaissance of the language.” (Jacob F Ajayi, Henry Martyn Lecture).

His Bible translation was known as Bibeli Mimo. A revision was released in 1886.

In 2008, the Bible League released a revision that they state is based on Crowther’s original work.

ZULU **(South Africa)**

Missionaries turned Zulu into a written language for the purpose of Bible translation. The first translator, Bishop Colenso, stated that the experience led him to deny the inspiration of Scripture and to embrace modernism.

In 1883, a Zulu Bible was released. The translation effort was led by William C Wilcox. He began the project in 1845. At the time of the release, very few Zulus could read.

The original edition of 1883 was at least primarily Traditional Text. Subsequent revisions have introduced many Critical Text readings.

PART IV

Apologia

A PLEA FOR A PERFECT BIBLE

Jeffrey Khoo

The Bible controversy today is hotting up. The controversy ironically involves the simple question of whether the Church today has a perfect Bible. Fundamentalists today cannot agree on this very basic question. The issue concerns the biblical doctrine of verbal plenary preservation.

VPI and VPP

King James Version (KJV) fundamentalists who affirm the *verbal plenary inspiration* (VPI) of the Bible, and believe in a perfect God who has given His Church a perfect Hebrew and Greek Text underlying the King James Bible are being labelled “extreme” and “dangerous” by non-KJV fundamentalists. Since when has believing in a perfectly inerrant Bible in the original languages ever been considered such? Are 21st century fundamentalists recanting their belief in verbal and plenary inspiration that their 20th century forebears fought so hard to define and defend against the modernists? These Neo-fundamentalists are saying: We had a perfect Bible then, but we do not have a perfect Bible now! The danger in fundamentalism today is the failure among fundamentalists to affirm the *verbal plenary preservation* (VPP) of the Scriptures.

Apparent Discrepancies or Scribal Errors?

Anti-VPP fundamentalists would deny that God’s people today have the perfect Word of God. According to them our Bible today contains scribal errors. However, such errors are so insignificant that they do not affect the spiritual truths taught in the Scriptures. This sounds rather neo-evangelical, doesn’t it? Anti-VPP fundamentalists appear to be quite sure that 2 Kings 8:26 (Ahaziah is 22 years old) and 2 Chron 22:2 (Ahaziah is 42 years old), and 2 Sam 8:4 (700 horsemen) and 1 Chron 18:4 (7000 horsemen) are *true contradictions or errors*. Although some might concede that the reformers “are quick to consider many of these

contradictions as merely apparent” (which is my view for “it is not improbable to reconcile the apparent contradiction between 2 Kings 8:26 and 2 Chron 22:2 by explaining that prior to his official reign at the age of 42, he might have co-reigned with his father at the age of 22,” and as for 2 Sam 8:4 and 1 Chron 18:4, it might be explained that one counted them one-by-one, and the other group-by-group, and so both figures could be correct), they prefer not to see them as apparent discrepancies but “scribal errors.” If they are indeed scribal errors, surely there must be manuscripts that reflect the correct reading. Surely God could not have possibly allowed the corruption to be so devastating that not a single manuscript would reflect the autographal reading.

Anti-VPP fundamentalists say they are able to correct the errors found in our present Bible by a collation of various manuscripts. But where are the manuscripts? Why did the Masoretes—the keepers of the purity of the OT Scriptures—refuse to correct these “scribal errors?” Was Jesus wrong when He said that the Hebrew Scriptures the Jews had at the time when He was on earth, which were not the autographs, were word perfect to the jot and tittle (Matt 5:18)? Interestingly, the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* lists no variants. If this is the case (ie, there are no extant manuscripts that reflect the correct reading), then they could be *actual and factual* errors committed by the original inspired writers and not necessarily scribal, could they not? Is this not a serious problem? Would this not lead to a denial of VPI?

Anti-VPP fundamentalists ape the neo-evangelicals when they say that it is of no consequence whether such discrepancies are simply scribal errors or true factual errors since they are so “minor;” they deal with numbers, names, dates, and places, and hence do not affect our salvation since the gospel is not impaired by such “errors.” Is this correct thinking? I submit that if they proceed with this line of thinking and of judging the Bible, crying “error, error, error” here and there, they are no better than the neo-evangelicals who say that our Bible is only inerrant in a limited sense (see “Discrepancies in Scripture,” in *The Battle for the Bible* by Harold Lindsell, 161-184).

The Autographa Not Lost

No one denies that scribal errors were committed during the work of copying Scripture. But the question is: Did God allow any of His inspired words in the autographs to be lost during this transmission process?

Although the Church does not have the autographs (the very first scripts) today, she has the apographs (copies) which reflect the autographs. Providentially speaking, the autographs were *neither lost nor destroyed*.

Was God careless in preserving His Scripture? Can He even allow “minor” corruptions? 17th century theologian—Francis Turretin—wrote, “It will not do to say that divine providence wished to *keep it free from serious corruptions, but not from minor*. For besides the fact that this is gratuitous, it cannot be held without injury, as if lacking in the necessary things which are required for the full credibility of Scripture itself. Nor can we readily believe that God, who dictated and inspired each and every word to these inspired (*theopneustois*) men, would not take care of their *entire* preservation. If men use the utmost care diligently to preserve their words (especially if they are of any importance, as for example a testament or contract) in order that it may not be corrupted, how much more, must we suppose, would God take care of his word which he intended as a testament and seal of his covenant with us, so that it might not be corrupted.” Turretin does not deny scribal errors in the *copying process* but he says that “even if some manuscripts could be corrupted, *yet all could not*.”

By faith, we believe in God’s promise that He will allow none of His words to be lost. Ps 12:6-7 says, “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.” Jesus declared in Matt 24:35, “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my *words* shall not pass away.” In Matt 5:18. Jesus promised, “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.”

Closest and Purest

There are some other fundamentalists who believe that the purity of the Scriptures has been purely *maintained*, but not finally *attained* in the Traditional Hebrew Masoretic Text and Greek Textus Receptus underlying the KJV. The Dean Burgon Society statement which declares that “the Texts which are the *closest* to the original autographs of the Bible are the Traditional Masoretic Hebrew Text for the Old Testament, and the Traditional Greek Text for the New Testament underlying the King James Version.” They take the word “closest” to mean that the

Hebrew and Greek Scriptures that underlie the KJV are *not completely inerrant* since they contain so-called “scribal mistakes.”

It must be clarified that the word “closest” in the Dean Burgon Society statement does not at all mean that we have an errant text or that the text is not the same as the original writings. The Dean Burgon Society statement must be understood in the *context* (ie, the battle against Westcott and Hort) in which the statement was phrased. Westcott and Hort had puffed up their cut-up Greek text as being closest to the original since they based it on the 4th century Alexandrian manuscripts, which Dean Burgon had dismissed as “most corrupt.” The term “closest” seeks to *correct and counteract* Westcott and Hort’s view on the identity of the true text. The term “closest” also distinguishes between the autographa (past and “lost”) and the apographa (present and existing). VPP fundamentalists do not deny that the autographa and apographa *though distinct are the same*. The *paper* may be different, but the *contents* are the same.

The word “closest” should be interpreted to mean “purest.” Dr D A Waite, President of the Dean Burgon Society, likewise understands the statement to mean “that the *words* of the Received *Greek* and Masoretic *Hebrew* texts that underlie the *King James Bible* are the very *words* which God has *preserved* down through the centuries, being the exact *words* of the *originals* themselves.” This declaration is entirely consistent with the fundamental doctrines of VPI and VPP.

Such a high view of Scripture grants believers *maximum certainty* with regard to the authenticity of the inspired words of Scripture. And such certainty can only be had if the doctrine of the special providential preservation of the Scriptures is upheld. Dr E F Hills wrote, “if we believe in the special providential preservation of the Scriptures ... we obtain *maximum certainty*, all the certainty that any mere man can obtain, all the certainty that we need. For we are led by the logic of faith to the *Masoretic Hebrew text*, to the *New Testament Textus Receptus*, and to the *King James Version*.”

Does the Lord want His people to be certain about His inspired words? Listen to what the Lord says, “Have not I written to thee excellent things in counsels and knowledge, That I might make thee know *the certainty of the words of truth*; that thou mightest answer the words of truth to them that send unto thee?” (Prov 22:20-21). Be sure of this: God

wants us to have certainty concerning His words, and we can be certain of God's words only if we apply the logic of faith consistently.

Which Textus Receptus?

If there exists a perfect TR, then which of the many editions of the TR is perfect? It must be affirmed that all the editions of the TR being from the pure stream of God's preserved text are *pure*, no doubt about it. But which is the *purest*? It is the TR underlying the KJV. Dr Hills takes the same view concerning the KJV and TR. Hear Dr Hills himself, "The texts of the several editions of the Textus Receptus were God-guided. They were set up under the leading of God's special providence. Hence the differences between them were kept down to a minimum. ... But what do we do in these few places in which the several editions of the Textus Receptus disagree with one another? Which text do we follow? The answer to this question is easy. We are guided by the common faith. Hence we favor that form of the Textus Receptus upon which more than any other *God, working providentially*, has placed the stamp of His approval, namely, the King James Version, or more precisely, the Greek text underlying the King James Version."

Like Dr Hills, we believe that all the TR editions are pure, but there is one that is purest—the one underlying the KJV. Dr Hills said that the King James Version "ought to be regarded not merely as a translation of the Textus Receptus but also as an independent variety of the Textus Receptus." Is not the Greek Text underlying the KJV the Textus Receptus? Whose TR? Not completely Erasmus's, Stephen's, or Beza's, it is *a new edition* of the TR which reflects the textual decisions of the KJV translators as they prayerfully studied and compared the preserved manuscripts. According to the Trinitarian Bible Society, "The editions of Beza, particularly that of 1598, and the two last editions of Stephens, were the chief sources used for the English Authorised Version of 1611. ... The present edition of the *Textus Receptus* underlying the English Authorised Version of 1611 follows the text of Beza's 1598 edition as the primary authority, and corresponds with 'The New Testament in the Original Greek according to the text followed in the Authorised Version,' edited by F H A Scrivener."

Special Providence Not Static But Dynamic

It ought to be noted that God's providential preservation of His Scripture is ***not static but dynamic***. The deistic heresy that God inspired His Word but did nothing to preserve it must be rejected. Dr Timothy Tow rightly said, "If Deism teaches a Creator who goes to sleep after creating the world is absurd, to hold to the doctrine of inspiration without preservation is equally illogical ... inspiration and preservation are linked one to another. Without preservation, all the inspiration, God-breathing into the Scriptures, would be lost. But we have a Bible so pure and powerful in every word and it is so because God has preserved it down through the ages."

I believe God providentially guided the KJV translators to produce the purest TR of all. The earlier editions were individual efforts, but the TR underlying the KJV is a corporate effort of 57 of the most outstanding biblical-theological, and more importantly, Bible-believing scholars of their day. And as the Scripture says, "in a multitude of counsellors there is safety" (Prov 11:14). The KJV translators had all the various editions of the TR to refer to, and they made their decisions with the help of the Holy Spirit. I believe the Lord providentially guided the King James translators to make the right textual decisions. As such, I do not believe we need to improve on the TR underlying the KJV. No one should play textual critic, and be a judge of God's Word today. *God is His own Textual Critic*. I accept God's special providential work in history during the great 16th Century Protestant Reformation.

Why the TR Underlying the KJV?

Now the question remains: Why the TR underlying the KJV and not Luther's German Bible, or the Spanish Reina Valera, or the Polish Biblia Gdanska, or the French Martin Bible, or some other language Bible? Now we do not deny there are faithful and reliable versions that are accurately translated and based on the TR, nor do we discount the need for foreign language Bibles, but here is Dr Hills's reply to the question: "God in His providence has abundantly justified this confidence of the King James translators. The course of history has made English a world-wide language which is now the native tongue of at least 300 million people and the second language of many millions more. For this reason the King James Version is known the world over and is more widely read than any other translation of the holy Scriptures. Not only so, but the

King James Version has been used by many missionaries as a basis and guide for their own translation work and in this way has extended its influence even to converts who know no English. For more than 350 years therefore the reverent diction of the King James Version has been used by the Holy Spirit to bring the Word of life to millions upon millions of perishing souls. Surely this is a God-guided translation on which God, working providentially, has placed the stamp of His approval.” This is in keeping with Jesus’ words, “Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit ... Wherefore *by their fruits ye shall know them*” (Matt 7:17-20).

I believe the purity of God’s Word has been *faithfully maintained* throughout the whole transmission of the Traditional/Byzantine/Majority/Received Text, and is *fully represented* in the Apographa of the Hebrew Masoretic Text for the Old Testament and the Greek Textus Receptus for the New Testament underlying the KJV. So I agree with David W Cloud, in his paper quoting E F Hills, that “the KJV is accurate in all textual matters, *and if there is a difference between a KJV reading and any certain edition of the Received Text, we follow the KJV*” (ie, the TR underlying the KJV). I also agree with Dr Hills who warned, “We must be very cautious therefore about finding errors in the text of the King James Version, and the same holds true also in the realm of translation. Whenever the renderings of the King James Version are called in question, *it is usually the accuser that finds himself in the wrong.*”

A Virtual Photocopy

As regards the Traditional Hebrew and Greek Scripture underlying the KJV being a “virtual photocopy” of the original, G I Williamson did write to this effect in his commentary on the *Westminster Confession* concerning preservation, “This brings us to the matter of God’s ‘singular care and providence’ by which He has ‘kept pure in all ages’ this original text, so that we now actually possess it in ‘authentic’ form. And let us begin by giving an illustration from modern life to show that an original document may be destroyed, without the text of that document being lost. Suppose you were to write a will. Then suppose you were to have a photographic copy of that will made. If the original were then destroyed, the photographic copy would still preserve the text of that will *exactly the same as the original itself*. The text of the copy would differ in no way whatever from the original, and so it would possess exactly the same ‘truth’ and meaning as the original. Now of course photography was not

invented until long after the original copy ... had been worn out or lost. How then could the original text of the Word of God be preserved? The answer is that God preserved it by His own remarkable care and providence.”

Concerning what the Westminster theologians meant when they declared that the Hebrew OT and the Greek NT “being immediately inspired of God, and by His singular care and providence kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentical,” we have another commentary from Prof William F Orr of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary who wrote, “this affirms that the Hebrew text of the Old Testament and the Greek of the New which was known to the Westminster divines was immediately inspired by God because it was *identical* with the first text that God had kept pure in all the ages. *The idea that there are mistakes in the Hebrew Masoretic texts or in the Textus Receptus of the New Testament was unknown to the authors of the Confession of Faith.*”

Biblical Basis

So does the Church have a perfect Hebrew and Greek Bible today? Yes, indeed she does. Based on what? Based on God’s promise that He would preserve every one of His words to the jot and tittle (Exod 32:15-19, 34:1-4; Pss 12:6-7, 78:1-8, 105:8; 119:89,111,152,160; Prov 22:20-21; Eccl 3:14; Jer 36:30-32; Matt 4:4, 5:18, 24:35; Mark 13:31; Luke 21:33; John 10:35; 1 Pet 1:23-25; Rev 22:18-19).

Some may say that this belief on biblical preservation is a result of “circular reasoning.” Indeed it is. On what basis does the Church believe in VPI? Is it not on the testimony of the Bible itself (2 Tim 3:16, Matt 5:18)? “God says it, I believe it, that settles it.” Circular reasoning or *a priori* reasoning is not illegitimate. It is fallacious only when the premise to begin with is false. If I reason, “I am perfect because I say I am,” it is fallacious because the presupposition is utterly untrue (Rom 3:4-23). If God says of Himself, “I am perfect because I say I am,” that is absolutely true. Why do we believe God has preserved His Word and words perfectly? It is simply because God has promised to do just that in the Scriptures cited above. We simply take God at His Word because God cannot lie (Num 23:19).

Do we know everything that went on in the transmission of the text? No, we do not. But God knows; He knows everything and we believe He knows what He is doing. For instance, we were not there when God

created the world. We did not see His work with our own eyes. When Science contradicts what the Bible says concerning origins, who are we going to believe? Science or the Bible? We believe the Bible. Heb 11:3 says, “Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.” Faithfulness to God and His Word demands that a Christian believe in a perfect God who has given His Church a perfect Bible. Biblical epistemology is not “seeing is believing,” but “believing is seeing.”

Canonisation and Preservation

Is there a historical precedent that tells us that God’s providential work can involve a closure, a terminus? The answer is yes. All the inspired NT books were completed by AD 100 when the Apostle John wrote the last book of Revelation, and God warned against adding to or subtracting from His Word in Rev 22:18-19. However, we know that in the first few centuries, there were uninspired men who penned spurious gospels and epistles, and passed them off as Scripture. Some of these were the Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Nicodemus, the Epistle of Barnabas, etc. Nevertheless, none of the inspired books of Scripture have been lost or obscured in the canonical process. By the providential guidance of the Holy Spirit, God’s people were led to identify the 27 books to become our NT Canon, no more, no less. There was a terminus to the canonisation of Scripture at the Council of Carthage in 397.

In like manner, the Lord allowed copyist errors and corruptions to enter into the transmission process through the pen of fallible scribes. Nevertheless, His providential hand kept His inspired words of Scripture from being lost. In light of God’s providence, that nothing happens by chance, and that history is under His sovereign control, I believe that in the fulness of time—in the most opportune time of the Reformation when the true church separated from the false, when the study of the original languages was emphasised, and the printing press invented (which meant that no longer would there be any need to handcopy the Scriptures thereby ensuring a uniform text)—God restored from out of a pure stream of preserved Hebrew and Greek manuscripts, the purest Hebrew and Greek Text of all—the Text that underlies our KJV—that accurately reflects the original Scriptures.

That the providential preservation of Scripture sees its historical parallel in the providential canonisation of Scripture was Dean Burgon's thinking as well. Dr Hills wrote of Burgon: "Burgon ... never lost sight of the special providence of God which has presided over the transmission of the New Testament down through the ages, expressly set out to maintain against all opponents that the Church was divinely guided to reject the false readings of the early centuries, and to gradually accept the true text. He denied that he was claiming a perpetual miracle that would keep manuscripts from being depraved at various times, and in various places. But 'The Church in her collective capacity, has nevertheless—as a matter of fact—been perpetually purging herself of those shamefully depraved copies which once everywhere abounded with her pale' (*The Revision Revised*, 334-5). He believed that just as God gradually settled the *Canon* of the New Testament by weaning His churches from non-canonical books, so He did with the *Text* also."

A Perfect Bible Today!

What kind of Bible do fundamentalists have? Do they have a perfect Bible? The VPP fundamentalist would say yes, but the anti-VPP would say no. Make no mistake about it, both claim to believe in VPI, but despite this, anti-VPP fundamentalists say they do not have a perfect Bible. Is this biblical? Is this logical? Is this safe? Anti-VPP fundamentalists say that God's preservation of His Bible is *imperfect*. They say God did not preserve His words, only His doctrines; it is conceptual, not verbal preservation. What? Ps 12:6-7, Matt 5:18, and Matt 24:35 tell us explicitly that God will preserve His "pure words," and every "jot and tittle" of His "words." Did not the Lord convey His doctrines through words? Without the words, where the doctrines?

Dr Hills sounded a pertinent warning, "Conservative scholars ... say that they believe in the special, providential preservation of the New Testament text. Most of them really don't though, because, as soon as they say this, they immediately reduce this special providential preservation to the vanishing point in order to make room for the naturalistic theories of Westcott and Hort. As we have seen, some say that the providential preservation of the New Testament means merely that *the same "substance of doctrine"* is found in all the New Testament documents. Others say that it means that the true reading is always present in *at least one of the thousands of extant New Testament*

WHAT KIND OF BIBLE DO YOU HAVE?

The Perfection of the Bible: Three Views

	NOT PERFECT <i>Not Perfect Then & Now</i>	NOT SO PERFECT <i>Perfect Then Not Now</i>	ALL PERFECT <i>Perfect Then & Now</i>
THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL	Liberalism/Modernism, Neo-orthodoxy	Neo-evangelicalism, Neo-fundamentalism	Biblical & Reformed Fundamentalism
DESCRIPTION OF THE BIBLE	Bible <i>is not or becomes</i> the Word of God	Bible <i>contains</i> the Word of God	Bible <i>is</i> the Word of God
VIEW ON BIBLICAL INSPIRATION	Human or Non-miraculous inspiration	Divine inspiration only in Autographs	Divine inspiration in Autographs & faithful Apographs
VIEW ON BIBLICAL PRESERVATION	Denies preservation of words & doctrines	Denies preservation of words / Affirms preservation of doctrines	Affirms preservation of both words & doctrines to the jot & tittle (VPP; WCF 1.8, Matt 5:18)
AUTHORITY	Science Alone	Science plus Bible	Bible Alone (<i>Sola Scriptura</i>)
EPISTEMOLOGY	Intellect not Faith is supreme (See to believe)	Faith subjected more to the Intellect than to the Bible (See to believe)	Faith and Intellect totally subjected to the Bible (Believe to see)
VIEW OF BIBLICAL INFALLIBILITY & INERRANCY	Denies both infallibility & inerrancy	Denies inerrancy / Affirms infallibility (ie, limited inerrancy)	Affirms both infallibility & inerrancy to the jot and tittle (VPI)
ARE THERE MISTAKES / ERRORS IN THE BIBLE?	Full of mistakes, with all kinds of factual discrepancies & actual contradictions	No mistakes only in spiritual matters but not in science, history, geography where discrepancies are actual or factual errors	No mistakes or errors at all, and any discrepancy is only apparent
CHOICE OF ORIGINAL GREEK TEXT	Westcott-Hort Minority & Critical Text Only	Westcott-Hort Minority & Critical Text is Superior	Textus Receptus (Received Text) Only
POSITION ON BIBLE VERSIONS	Only Liberal, Ecumenical, Roman Catholic, Feminist versions acceptable	All versions acceptable whether corrupt or not	Only KJV acceptable since it is the best (most accurate, faithful & reliable)
CHOICE OF BIBLE VERSIONS	RSV, NRSV, TEV/GNB, TNIV	NIV, NASB, NKJV, ESV	KJV Only
TRANSLATION METHOD	Dynamic Equivalence (Contextualisation)	Dynamic Equivalence (Thought for Thought)	Formal Equivalence (Word for Word)
PROPOSENTS	Metzger, Aland, Nida, Martini, Wikgren, UBS, WCC, SBL	Lewis, White, Kutilek, Carson, Wallace, Price, Hudson, IBS, NAE, ETS, BJU, CBTS	Burgon, Hills, Otis Fuller, Waite, Cloud, Paisley, Morris, PCC, TBS, DBS, McIntire, ICCB, BPC, FEBC

manuscripts. And still other scholars say that to them the special, providential preservation of the Scriptures means that the true New Testament text was providentially *discovered in the mid-19th century by Tischendorf, Tregelles, and Westcott and Hort* after having been lost for 1,500 years.

“If you adopt one of these false views of the providential preservation of Scriptures, then you are logically on your way toward *the denial of the infallible inspiration of the Scriptures*. For if God has preserved the Scriptures so carelessly, why would he have infallibly inspired them in the first place? It is not sufficient therefore merely to *say* that you believe in the doctrine of the special, providential preservation of holy Scriptures. You must *really* believe this doctrine and allow it to guide your thinking. You must begin with *Christ and the Gospel* and proceed according to the logic of faith. *This will lead you to the Traditional text, the Textus Receptus, and the King James Version*, in other words, to the common faith.”

God forbid that we should ever make this anti-biblical statement: “The Bible contains mistakes and errors but they are so small and so minor they should not cause us any worry.” If the Bible contains error, no matter how small or minor, I worry! “For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all” (Jas 2:10). If a person says he believes in a perfect Bible, and yet denies just one verse, yea even a jot or tittle, he is guilty of denying all of the Bible. Jesus warned, “But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea” (Matt 18:6).

I believe in a perfect God who has given us a perfect Bible. “*Yea, let God be true, but every man a liar*” (Rom 3:4)! Since God said it, that settles it, and my duty is simply to *believe it!* This kind of faith ought to be instilled in every Christian. We need to cleave on to the very words of God and never doubt the veracity of His words! No one has all the answers. God has all the answers, and sometimes He allows false prophets (like Westcott and Hort with their Accursed Text), and false doctrines (like limited inerrancy and imperfect preservation) to come into the scene in order to test whether we love Him or not (Deut 13:3, Ps 139:21-22). Would we doubt or question Him, or would we trust and obey His every word no matter what man may say? “Man shall not live

by bread alone, but by *every word* that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matt 4:4).

Instead of the rationalistic approach that begins with the opinions of man and then work backwards to the truth of God, which confuses it, we ought to take the faith approach. That is why Hills warned that if we do not really apply the logic of faith consistently and allow it to reach its logical conclusion, we would end up ultimately denying the very Word of God itself. It is thus no surprise that anti-VPP fundamentalists are prepared to call what are apparent contradictions in the Bible “errors.” In denying VPP they effectively deny VPI as well. They are not able to say they have a perfect Bible.

Can we afford to believe in a Bible that is less than perfect? If God is incapable of giving us a perfect Bible, what makes us so sure that He is capable of preserving our salvation to the very end? We are thrown into all kinds of doubts. If we doubt our Bible, we might as well doubt our salvation (cf 1 Cor 15:14-19). If we as biblical fundamentalists are unwilling to affirm that we have a perfectly flawless Bible *today*, something is seriously wrong somewhere! *Absolute and unquestioning faith in God’s infallible and inerrant Word is the only solution!* “The law of the LORD is *perfect*, converting the soul” (Ps 19:7).

Affirmation of VPI and VPP

It is absolutely vital for those who love God and His Word to affirm the twin doctrines of VPI and VPP. Here is a summary statement of my faith in a perfectly inspired and preserved Bible today:

- (1) I do affirm the biblical doctrine of providential preservation that the inspired words of the Hebrew OT Scriptures and the Greek NT Scriptures are “kept pure in all ages” as taught in the Westminster Confession.
- (2) I do believe that “the Texts which are closest (ie, purest) to the original autographs of the Bible are the Traditional Masoretic Hebrew Text of the Old Testament, and the Traditional Greek Text for the New Testament underlying the King James Version.”
- (3) I believe that the purity of God’s words has been faithfully maintained in the Traditional/Byzantine/Majority/Received Text, and fully represented in the Textus Receptus that underlies the KJV. Providential preservation is not static but dynamic.

Forever Infallible and Inerrant

- (4) I do believe that God's providential preservation of the Scriptures concerns not just the doctrines but also the very words of Scripture to the last jot and tittle (Ps 12:6-7, Matt 5:18, 24:35, Mark 13:31, Luke 21:33, Rev 22:18-19).
- (5) I do not deny that other faithful Bible translations, including foreign language ones, that are based on other editions of the Textus Receptus can be deemed the Word of God.
- (6) I do believe in the verbal plenary inspiration and total inerrancy of Scripture. I do not believe there are any scribal errors in our present Bible, and any alleged errors are only apparent and not errors at all.
- (7) I do not believe we need to improve on the TR underlying the KJV. I do not want to play textual critic, and be a judge of God's Word. I accept God's special hand in His providential work of perfect Bible preservation during the Reformation.

MY REPLY TO JAMES D PRICE’S REVIEW OF “A PLEA FOR A PERFECT BIBLE”

Jeffrey Khoo

Preamble

Dr James D Price of Temple Baptist Seminary has written a review of my paper “A Plea for a Perfect Bible” as published in *The Burning Bush* (January 2003, www.febe.edu.sg/burningbush.htm). His paper has been disseminated via email by anti-preservationist advocates in Singapore who hail him as one of their champions. Knowing the anti-KJV-only and pro-Westcott-Hort inclination of Price, it is only expected of him to be biased against my paper in defense of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures underlying the KJV.

Price is Not for the KJV-Alone Stance of ____ Church

I am quite sure that Price would criticize the ____ Church Statement of Reconciliation of January 5, 2003—that the KJV is “the very word of God, and fully reliable, ... And thus we should continue to exclusively use the KJV for all ministries of the church and for our members’ use, and refrain from all Modern English versions, like the RSV, NASV and NIV. One of the many deficiencies of these Modern English versions is that they are based on the corrupted Westcott and Hort Greek and Hebrew Text; whilst the KJV is based on the uncorrupted family of the Greek Received Text and the Masoretic Hebrew Text.”

Price does not believe that the KJV is as reliable as we think. This can only be expected of him because he is one of the translators of the NKJV—a version that seeks to discourage the use of the old KJV. Neither does Price consider the Textus Receptus to be a superior text. He is sympathetic to Westcott and Hort and their method of textual criticism.

Price Undermines the KJV as the Very Word of God

Price is quite adept at confusing and undermining people’s confidence on the KJV. He has a list of grammatical, spelling,

capitalization, and printing “mistakes” in the KJV. Price is conceited enough to think his command of the English language is superior to that of the King James translators. He wants to correct the King’s English of the KJV. It is like a kindergarten pupil trying to correct the university professor. David Marshall who had for his English textbook the King James Bible would have dismissed Price’s puerile criticism of the English of the KJV. The KJV was written in an age when the English language was at its zenith. Since then, the standard of English has deteriorated, and Price’s English is no better.

Price, like most anti-KJVists, is quick to criticise the KJV for its “mistakes.” A favorite example is Matt 23:24, “Ye blind guides, which *strain at a gnat*, and swallow a camel.” Some call “strain at a gnat” a translation or a grammatical mistake, saying that it should be “strain *out* a gnat” and not “strain *at* a gnat.” Price calls it a misprint or typographical error. I believe it is neither a translational error nor a typographical error. Even the New Oxford English dictionary does not see “strain at” to be a mistake, but an archaic usage. Thus, to “strain out a gnat” is correct; to “strain at a gnat” is also correct.

If “strain at” is indeed a legitimate translation, how then ought we to understand it? Well, it depends on where the emphasis lies. Is the emphasis on the verb (“strain”) or on the noun (“gnat”)? The King James translators were astute to translate the Greek word “*diulizo*” (“to strain,” “to filter,” “to percolate”) as “to strain at.” This is because the context has to do with *sight*. Jesus ridiculed and rebuked the Pharisees calling them “blind guides.” How blind were they? They were so sharp to spot a tiny little gnat and quick to filter it out of their drink, but could not see a huge camel on their plate and were prepared even to swallow it whole. Thus “to strain at” could be taken to mean “to strain at [*the sight of*] a gnat.” Now, the Chambers Dictionary confirms this: “**strain at** in Matt. xxiii. 24, to remove by straining, strain *in the event of finding*.” Many today like Price would have to “strain at a gnat” to fault the KJV, but when it comes to the modern perversions, they would “swallow a camel.”

The other “mistakes” Price pointed out like archaic spellings and capitalizations etc, are not “mistakes.” The King James translators capitalize certain nouns and adjectives when these nouns and adjectives refer to God. In certain places they do not because it could be due to their uncertainty on how the noun/adjective is to be interpreted, or simply because it was an oversight on their part (they were not infallible as

proofreaders and translators). At times there is a need to return to the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures for certainty and clarity. Dr E F Hills has this wise advice, "We must be very cautious therefore about finding errors in the text of the King James Version, and the same holds true also in the realm of translation. Whenever the renderings of the King James Version are called in question, it is usually the accuser that finds himself in the wrong."

Price Misrepresents My Paper and Confuses the Issue

Now, let me rebut a couple of misleading statements by Price. Price wrote, "Historically, fundamentalists have understood that God preserved the text (words) of Scripture through the hand-written copies of the Hebrew and Greek Bibles that have survived through history—that is, the preserved ancient Bibles (manuscripts)." Price misleads. No fundamentalist, neo-evangelical or modernist would object to such a general statement of Scripture preservation as offered by Price. Price's statement is too broad and ambiguous for it to be definitive.

What distinguishes historic and reformed fundamentalists from neo-evangelicals and neo-fundamentalists is this: historic and reformed fundamentalists believe that the Scriptures are preserved in the Byzantine/Majority/Received Text which is the source text of the KJV and all the Reformation Bibles, while neo-evangelicals and neo-fundamentalists believe they are preserved in the Alexandrian/Minority/Westcott-Hort Text, the root of all the modern perversions of the Bible.

Price says I misrepresent historic fundamentalism because it never held to the KJV as the best and only English Bible fundamentalists should use. But the following fundamentalists would disagree with Price: (1) Regular Baptist, Dr Robert Gromacki of Cedarville College, in his New Testament Survey textbook, affirmed the KJV "as *the* text of fundamentalism" (*New Testament Survey*, xii). (2) Dr Ian Paisley, a Free Presbyterian and prominent leader of the World Congress of Fundamentalism, upholds the KJV alone. Without mincing his words, he wrote, "I believe this Authorized Version is unsurpassably pre-eminent over and above all other English translations, ... I cry out 'There is none like that, give it me,' and in so doing I nail the Satanic lie that the Authorized Version is outdated, outmoded, mistranslated, a relic of the past and only defended by stupid, unlearned, untaught obscurantists. ... I believe this Book will always be the unsurpassable pre-eminent English

version of the Holy Bible and no other can ever take its place. To seek to dislodge this Book from its rightful pre-eminent place is the act of the enemy, and what is attempted to put in its place is an intruder - an imposter - a pretender - a usurper” (*My Plea for the Old Sword*, 10-11). (3) In similar fashion, Dr Carl McIntire and the International Council of Christian Churches (ICCC) in two recent World Congresses, in Amsterdam 1998 and in Jerusalem 2000, affirmed the exclusive KJV and TR stance of historic fundamentalism.

When Price fails to understand or answer my arguments, he conveniently distorts my position on divine inspiration and preservation and my view on the KJV/TR. He wrote, “The bottom line ... is a blind commitment to the theory that the English words of the King James Version are the divinely inspired, divinely preserved Word of God, regardless of any Hebrew and Greek evidence to the contrary. It is neither the Traditional Text, nor the Byzantine Text, nor the Majority Text, nor any of the various editions of the Textus Receptus that is the final authority, so why mention them? To Khoo, Cloud, and Hills, the final authority in all matters of text and translation is the English King James Version of 1769 in one of its various differing editions. The Textus Receptus that underlies the English words of the KJV is a phantom text that had no tangible existence prior to its being created after the fact in the mid-nineteenth century, so why mention the others at all?”

Why mention them? Why mention the Traditional Text? Why the Byzantine Text? Why the Majority Text? Why the Textus Receptus? It is precisely because “I believe that the purity of God’s words has been faithfully maintained in the Traditional/Byzantine/Majority/Received Text, and fully represented in the Textus Receptus that underlies the KJV” (“A Plea for a Perfect Bible,” 13). Right at the very outset of my Burning Bush paper, I had made it clear that I was talking about an infallible and inerrant Hebrew and Greek Scriptures on which the KJV is based, and not the KJV per se. There is no “double inspiration” and the KJV is definitely not more inspired than the original language text.

Also, the text underlying the KJV is not a “phantom text.” If it is indeed a “phantom” or “intangible” text, then what did the King James translators use to translate their Bible? Perhaps, Price meant it is a “phantom text” today. But how is it a “phantom” or “intangible” text when it is in print, and used in our Greek classes? The Textus Receptus underlying the KJV is essentially Beza’s 1598 TR and the last 2 editions

of Stephen's TR, and corresponds with Scrivener's TR that is today published by the Trinitarian Bible Society and the Dean Burgon Society. Price disappoints with his careless and illogical analysis of my paper and serious distortion and misrepresentation of my views.

Now, what is really a "phantom text" is Price's "autographic text." Where is this "autographic text?" Is it tangible? Who is the publisher? Can Price produce it? I submit to you that Price's "autographic text" is the "intangible text."

Price's Fallacious Method in Solving Bible Difficulties

As regards my attempt at reconciling an apparent discrepancy in the OT, viz, 2 Kgs 8:26 and 2 Chron 22:2, Price was correct to point out the difficulties of my suggested solution if we take Ahaziah to be the actual son of Jehoram. Now, I must clarify that I am not saying that the "co-regency" solution is *the* answer for this case; it is simply *one way* of reconciling such apparent discrepancies. One possible reply to Price is that Ahaziah might not have been the actual blood relative of Jehoram, but a step-son, a son-in-law, or an adopted son, thus allowing Ahaziah to be about the same age as Jehoram. Another possible solution is to look at 2 Kgs 8:26 as the actual age of Ahaziah when he became king, and 2 Chron 22:2 as the age of his dynasty when he became king.

My approach to biblical discrepancies is simple: "Let God be true, but every man a liar" (Rom 3:4). In other words, the Bible must always be right, and I am wrong. We offer possible solutions, but we do not say "This is exactly what happened." We do not have all knowledge, and we do not know enough of history and the background of the times to offer a definite solution. There are certain things we may not be able to solve or understand this side of eternity. But one thing is for sure, such discrepancies are only apparent; they are not mistakes or errors in the Bible.

Now, Price offers a solution to the above discrepancy which I find rather troubling. He says that 2 Chron 22:2 should read 22 instead of 42 even though every existing Hebrew manuscript reads 42 (note that Price acknowledges that I was correct to observe this). Price solves the discrepancy by using a non-inspired version/translation, namely, the Septuagint (ie, a Greek version of the Hebrew OT) to correct the inspired Hebrew Scriptures. Price says this is the "scholarly" way to solve a Bible difficulty. This is no different from using the NIV or any of the modern

versions, or for that matter the KJV to correct the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures. By so doing, Price is in effect saying that the versions (whether ancient or modern) are more inspired than the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures. This is Ruckmanism, is it not?

Price Agrees with Me on VPP

Despite the many inaccurate and misleading arguments, and misrepresentations of my views on the TR and KJV by Price, I am glad to note that he at least agrees with me that the Holy Scriptures are verbally-plenarily inspired (VPI) and verbally-plenarily preserved (VPP). Price also agrees with me that “God did give us a perfect Bible, and has preserved its text.” He says that his perfect Bible is in “the autographic text”—“the autographic text is the exact, perfectly pure, absolutely certain, divinely inspired, infallible, inerrant Word of God, with no room for doubt.” Now this is a fine statement of faith on the perfection of the Bible. But I would like to know this: What and where is the “autographic text?” What does he mean by the “autographic text”? Is this autographic text the same as the Autographs? Or are they copies of the Autographs? If they are the Autographs, then where are the Autographs? Is it not true that the Autographs are no longer in existence? Are not the Autographs therefore the “phantom” or “intangible” text? If by “autographic text” is meant the “copies” of the Autographs, then are they not in fact “apographs”? And if they are indeed “apographs”, why am I faulted when I say that all the inspired words are fully represented in the Hebrew and Greek apographs underlying the KJV? Perhaps the difference between Price and me is that Price sees the “autographic text” as not just the Hebrew and Greek apographs underlying the KJV but also NIV, NASB, RSV, etc, and that the corrupt apographs underlying the modern versions (ie, the Westcott and Hort Text) could be superior to the preserved apographs of the KJV.

NON-RUCKMANITE ANSWERS TO ANTI-KJV QUESTIONS

Jeffrey Khoo

Preamble

Gary Hudson had a set of questions published in the internet against the King James Bible (<http://members.aol.com/pilgrimpub/questkjb.htm>). His questionnaire entitled, “Questions for the KJV-Only Cult,” was actually directed at Ruckmanites. Unfortunately, Hudson did not care to clarify that the majority of KJV advocates are not of the Ruckmanite origin or stripe. Many readers do go away confused, thinking that all defenders of the King James Bible are “Ruckmanites” and “heretics.” Such misinformation and misrepresentations continue unabated today by the writings of Doug Kutilek and James D Price and those of their ilk.

It must be underscored that Bible believers and KJV defenders like Edward F Hills, David Otis Fuller, D A Waite, Ian Paisley, David Cloud, Timothy Tow, the Trinitarian Bible Society, the Dean Burgon Society, and the Far Eastern Bible College do **NOT** espouse at all the beliefs of Ruckman that:

- (1) the KJV is doubly inspired;
- (2) the KJV is advanced revelation;
- (3) the English KJV is as or more inspired than the original language Scriptures;
- (4) the KJV can be used to correct the original language Scriptures;
- (5) there is no need whatsoever to study the Biblical languages of Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek due to an “inspired” English translation;
- (6) the KJV cannot be improved on (*The Defined King James Bible* edited by D A Waite and S H Tow and published by Bible For Today is certainly an improvement on the KJV);
- (7) the KJV is the only Bible that has gospel or salvific content;

(8) those who do not use the KJV are condemned to hell; and

(9) all non-English speaking believers must learn English to know the Truth.

Nevertheless, Hudson's questions have created enough misinformation on and misrepresentation of the King James Bible and the majority of its advocates that a response is necessary. Below are Hudson's questions followed by my answers from a KJV-superiority perspective.

Answers to Questions

(1) Must we possess a perfectly flawless Bible translation in order to call it “the word of God”? If so, how do we know “it” is perfect? If not, why do some limit “the word of God” to only *one* 17th Century English translation? Where was “the word of God” prior to 1611?

We believe that “the King James Version (or Authorised Version) of the English Bible is a true, faithful, and accurate translation of these two providentially preserved Texts [Traditional Masoretic Hebrew Text and Traditional Greek Text underlying the KJV], which in our time has no equal among all of the other English Translations. The translators did such a fine job in their translation task that we can without apology hold up the Authorised Version and say ‘This is the Word of God!’ while at the same time realising that, in some verses, we must go back to the underlying original language Texts for complete clarity, and also compare Scripture with Scripture.” (*The Dean Burgon Society, “Articles of Faith,” section II.A.*)

Every Bible translation can be legitimately called “the Word of God” if it is true and faithful to the original and traditional text. We refuse to consider heretical Bibles like the New World Translation of the Jehovah's Witnesses as “the Word of God.” We also reject as unreliable all Bible versions (eg NIV, TEV, TLB, CEV ...) that are a result of the dynamic equivalence method of translation, and those (eg RSV, NASB, ESV ...) that cast doubt and/or omit verses based on corrupted readings of the Alexandrian or Westcott-Hort Text, and consider them unsafe for use.

Where was the Word of God prior to 1611? Well, the Word of God is found in the divinely inspired and perfectly preserved Traditional Text

of Old Testament and New Testament Scriptures used and recognised by the Church down through the ages, and in all the faithful and reliable translations that were based on those Texts, viz, Martin Luther's German Bible (1522), William Tyndale's Bible (1525), Myles Coverdale's Bible (1535), The Matthew's Bible (1537), The Great Bible (1539-41), and The Geneva Bible (1557-60).

It is significant to note that prior to the KJV, the English translations were largely individual efforts. The KJV on the other hand is a corporate work. In the words of the translators, the KJV was not produced "to make a bad one a good one; but to make a good one better, or out of many good ones one principal good one." For this purpose and with such devotion the KJV translation committee was formed, and they were careful to "assemble together; not too many, lest one should trouble another; and yet many, lest many things haply might escape them."

The King James Bible is a product of the 16th Century Protestant Reformation. The special providential hand of God was clearly at work at the time of the Reformation not only in the separation of the true church from the false church, but also in the invention of the printing press, the renewed interest in the study of the original languages, the identification of the purest Greek Text (Textus Receptus) which became the source text for the KJV. These products of the Protestant Reformation bear the divine imprimatur.

God holds His people in every age responsible for using the divinely inspired and preserved original texts and only the faithful and accurate translations of His Word. The KJV-superiority position does not limit the Word of God to only one 17th Century English Translation, but advocates that the KJV, being still the most accurate English translation based on the purest texts, should be the only Bible used by English-speaking Christians today. To use other Bibles when the best is clearly available would be to neglect our responsibility.

(2) Were the KJV translators "liars" for saying that "the meanest translation" is still "the word of God"?

The 1611 Preface of the KJV is often used by anti-KJVists to support the corrupt modern versions. They argue that in that Preface the KJV translators themselves viewed even the worst English versions as the Word of God. Did the KJV translators really say that every translation of the Bible even if filled with grammatical, translational, or doctrinal

errors could be rightly called the Word of God? They certainly did not. The context in which they wrote those words clearly reveals this: “Now to the latter we answer, that we do not deny, nay, we affirm and avow, that the very *meanest* translation of the Bible in English set forth by men of our profession (for we have seen none of theirs of the whole Bible as yet) containeth the word of God, nay, is the word of God: as the King’s speech which he uttered in parliament, being translated into French, Dutch, Italian, and Latin, is still the King’s speech, though it be not interpreted by every translator *with the like grace*.”

It is clear that by the word “meanest” they do not mean “worst” (ie “evil in the highest degree”). Who would dare mistranslate the king’s speech? Clearly they were not talking about sense but *style*. By “meanest” they meant *poor in literary grace*. When beginning Greek students translate their Greek Bible into English, it may be rough and wooden; but if literal and precise, it is the Word of God. The KJV translators, some of whom were Puritans, certainly did not humour wicked or corrupt versions. It is utterly ridiculous and absurd to suggest that they did.

The KJV translators were certainly not “liars,” but anti-KJVists have put words into their mouths to make them mean what they did not mean by “meanest” in a mean attempt to demean the pro-KJV position.

(3) Do you believe that the Hebrew and Greek used for the KJV are the word of God?

Yes, we believe in the divine, Verbal Plenary Inspiration and Verbal Plenary Preservation of the Scriptures in the original languages, their consequent inerrancy and infallibility, and as the perfect Word of God, the Supreme and final authority in faith and life (2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:20-21; Ps 12:6-7; Matt 5:18, 24:35). We believe the Hebrew Old Testament and the Greek New Testament underlying the Authorised (King James) Version to be the very Word of God, infallible and inerrant.

(4) Do you believe that the Hebrew and Greek underlying the KJV can “correct” the English?

Yes, we believe that the inspired, infallible and inerrant Hebrew and Greek words underlying the KJV can correct the mistranslations of the modern English Bibles which use the corrupt Westcott-Hort Text, and use the dynamic equivalence method of translation.

We do *not* believe that the King James translators have been at all careless in their translation of their Bible, but do recognise that when interpreting difficult verses, we need to consult the underlying Hebrew and Greek texts in order to shed light on the full or complete meaning of a word, verse or passage. We affirm with the Dean Burgon Society that “the King James Version (or Authorised Version) of the English Bible is a true, faithful, and accurate translation of these two providentially preserved Texts [Traditional Masoretic Hebrew Text and Traditional Greek Text underlying the KJV], which in our time has no equal among all of the other English Translations. The translators did such a fine job in their translation task that we can without apology hold up the Authorised Version of 1611 and say ‘This is the Word of God!’ while at the same time realising that, in some verses, we must go back to the underlying original language Texts for complete clarity, and also compare Scripture with Scripture.” (*The Dean Burgon Society, “Articles of Faith,” section II.A*).

(5) Do you believe that the English of the KJV “corrects” its own Hebrew and Greek texts from which it was translated?

No, we do not believe that the English of the KJV corrects its own Hebrew and Greek Text. How can it do so, since it is derived from its very own original language text? The original Scriptures in Hebrew and Greek can and should never be corrected by any translation whether English, Chinese, Korean, Indonesian, or any other language. We categorically reject Ruckman’s heretical view that the English KJV is “more inspired” than the original Hebrew and Greek Scriptures that underlie it.

(6) Is any translation “inspired”? Is the KJV an “inspired translation”?

God “inspired” or “breathed out” (*theopneustos*, 2 Tim 3:16) His words in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. Strictly speaking, the divinely inspired words were the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek words God gave to His Prophets and Apostles to pen the Holy Scriptures.

What is the relation between the inspired text and its derived translation? By way of illustration, the original language Scripture underlying the KJV is like the perfect platinum yardstick of the Smithsonian Institute, infallible, inerrant, authoritative. The KJV and other accurate and reliable translations are like the common yardstick,

though not 100% are good and safe enough for use. Although there may be a need to consult the underlying Hebrew and Greek texts especially when interpreting difficult verses, we do not believe that the King James translators were in any way careless in translating their Bible. The same however cannot be said of the modern versions—they are definitely shorter by many inches and far too unreliable.

(7) Is the KJV “scripture?” Is it “given by inspiration of God” (2 Tim 3:16)?

The KJV as a translation was not “given by inspiration of God.” “All Scripture” (*pasa graphē*) of 2 Timothy 3:16 refers to the original Hebrew, Aramaic Old Testament and Greek New Testament words that God had “breathed out” without any error or mistake. These divinely inspired words in the original languages are infallible and inerrant and cannot be corrected, improved upon or changed in any way.

The English words of the KJV are *translated* words. But since the English words in the KJV are so accurately and faithfully translated from the original Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek words, we can confidently declare the KJV to be “the Word of God,” and “Holy Scripture,” and thus “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 Tim 3:16-17).

(8) When was the KJV “given by inspiration of God”?—1611 ... or any of the KJV major/minor revisions in 1613, 1629, 1638, 1644, 1701, 1744, 1762, 1769, and the last one in 1850?

The KJV was first published in 1611. However, there were revisions that followed soon after; all of which were completed by 1629. The revisions that occurred between 1611 and 1638 were due to printing errors. The KJV translators themselves, namely, Samuel Ward and John Bois, corrected these errors. In the course of typesetting, the printers had inadvertently left out words or phrases; all such manifest typographical errors had been corrected. For example, Psalm 69:32 of the 1611 edition read “good” instead of “God.” This was clearly a printer’s error, and was corrected in 1617.

Apart from a slight revision in 1638, there followed several facetious attempts to revise the KJV between 1638-1762 but none were successful.

The final revision of the KJV was done between 1762 and 1769. The 1762 revision had to do with spelling. For example, old forms that had an “e” after verbs, and “u” instead of “v,” and “f” for “s” were all standardised to conform to modern spelling. For example, “feare” is “fear,” “mooued” is “moved,” and “euill” is “evil,” and “alfo,” is “also.” All these Gothic and German spelling peculiarities have been Romanised. 1769 saw an updating of weights, measures, and coins. This 1769 edition of the KJV is the one popularly in print today. It is important to note that the 1769 edition is essentially the same as the 1611.

1850? Is this Hudson’s typo? There was an 1805 (not 50) edition which accidentally printed a proofreader’s note “to remain” in the text of Galatians 4:29 that made the verse to read “him that was born after the Spirit to remain” The only significant revision in the 1800s was in 1873 when Scrivener worked on the KJV’s marginal notes, orthography, and cross references.

There are not two or more KJVs but only one, and the one that is used today is basically the 1769 edition.

(9) In what language did Jesus Christ (not Peter Ruckman and others) teach that the Old Testament would be preserved forever according to Matthew 5:18?

Jesus taught that the Old Testament would be preserved forever in the Hebrew language. This preservation must logically apply to the New Testament as well which was written in Greek. The jot and tittle of the divinely inspired Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek words were the words Jesus promised would be preserved for all time in Matthew 5:18.

(10) Where does the Bible teach that God will perfectly preserve His Word in the form of one 17th Century English translation?

Nowhere specifically. Nevertheless, it must be said that the Bible does teach explicitly that God will preserve perfectly His divinely inspired words in the original languages as promised in Psalm 12:6-7, Matthew 5:18, Matthew 24:35 and many other passages. By the logic of faith we identify the perfect Word of God to be the inspired and preserved Hebrew and Aramaic words of the Masoretic Text and the Greek words of the Textus Receptus underlying the KJV.

(11) Did God lose the words of the originals when the “autographs” were destroyed?

Although we do not have the autographs (the very first scripts) today, we have the apographs (copies) which reflect the autographs. All the divinely inspired words of the autographs have been providentially preserved in the apographs underlying the KJV. We affirm with the Westminster divines that the autographs “being immediately inspired by God [are] by His singular care and providence kept pure in all ages” (Westminster Confession of Faith, I:VIII).

Providentially speaking, the autographs were neither “lost” nor “destroyed.” The purity of God’s Word has been faithfully maintained throughout the whole transmission of the Byzantine/Majority/Received Text, and finally attained in the apographs of the Hebrew Masoretic Text for the Old Testament and the Greek Textus Receptus for the New Testament underlying the KJV.

By faith, we believe in God’s promise that He will allow none of His words to be lost. Psalm 12:6-7 says, “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.” Jesus declared in Matthew 24:35, “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my *words* shall not pass away.” In Matthew 5:18, Jesus promised, “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.”

(12) Did the KJV translators mislead their readers by saying that their New Testament was “translated out of the original Greek?” Were they “liars” for claiming to have “the original Greek” to translate from?

No, they were not liars, because the term “original Greek” indeed refers to the inspired and preserved Greek New Testament Text they had. The term “original” only means that the New Testament was originally written in Greek.

(13) Was the “original Greek” lost after 1611?

No, the “original Greek” continues to exist to this day, and we call it the Textus Receptus Greek New Testament.

(14) Did the great Protestant Reformation (1517-1603) take place without “the word of God”?

Of course not! The Protestant Reformation arose because of the Bible. *Sola Scriptura* (Scriptures Alone) was one of the Reformation pillars. What were the pre-1611 Bibles that were “the Word of God”? They were the Wycliffe Bible (1382), the Tyndale Bible (1525), the Coverdale Bible (1535), the Matthew Bible (1537), the Taverner Bible (1539), the Great Bible (1539), the Geneva Bible (1560), and the Bishops’ Bible (1568), all of which facilitated the Reformation cause, and were faithful precursors to the King James Bible.

(15) What translation of “the word of God,” used by the Reformers, was absolutely infallible and inerrant?

Every translation of the Word of God used by the Reformers that was faithfully translated and based on the pure and preserved Old Testament Masoretic Text and New Testament Received Text may rightly be considered the Word of God, infallible and inerrant insofar as they accurately reflect the original text.

(16) If the KJV is “God’s infallible and preserved word to the English-speaking people,” did the “English-speaking people” have “the word of God” from 1525-1604?

Yes, they did, because they were using faithful translations that were based on the pure and preserved Old Testament Masoretic Text and New Testament Received Text. They were also using the most accurate versions of their time, and that is the main thing that God expects of His people.

(17) Was Tyndale’s (1525), or Coverdale’s (1535), or Matthew’s (1537), or the Great (1539), or Geneva (1560) ... English Bibles absolutely infallible?

Answered in Questions 14, 15, and 16.

(18) If neither the KJV nor any other one version were absolutely inerrant, could a lost sinner still be “born again” by the “incorruptible word of God” (1 Pet 1:23)?

A lost sinner can be and must be born again by the “incorruptible word of God” (1 Pet 1:23). God’s Word has been purely preserved in the Hebrew Masoretic Text and Greek Textus Receptus. Any accurate translation based on this can be used of God to save sinners.

Can the NIV, for instance, lead someone to salvation? Here is an answer from the Trinitarian Bible Society: “The NIV contains enough

truth to be used of the Holy Spirit to draw a man to the Saviour. But although it contains truth, is it the very Word of God? If not, Christians must be urged to return to the truth.”

There is no denial that sinners may be saved through the modern versions if such versions contain enough of the gospel (1 Cor 15:1-4), just like a person may be saved by hearing a sermon or reading a tract. This however does not mean that God sanctions such versions or that the Church should continue using them. Remember, God still holds His people responsible to use the most faithful translation, based on the purest text.

(19) If the KJV can “correct” the inspired originals, did the Hebrew and Greek originally “breathed out by God” need correction or improvement?

Answered in Question 5.

(20) Since most “KJV-Onlyites” believe the KJV is the inerrant and inspired “scripture” (2 Pet 1:20), and 2 Peter 1:21 says that “the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,” would you not therefore reason thus—“For the King James Version came not in 1611 by the will of man: but holy men of God translated as they were moved by the Holy Ghost”?

This question assumes all KJV-Only advocates to be Ruckmanites who believe that the KJV was given by divine inspiration. This is a very unfair and untrue representation of the facts. It would be absurd to ascribe to a translation the same degree of perfection that the Holy Spirit gave in the inspiration of the original language Scriptures. The divine inspiration of the original language Scriptures is quite different from the translation of the Scriptures for no translators can claim divine inspiration for their translation work. Nonetheless, the KJV pastors and scholars faithfully and accurately translated their English Bible from the inspired and inerrant Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek words that God has providentially and infallibly preserved.

(21) Which reading is the verbally (word-for-word) inerrant scripture—“whom ye” (Cambridge KJV’s) or “whom he” (Oxford KJV’s) at Jeremiah 34:16?

The reading “whom ye” in the Cambridge KJV is correct. In Jeremiah 34:16, the Hebrew *shillachthem* is the piel perfect form of the

root *shalach* with a 2nd masculine plural suffix. The verbally inerrant reading is thus “whom ye.” The Oxford “whom he” has to be a spelling/typing/printing error.

(22) Which reading is the verbally (word-for-word) inerrant scripture—“sin” (Cambridge KJV’s) or “sins” (Oxford KJV’s) at 2 Chronicles 33:19?

The Hebrew word used in 2 Chronicles 33:19 is *chattath*, a feminine *singular* noun with a 3rd masculine singular suffix (see BDB, 308). Again the Cambridge KJV, “his sin,” is correct (see Question 21 above).

(23) Who publishes the infallible “inerrant KJV”?

The British Crown owns the copyright to the KJV, and hence the right to grant permission to publish it to whomever she wishes. Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II licensed only William Collins Sons and Company Limited to print and publish the KJV in 1958. However, it does seem that the Crown does not care too much to enforce her copyright. The KJV is published today by not a few University Presses, Bible Societies, publishing houses, and software companies in Britain and America and elsewhere. As regards the “inerrant KJV” see Question 24 below.

(24) Since the revisions of the KJV from 1613-1850 [sic] made ... many hundreds of changes [sic] ... would you say the KJV was “verbally inerrant” in 1611 ... or 1629, 1638, 1644, 1664, 1701, 1744, 1762, 1769, or 1850 [sic]?

When we talk about infallibility, inerrancy, and inspiration, we are primarily referring to the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek words of the Holy Scriptures. A Bible translation is “infallible,” and “inerrant” only to the extent that it is faithful and accurate to the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures, and even then its “inerrancy,” and “infallibility” is not direct but *derived*.

It must be noted that the changes to the KJV were not due to any change in the Hebrew and Greek Text, but to the refinements that have been made to the English language itself, and to the typographical or typesetting mistakes that arose out of the printing process. The original language text itself is verbally inerrant. Translations made from that text would share in the verbal inerrancy of the text insofar as they are accurate word-for-word translations of the text. Thus, refinement and

improvement in translation was not only possible, but also needful (see answer to Question 8).

(25) Would you contend that God waited until a king named “James” sat on the throne of England before perfectly preserving His Word in English, and would you think well ... if the historical fact was revealed to you that King James was a practicing homosexual all his life?

There are those who say that King James was a homosexual, and there are those who think not (recently, a scholarly 392-page book by Stephen A Coston Sr, *King James the VI of Scotland and the I of England: Unjustly Accused?* [St Petersburg: KoenigsWort Incorporated, 1996], takes the latter view). But for argument’s sake, let us say King James was homosexual. Being homosexual he would surely alter scriptural texts that speak against the sin of homosexuality. We do not find such alterations in the KJV. On the contrary, we find intact such passages as Romans 1:26-27 speaking out against “*vile affections; for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet.*” If King James were truly homosexual, he would be expected to change or dilute this passage. There was no such tampering. In any case, even if King James was homosexual, he was not among the translators, and had no part in the translating work.

(26) Would you contend that the KJV translator, Richard Thomson, who worked on Genesis-Kings in the Westminster group, was “led by God in translating” even though he was an alcoholic that “drank his fill daily” throughout the work? (Gustavus Paine, *The Men Behind the KJV*, 40, 69).

No one can ever claim that the men who translated the KJV were perfectly sinless. If they were alive, they would probably be the first to admit their sins, and confess the grace of God that allowed them the privilege of being involved in the Bible translation work. Even the original Old Testament and New Testament writers of the Scriptures were not perfect men. For example, David committed adultery and yet God used him to write the Psalms. Peter denied Christ three times and yet wrote First and Second Peter. Generally speaking, there is no reason to

doubt that the men who translated the KJV, like the biblical writers, were regenerate men of piety, godliness and erudite scholarship, their weaknesses and failings of the flesh notwithstanding.

Now, what about Richard Thomson? Richard Montague called him “a most admirable philologist,” and no doubt for this reason he was inducted into the translation committee. Paine says that he was among the “younger men.” What about his drinking? McClure would have us know that Thomson’s alcoholism occurred in his later years, and not necessarily during the time he worked on the KJV. At any rate, even if Thomson did drink, Paine tells us that “he arose in the morning with his head clear enough to go forward competently with the day’s work.”

The Bible teaches the divine inspiration of the *words* and not the men whether apostles, prophets, scribes or translators. The men were spiritually guided (2 Pet 1:21), but the words were divinely inspired and absolutely inerrant not only in matters of salvation, but also in matters of history, geography and science (2 Tim 3:16).

(27) Is it possible that the rendition “gay clothing,” in the KJV at James 2:3, could give the wrong impression to the modern-English KJV reader?

It is unfortunate that the word “gay” today has acquired a negative connotation. The modern English KJV reader however would not be misled, when he reads the context of James 2:3—“*And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place ...*” It is easy to see here that the word “gay” has nothing to do with homosexual attire, but with wealthy, ostentatious dressing.

(28) Did dead people “wake up” in the morning according to Isaiah 37:36 in the KJV?

In Isaiah 37:36, the KJV renders a literal and accurate translation of the Hebrew text: “*Then the angel of the LORD went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses.*” It is quite plain that “they” who arose were not the same as “they” who were dead corpses.

(29) Was “Baptist” John’s last name according to Matthew 14:8 and Luke 7:20 in the KJV?

In Bible times, as well as in KJV English, it was not uncommon to find a person surnamed with his title or official designation. Eg Antiochus Epiphanes, Julius Caesar, Judas Maccabeus. The word “Baptist” was therefore not John’s last name, but his well-known designation.

(30) Does 2 Corinthians 6:11-13 in the KJV make any sense to the modern English KJV reader as compared to the NIV?

Although modern English versions may make certain verses easier to understand to the modern reader, they may not be accurate to the true meaning or intent of the text. As a matter of fact, present-day English versions like the NIV, by using the loose “dynamic equivalence” method of translation, have gone too far in giving a modern and strange voice in an attempt to replace the KJV.

The NIV rendering of 2 Corinthians 6:11-13 is a case in point. It shows how the NIV is an interpretation of or a commentary on the original text, and not a word-for-word translation. For example, the KJV practically translates word-for-word the meaning of the original text in verse 11, “*to stoma hemon* (our mouth) *aneoge* (is opened) *pros* (unto) *humas* (you),” but the NIV interprets the words as “We have spoken freely to you” which do not give the actual or precise meaning of the verbally (not conceptually) inspired Scripture. In fact the original words mean much more than “free speech.” As such, the NIV should not be taken as “Holy Bible” since it does not translate the inspired words of God accurately word for word. At best, it is only a commentary on the Bible like any other commentary written by men and thus prone to human fallibility and subjectivity.

Hence, we *strongly discourage* the use of the modern versions disguised as “Holy Bible” for personal study because of the many omissions, distortions, inaccuracies and misinterpretations found in them due to their corrupt source text and wrong method of translation. Instead, we recommend *The Defined King James Bible* published by The Bible For Today Press, 1998, where all the archaic words have their respective modern meanings footnoted for convenient reference. For example, the archaic word “straitened” in 2 Corinthians 6:12 is footnoted as “closely restricted, hemmed in.” Readers today can thus easily read and understand the faithful and reliable KJV.

(31) Does the singular “oath’s” occurring in every KJV at Matthew 14:9 and Mark 6:26 “correct” every Textus Receptus Greek which has the plural “oaths”?

Although *horkous* is in the Greek plural, there are times when it is legitimate to render the plural in the singular especially when it is a plural of *majesty*. At times the plural speaks not of *multiplicity* but of *majesty*. It seeks to highlight the grandiose nature of the meaning contained in the noun. This is probably the case with Matthew 14:9 and Mark 6:26 especially when we notice that the oath was *given by a king*. In other words, it was no ordinary oath, but a *royal oath*, and must thus be *doubly honoured* by the king who made it. That was why Herod, though extremely reluctant to kill John, could not retract the promise he had already made. The KJV translation, “for the *oath’s* sake,” is thus perfectly legitimate.

(32) Did Jesus teach a way for men to be “worshipped” according to Luke 14:10 in the KJV, contradicting the first commandment and what He said in Luke 4:8? (Remember—you may not go to the Greek for any “light” if you are a KJV-Onlyite!)

The word *doxa* here is to be distinguished from the usual “worship” (*latreuo* and *proskuneo*) that is accorded to God. The context clearly shows that the word “worship” in Luke 14:10 has nothing to do with religious worship, but has the connotation of respect or honour given to men in high office or dignitaries. The KJV is thus not self-contradictory in Luke 4:8 and 14:10.

Although we strongly recommend the laity to use the KJV as their scriptural text in their study of the Bible, we reject the fallacious view that the Greek Bible cannot be used to shed light on the English text.

(33) Is the Holy Spirit an “it” according to John 1:32; Romans 8:16, 26; and 1 Peter 1:11 in the KJV? (Again—you may not go to the Greek for any “light” if you are a KJV-Onlyite!)

The word “it” here, with reference to the Holy Spirit, is the direct result of the literal translation of the neuter gender of the pronouns and participles in the Greek text that stand in agreement with the neuter gender for the Greek word for “spirit” (*pneuma*). This does not mean that the KJV teaches that the Holy Spirit is an impersonal force. The cited verses themselves show that this is not the case, as a force cannot bear witness with our spirit that we are the children of God (Rom 8:16), make

intercession for us (Rom 8:26) or testify beforehand of the sufferings of Christ (1 Pet 1:11). Only a person can do such things, and the Holy Spirit is a person—the third person of the Holy Trinity.

Again—although we hold to a KJV-superiority position, we categorically reject the false view that says the inspired Greek Text may not be used to shed light on the KJV.

(34) Does Luke 23:56 support a “Friday” crucifixion in the KJV (no “day” here in Greek)?

Luke 23:56 supports a “Friday” crucifixion in the light of verses 54 and 55. Luke clearly recorded that the day of the crucifixion was the day of “the preparation, and the sabbath drew on (near)” (Luke 23:54). The “preparation” was the preparation for the sabbath of the passover week (2 Chron 30:21-22, ie, the feast of the unleavened bread which lasts for seven days). The passover that Jesus observed was held on a Thursday evening, while “the preparation of the passover” was held on a Friday (Mark 15:42). Jesus was thus crucified and buried on Friday before the “sabbath day” (ie, Saturday) which was a day of rest. The women returned to the tomb on Sunday with their spices and ointments only to discover that Jesus is risen from the dead (Luke 24:1-6).

(35) Did Jesus command for a girl to be given “meat” to eat according to Luke 8:55 in the KJV? (or, “of them that sit at meat with thee” at Luke 14:10).

It is most reasonable to translate Luke 8:55 the way the KJV has done, because what else could have been given to the girl to eat than something that is edible? In KJV English, “meat” refers to “food.” As for Luke 14:10, the context of the wedding feast makes it obvious that there must have been “meat” or “food” on the table, since they were obviously reclining down “to eat.”

(36) Was Charles Haddon Spurgeon a “Bible-corrector” for saying that Romans 8:24 should be rendered “saved in hope,” instead of the KJV’s “saved by hope”?

There is no mistranslation in the KJV of Romans 8:24 since the word “hope” (*elpidi*) in this verse is in the dative case, which can be translated in several ways. Spurgeon’s interpretation is only one possible way to translate the dative case. Not all interpreters will agree with Spurgeon that it should be rendered “saved in hope” instead of the KJV’s “saved by hope.” Neither do we think it good for anyone to cause a

believer to doubt God's Word as accurately translated in the KJV from the inspired and preserved text.

(37) Was J Frank Norris a “Bible-corrector” for saying that the correct rendering of John 3:5 should be “born of water and the spirit,” and for saying that “repent and turn” in Acts 26:20 should be “repent, even turn”? (Norris-Wallace Debate, 1934, pp108, 116). Also, is Norman Pickering an “Alexandrian Apostate” for stating, “The nature of language does not permit a ‘perfect’ translation—the semantic area of words differs between languages so that there is seldom complete overlap”?

The KJV has the second “of” in John 3:5 in italics, which means that it is supplied by the translators and not found in the Greek text. This allows the reader to decide for himself whether to interpret it with or without the preposition. Actually the word “spirit” here is in the genitive case, the same as the word “water.” The genitive has the idea of “out of” especially when used with the Greek preposition *ek*. It is reasonable for the translators to conclude that the preposition applies to both the words and not only to the first one.

As for Acts 26:20, the Greek conjunction *kai* can be translated as “and,” “also,” or “even.” The rendering, “*repent, even turn*” though permissible, does not detract from the KJV’s “*repent and turn*” which is perfectly accurate.

It is not wrong to state that the nature of languages does not permit a “perfect” translation, but surely a translation ought to be as “perfect” as can be in terms of its accuracy and faithfulness to the original text. What is required of God’s people is to use the most accurate translation available, one that is closest to the original text. The KJV is such a translation for the English language.

(38) Was R A Torrey “lying” when he said the following in 1907—“No one, so far as I know, holds that the English translation of the Bible is absolutely infallible and inerrant. The doctrine held by many is that the Scriptures as originally given were absolutely infallible and inerrant, and that our English translation is a substantially accurate rendering of the Scriptures as originally given”? (*Difficulties in the Bible*, p17).

It is correct to believe that the Scriptures “as originally given” meaning the Scriptures in the original languages—Hebrew, Aramaic, and

Greek—are the absolutely infallible and inerrant Word of God. All the originally inspired Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek words have been perfectly preserved by God and we have them today.

Our English translation is a “substantially accurate rendering of the Scriptures as originally given.” In other words, the KJV, even though it is the best, most accurate, most faithful translation, is still a translation of the Scriptures as originally given.

(39) Is Don Edwards correct in agreeing “in favor of canonizing our KJV,” thus replacing the inspired canon in Hebrew and Greek? (*The Flaming Torch*, June 1989, p6).

It is not correct to favour the “canonizing” of the KJV, as that would elevate it to a status even higher than the inspired and preserved texts from which it was translated. Read the answers to Questions 5-6.

(40) Did God supernaturally “move His Word from the original languages to English” in 1611?

No, we do not believe that God supernaturally moved His Word from the original languages to English (see answers to Questions 1, 3-7). We categorically reject the Ruckmanite view of “double inspiration” and “advanced revelation” for the KJV.

More Answers to Questions

(41) If the KJV translators were inspired of God in their work, how is it that they humbly acknowledge their own shortcomings and imperfections as Bible translators?

The KJV translators rightly did not claim to be “inspired” by God in their translation work, because they were not. Inspiration is applicable only to the *words* that God had “breathed out” in the beginning and inscripturated by Spirit-moved Prophets and Apostles who were specially commissioned by the Lord to preach and write the Holy Scriptures (2 Pet 1:21, 2 Tim 3:16, 1 Thess 2:13).

Nevertheless, it must be observed that the King James translators recognised with deep reverence that the sacred texts from which they were translating were the inspired words of God. This is why they ardently desired to make their translation as accurate as possible despite their own shortcomings and imperfections. In contrast to this, not all who are involved in modern Bible translation work today have such a high

regard for the texts they translate, as evidenced from the bold liberties they are willing to take with the text.

(42) When there is a difference between the Textus Receptus and the Majority Text, why do you prefer the Textus Receptus?

The “Majority Text” or “Byzantine Text” refers to most of the extant Greek New Testament manuscripts we have today. The majority of faithfully transmitted manuscripts bear remarkable uniformity. There are some differences, but God’s special providential preservation of His words ensured that “the text found in the vast majority of the Greek New Testament manuscripts is a trustworthy reproduction of the divinely inspired Original Text” (E F Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, 106).

The special providential preservation of the New Testament saw the eventual printing of the Textus Receptus in the time of the Reformation. The Textus Receptus was an edition of the Majority Text that was the traditional text, received and used extensively by the Church throughout the centuries, and by the Reformers and Protestants for their translation work in various languages.

The Textus Receptus and Majority Text belong to the same family of traditional and preserved texts. However in a few places, the Textus Receptus is preferred over the Majority Text because the Protestant Reformation was used by God to recognise and identify all the pure words of the original Scriptures. One example is 1 John 5:7 (see my paper, “A Preliminary Examination of the Antiquity and Authenticity of the Johannine Comma: Does a Clear, Biblical Proof Text Exist for the Doctrine of the Trinity?” in <http://logosresourcepages.org/Versions/johannine.htm>).

(43) Did the Lord Jesus and the Apostles make use of and quote from the Septuagint (ancient Greek translation of the OT), even though the Septuagint differed from the original Hebrew in places and was certainly not a perfect translation?

We doubt that Jesus made use of and quoted from the Septuagint (a Greek translation of the inspired Hebrew Old Testament). There is not one instance in the Scriptures where we find Jesus or the Apostles saying that they have quoted from the Septuagint. Many of the Greek quotations of the Old Testament do not agree with the Septuagint. The few quotations that do agree are probably due to the Septuagint copying from

the inspired Greek New Testament rather than the other way round. It is also reasonable to assume that Jesus and the Apostles did their own direct translation of the Hebrew text into Greek. See Prabhudas Koshy, "Did Jesus and the Apostles Rely on 'The Corrupt Septuagint'?" *Bible Witness* (July-September 2002): 25-26.

(44) Since no two manuscripts of the Greek New Testament have been found to be exactly alike, which manuscript is it that has been perfectly preserved and perfectly mirrors the original?

It is fallacious to dogmatically assume that "no two Greek New Testament manuscripts are exactly the same." There are over 5000 extant Greek New Testament manuscripts, and not all of them have been thoroughly examined and compared yet. What we do know for a fact is that the majority of the manuscripts reflect remarkably uniform readings, and this must necessarily mean that they are the providentially preserved copies (see J W Burgon's *The Traditional Text* published by the Dean Burgon Society; see also E F Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, 139-68). Burgon proved that the Traditional Text on which the KJV is based is the trustworthy and providentially preserved text over against Westcott and Hort's corrupt Alexandrian or Minority Text which is from a very small number (1%) of the extant manuscripts.

The two chief representatives of the Alexandrian or Minority Text are the Codex Vaticanus (B) and Codex Sinaiticus (Aleph). According to Burgon, these two Alexandrian manuscripts are absolutely unreliable. Burgon wrote, "B and Aleph, have ... established a tyrannical ascendancy over the imagination of the Critics, which can only be fitly spoken of as a blind superstition. It matters nothing that all four are discovered on careful scrutiny to differ essentially, not only from ninety-nine out of a hundred of the whole body of extant MSS. besides, but even *from one another*. This last circumstance, obviously fatal to their corporate pretensions, is unaccountably overlooked. And yet it admits of only one satisfactory explanation: viz. that *in different degrees* they all exhibit a fabricated text. Between the first two (B and Aleph) there subsists an amount of sinister resemblance, which proves that they must have been derived at no very remote period from the same corrupt original. ... And be it remembered that the omissions, additions, substitutions, transpositions, and modifications, *are by no means the same* in both. It is in fact *easier to find two consecutive verses in which these two MSS. differ the one from the other, than two consecutive verses in which they*

entirely agree.” [J W Burgon, *The Revision Revised* (Collingswood NJ: Dean Burgon Society Press, 1883), 12].

We have every reason to believe the pure text of God’s Word is found in the Byzantine/Majority/Received Text that underlies the KJV as opposed to the host of modern versions that are based on the grossly corrupt Alexandrian/Minority/Rejected Text of Westcott and Hort and the modern versions.

(45) Why does the KJV differ from the Textus Receptus in certain places like Acts 19:20 where the Greek has “Lord” and the KJV has “God”?

There is no significant difference between the Textus Receptus and the KJV in Acts 19:20. The Greek word *kurios* can be translated in a number of ways depending on the context. It can be rendered “Lord,” “master,” “sir,” “God,” or “owner” (see *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*, 900-1). Acts 19:20 certainly allows for “God” instead of “Lord” since the context is speaking of the Word of God as a whole. If it is rendered as “word of the Lord” it might be construed as some specific word from Jesus instead of God’s Word or the Holy Scriptures in general. In any case, whether it is “the word of God,” or “the word of the Lord,” both are perfectly acceptable translations of the original.

(46) Has any Bible to date proved to be that hoped for improvement of the KJV?

Some say the NKJV is the answer. We doubt that it is, since it has done away with the “ye’s,” “thee’s,” “thou’s,” “thy’s,” and “thine’s.” These not only serve to distinguish between the 2nd person singular and plural, but they also heighten the reverence of the language of God’s Holy Word. There are also many other unnecessary changes to the old KJV. The NKJV is not recommended because it (1) shows sympathy to the corrupt Westcott and Hort Text; (2) departs from the Traditional Hebrew Masoretic Text and the Greek Textus Receptus at certain places; (3) incorrectly translates certain verses (eg, Heb 2:16 where its mistranslation undermines the doctrine of the incarnation of Christ); (4) unnecessarily changes perfectly understandable and accurate words from the old KJV; (5) adds words without italicising them, thereby giving the false impression that they are from the original; and (6) changes nouns to pronouns and pronouns to nouns (see also Malcom Watts, *The New King*

James Version: A Critique, Trinitarian Bible Society, 2008; and D A Waite, *The New King James Version Compared to the King James Version and the Underlying Hebrew and Greek Texts*, Bible For Today, 1990).

Today, an improved edition of the KJV can be found in *The Defined King James Bible* which supplies the modern meanings of the archaic words of the KJV in its footnotes.

(47) Why did the KJV translators translate the Apocrypha and include these books in the original 1611 edition?

It must be stated that the KJV translators in no wise considered the Apocrypha to be inspired Scripture. The Westminster Confession of Faith (1643-8) which was written not long after the KJV was translated states that the Apocrypha was clearly not recognised by God's people to be part of the Word of God. It is significant to note that when it came to translating the Apocrypha, the KJV translators did not care very much for it. Scrivener wrote, "It is well known to Biblical scholars that the Apocrypha received very inadequate attention from the revisers of 1611 and their predecessors, so that whole passages remain unaltered from the racy, spirited, rhythmical, but hasty, loose and most inaccurate version ... made by Coverdale for the Bible of 1536."

It is also important to note that it was not only the KJV that contained the Apocrypha but also other Reformation Bibles like the Wycliffe and Geneva Bibles. It was only in 1640 that the Geneva Bible omitted the Apocrypha, and it was not until the 19th century that the removal of the Apocrypha from all Protestant Bibles became the norm.

(48) Why were italics employed by the KJV translators in 1 John 2:23?

The words "he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also" in 1 John 2:23 were italicised because the King James translators initially did not find them in the Majority Text and in earlier editions of the Textus Receptus. The common faith however restrained them from omitting those words since they were found in the Great Bible and the Bishops' Bible. Later research produced evidence that they should be part of inspired Scripture because of the testimony of a good number of Greek manuscripts including Aleph and B. The italics should have been removed in the reprints of the KJV but unfortunately escaped the attention of the printers.

(49) Why are there 35 textual notes given in the margin of the King James Bible? (Examples: Matthew 26:26, “Many Greek copies have ...,” Luke 10:22, “Many ancient copies add these words ...,” Luke 17:36, “These verse is wanting in most of the Greek copies,” Acts 25:6, “Or as some copies read, ...”.

These marginal notes compared the differences among the various editions of the Textus Receptus. Dr E F Hills observed that “this comparison indicates that the differences which distinguish the various editions of the Textus Receptus from each other are very minor. They are also very few. ... the 3rd edition of Stephanus and the first edition of Elzevir differ from one another in the Gospel of Mark only 19 times. On the other hand, the corrupt Alexandrian codices like Aleph, B and D differ in so many places and could not agree among themselves: *Codex B* disagrees with *Codex Aleph* in Mark 652 times and with *Codex D* 1,944 times.” What a contrast!

Hills went on to say, “The texts of the several editions of the Textus Receptus were God guided. They were set up under the leading of God’s special providence. Hence the differences between them were kept down to a minimum.”

“But what do we do in these few places in which the several editions of the Textus Receptus disagree with one another? Which text do we follow? The answer to this question is easy. We are guided by the common faith. Hence we favor that form of the Textus Receptus upon which more than any other God, working providentially, has placed the stamp of His approval, namely, the King James Version, or, more precisely, the Greek text underlying the King James Version” [E F Hills, *The King James Version Defended* (Des Moines: Christian Research Press, 1984), 222-3].

(50) Blayney’s edition of the KJV (1769) became the standard form of the version and is unto this day, but his edition differs from the 1611 edition in about 75,000 minor details. Which edition of the KJV (Blayney’s or the original) is the perfect Bible?

An analysis of the 75,000 minor details will reveal that the changes were for the most part in updating the spelling of English words that had changed over time. It would be therefore quite unfair and untrue to say that our present KJV edition is flawed, not being identical with the 1611 edition in 75,000 details. If a modern English reader were to read the

1611 edition, he may find it very difficult to read, because of all the different spelling of certain words. We must thank the Lord for the subsequent editions of the KJV which made the KJV more accurate and readable. According to Dr D A Waite, there were not 75,000 but only 285 minor changes not of substance but of form such as “towards” for “toward”, “burnt” for “burned,” “amongst” for “among” (D A Waite, *Defending the King James Bible*, 238; see also answer to Question 8).

Once again we say that the KJV-superiority position does not mean that the KJV cannot be improved on or that the original language texts may not be used to shed further light on God’s truth found in the English Bible. The KJV-superiority position is merely the logical result of applying the principle that God holds His people in the English-speaking world (just as He holds those in other languages) responsible to use the best translation of the Bible that is presently available and done by the best translators (spiritually and academically qualified) from the best Hebrew and Greek texts (**NOT** the Westcott and Hort text **BUT** the traditional Masoretic Hebrew and Received Greek texts) which possess all the qualities of infallibility and inerrancy since they possess *all* the originally inspired words that God has continuously preserved without the loss of any word to the jot and tittle (Ps 12:6-7, Matt 5:18).

CAN VERBAL PLENARY INSPIRATION DO WITHOUT VERBAL PLENARY PRESERVATION?

The Achilles' Heel of Princeton Bibliology

Jeffrey Khoo

Issue

The old Princeton theology has often been regarded as the scholarly orthodoxy that should characterise evangelical theology in the face of challenges posed by liberalism or modernism. Alexander, Hodge and Warfield are household names in evangelical-theological scholarship. They have become reference points of theological orthodoxy. Despite their noble attempts to articulate the fundamental doctrines of the Christian Faith, it is increasingly discovered that Princeton in its efforts to defend theological orthodoxy and gain a certain level of acceptability and respectability in the scholarly world had compromised the supreme and absolute authority of the Scriptures by adopting the textual critical methods of rationalistic scholasticism.

Textual criticism introduced by Princeton Seminary is the Trojan horse in Reformed, evangelical, and fundamentalist Bibliology today. No Reformed, evangelical or fundamentalist “scholar,” without wanting to look stupid or foolish, would dare affirm without equivocation that the Bible in our hands today is infallible and inerrant, without any mistake. This is the tragedy of compromise.

This paper seeks to expose the fallacy of the Princeton theology especially as regards its Bibliology, and warn of the dangers that it presents to God’s people as they face the incessant salvos against Christ and His Word by Postmodernism, Ecumenism, Neo-Evangelicalism, Neo-Fundamentalism, Open Theism and Neo-Deism today.

Archibald Alexander

The theology of Princeton was shaped by Archibald Alexander (1772-1851), the first professor of theology at Princeton, and by his successors, Charles Hodge and B B Warfield.¹ These men remain highly respected by reformed and evangelical scholars today. But before we decide to bow to their scholarship, we need to examine what they believed about the Scriptures.

Archibald Alexander promoted the Westminster Standards to be the orthodox expression of faith. He also upheld the power of human reason. What of the Bible in his hands? Well he believed that the Bible was indeed preserved “by God’s singular care and providence” as spelled out in the Westminster Confession of Faith quoting Matthew 5:18, but his human mind could not accept the idea that the apographs (ie, copies of the originals) could be infallible and inerrant. It ought to be noted that Alexander’s preserved text manifested no less than 60,000 scribal errors, but in his opinion, these did not affect doctrine in any way.² In his inaugural sermon at his installation as Princeton’s first professor of theology, he spoke positively of textual criticism, and posited the theory of conceptual preservation: “For though the serious mind is at first astonished and confounded, upon being informed of the multitude of various readings ... yet it is relieved, when on careful examination, it appears that not more than one of a hundred of these, makes the slightest variation in the sense, and that the whole of them do not materially affect one important fact or doctrine.”³

Alexander saw no contradiction between his opinion of scribal errors in the texts that he had in his hands and the Westminster Confession’s affirmation of the divine preservation of Scripture because he considered the perfection of the autographs and the purity of the apographs to concern merely doctrine and not words. In other words, these scribal errors do not affect any vital doctrine of the Christian faith, and there is no trouble even in seeing that God could have “inspired” these scribal errors in the lost autographs and that these same scribal errors could have been “preserved” in the apographs the church now has in her hands. It appears that Alexander had no qualms admitting that the autographs were not inerrant for he wrote, “it is even possible that some of the autographs, if we had them, might not be altogether free from such errors as arise from the slip of the pen, as the apostles [had] amanuens[es] who were not inspired.”⁴

The case of Alexander shows that a rejection of verbal preservation in favour of conceptual preservation could lead ultimately to a denial of verbal inspiration and inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures. This was clearly what happened to Bart Ehrman (PhD, Princeton Theological Seminary) who had Bruce Metzger—Princeton’s George L Collord Professor of New Testament Language and Literature, Emeritus, but known also as “Bible Butcher”⁵—for his mentor. In his book *Misquoting Jesus*, Ehrman testified how a Bible filled with scribal errors today became a problem for him:

If one wants to insist that God inspired the very words of scripture, what would be the point if we don’t have the very words of scripture? ... It’s a bit hard to know what the words of the Bible mean if we don’t even know what the words are!

This became a problem for my view of inspiration, for I came to realize that it would have been no more difficult for God to preserve the words of scripture than it would have been for him to inspire them in the first place. If he wanted his people to have his words, surely he would have given to them (and possibly even given them the words in a language they could understand, rather than Greek and Hebrew). The fact that we don’t have the words surely must show, I reasoned, that he did not preserve them for us. And if he didn’t perform that miracle, there seemed to be no reason to think that he performed the earlier miracle of inspiring those words.⁶

It is significant to note that Ehrman began as a fundamentalist in Moody Bible Institute, but eventually succumbed to the “dark side” when he went to Princeton where he came under the mentorship of textual-critical Vader—Bruce Metzger—whom he calls his “Doctor-Father.”⁷

Edward F Hills had long warned that a denial or even a low view of the special providential preservation of the Scriptures would logically and ultimately lead one to a denial of the verbal and plenary inspiration of the same Scriptures.

Conservative scholars ... say that they believe in the special, providential preservation of the New Testament text. Most of them really don’t though, because, as soon as they say this, they immediately reduce this special providential preservation to the vanishing point in order to make room for the naturalistic theories of Westcott and Hort. As we have seen, some say that the providential preservation of the New Testament means merely that the same “substance of doctrine” is found in all the New Testament documents. Others say that it means that the true reading is always present in at least one of the thousands of extant New Testament manuscripts. And

still other scholars say that to them the special, providential preservation of the Scriptures means that the true New Testament text was providentially discovered in the mid-19th century by Tischendorf, Tregelles, and Westcott and Hort after having been lost for 1,500 years.

If you adopt one of these false views of the providential preservation of Scriptures, then you are logically on your way toward the denial of the infallible inspiration of the Scriptures. For if God has preserved the Scriptures so carelessly, why would he have infallibly inspired them in the first place? It is not sufficient therefore merely to say that you believe in the doctrine of the special, providential preservation of holy Scriptures. You must really believe this doctrine and allow it to guide your thinking. You must begin with Christ and the Gospel and proceed according to the logic of faith. This will lead you to the Traditional text, the Textus Receptus, and the King James Version, in other words, to the common faith.⁸

Taking Alexander's lead, Princeton began on a wrong footing as regards the verbal and plenary preservation of the Holy Scriptures which eventually saw its rejection of the Textus Receptus in favour of the Westcott-Hort Text. Alexander had laid the foundation for Charles Hodge (1797-1878) and B B Warfield (1851-1921) to pursue rationalistic textual criticism that was growing out of German scholasticism.

Charles Hodge and His Son C W Hodge

Charles Hodge was exposed to textual criticism when he studied in Germany from 1826 to 1828. Despite his studies in textual criticism and his knowledge of textual variants among the manuscripts, Hodge was careful not to engage in any form of conjectural emendation of the Biblical text which he considered to be wholly illegitimate. He urged rightly, "it would be exceedingly injurious as every critic would think himself authorized to make alterations and thus certainty and authority of S.S. [sacred Scripture] would be destroyed."⁹ Despite the textual critical theories he learned in Germany which sought to dethrone the Textus Receptus at that time, Hodge stuck to it and recognised its authenticity.¹⁰

Although Charles Hodge upheld the Textus Receptus, he did not defend it vigorously enough, and did not warn against the rationalistic textual critical views that were emerging out of Germany. He was contented with an essentially infallible but not totally inerrant Scripture for he admits that "the Scriptures do contain, in a few instances, discrepancies which with our present means of knowledge, we are unable satisfactorily to explain."¹¹

It was left to Hodge's son, C W Hodge, to pave the way for German-style textual criticism in Princeton Seminary. C W Hodge found no point addressing the inspiration of Scripture if the extant manuscripts were full of textual variations and scribal errors. He asked, "What are we to say of verbal inspiration when the Church cannot agree as to the words of the text?" He had accumulated no less than 120,000 textual variants (double that of Alexander) and even dismissed the Trinitarian text of 1 John 5:7 to be unworthy of Scripture. His rejection of 1 John 5:7 was due to Griesbach's dictum that "all readings favouring *orthodoxy* were to be immediately regarded as suspect."¹² (As noted above, this is also the textual critical mindset and method of Bart Ehrman.) Agreeing with Westcott and Hort, Hodge also rejected the authenticity of the last 12 verses of Mark (Mark 16:9-20) and the *pericope de adultera* (John 7:53-8:11).

B B Warfield

The Reformation cry of *Sola Scriptura* as the supreme and final authority of the Christian faith and life has always been understood to mean the infallible and inerrant Scriptures believers had in their possession. The Scripture that the Reformers accepted as infallible and inerrant were not the autographs but the apographs, and the preserved apographs had all the very words and passages (last 12 verses of Mark, *pericope de adultera*, Johannine comma, etc) which textual critical scholars today, following Griesbach, Westcott and Hort, say are not Scripture at all.¹³

Francis Turretin (1623-1687), pastor and theologian of the Church and Academy of Geneva, made it quite clear that the Reformers never thought of the infallible and inerrant Scriptures in terms of the non-existent autographs but always the available and accessible apographs. Turretin wrote,

By original texts, we do not mean the autographs written by the hand of Moses, of the prophets and the apostles, which certainly do not now exist. *We mean their apographs which are so called because they set forth to us the word of God in the very words of those who wrote under the immediate inspiration of the Holy Spirit.*¹⁴

Now, B B Warfield came into the scene two centuries later and changed all that by introducing his new theory of *Sola Autographa*, that the inerrancy of the Scriptures resides only in the autographs, the very

first scripts written by the original authors themselves.¹⁵ By so doing, he could straddle himself quite comfortably between the liberal and conservative camps. He would have had no qualms agreeing with the liberals who pounded on self-claimed “evidence” and “reason” that the Bible was indeed erroneous with many mistakes whether intentional or unintentional, divine or human. At the same time, he would have had no problems affirming with the conservatives that the Bible was truly inerrant because he thought of the Bible’s inerrancy only in terms of its autographs which of course no longer exist, and thus the inerrancy of autographs was really a matter of Faith and not Reason, end of discussion!

Princeton’s less than perfect view of the verbal and plenary preservation of the Scriptures came full circle when Warfield accepted without question the textual critical theory and method of Westcott and Hort. Warfield promoted the critical text of Westcott and Hort soon after it appeared in 1881.¹⁶ Princeton historian David Calhoun was correct to note that Warfield’s “positive attitude toward textual criticism influenced many to appreciate the science and to value the new translations of the Bible based upon its work.”¹⁷

Letis observed that it was Warfield’s employment of German higher criticism and Westcott-Hort’s lower (textual) criticism that led him to reject the authenticity of age-old Bible passages like Mark 16:9-20.¹⁸ Like Westcott and Hort, Warfield accepted the “conjectural emendation” (ie, speculative correction) of the Scriptures.¹⁹ Warfield and all the higher and lower critics were thus advocating that the Bible the Church had been using throughout the centuries contained non-inspired and extra-scriptural material which God never gave and never intended His people to read! Did the Church Fathers and the Reformers all misquote Jesus, reading from the wrong Bible? God forbid!

It is thus no surprise that Warfield, given his sympathy to the liberal method, did not think that the doctrine of the verbal and plenary inspiration of the Scriptures was indispensable. He wrote,

Let it not be said that thus we found the whole Christian system upon the doctrine of plenary inspiration. ... Inspiration is not the most fundamental of Christian doctrines, nor even the first thing we prove about the Scriptures. ... ‘without any inspiration we could have had Christianity; yea, and men could still have heard the truth and through it been awakened, and justified, and sanctified, and glorified ... even had we no Bible; ...’²⁰

But what does the Bible say about itself and its relation to faith and salvation? It is written, “The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul” (Ps 19:7). “Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word” (Ps 119:9). “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom 10:17). Does not Warfield realise that without the Scripture, there could be no Gospel? For did not the Apostle write, “Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins *according to the scriptures*; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day *according to the scriptures*” (1 Cor 15:1-4)? “According to the scriptures ... according to the scriptures” our faith must be, or else it is blind faith or no faith at all!

Warfield’s erroneous thinking concerning the indispensable doctrinal and practical importance of the absolute inspiration, authority and sufficiency of the Bible is surely refuted by the Bible itself, for it stands written, “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 Tim 3:16-17). The Bible as a whole and in all its parts to the last iota is precisely what we need, and all that we need, to know the living and true God, even Jesus Christ, the only way of salvation from sin and death, has been offered to mankind. We cannot separate Christ from His words. No Bible, no Christianity!

Warfield’s dichotomy of Faith and Reason became the philosophical noose that slowly but surely strangled and finally shook and scandalised the very foundations of Christianity which are Christ’s full deity and the Bible’s absolute authority.²¹ Such a naturalistic and compromised approach to the Holy Scriptures and the Christian Faith introduced by Warfield has left believers utterly vulnerable and practically defenceless to 20th and 21st century assaults on their Lord and His Word by the Modern Versions, *The DaVinci Code* and the Gnostic Gospels.²²

Can Doctrines Do Without Words?

Is Princeton’s “Plenary Inspiration” enough or is there a need to affirm “*Verbal Plenary Inspiration*?” In other words, does it really matter

if we do not have all the inspired words of Scriptures but just the fundamental doctrines of Christianity? Ryrie commented in his *Basic Theology* why there is a need to be very precise and strict in defining “Verbal Plenary Inspiration:”

While many theological viewpoints would be willing to say the Bible is inspired, one finds little uniformity as to what is meant by inspiration. Some focus it on the writers; others, on the writings; still others, on the readers. Some relate it to the general message of the Bible; others, to the thoughts; still others, to the words. Some include inerrancy; many don’t.

These differences call for precision in stating the biblical doctrine. Formerly all that was necessary to affirm one’s belief in full inspiration was the statement, “I believe in the *inspiration* of the Bible.” But when some did not extend inspiration to the words of the text it became necessary to say, “I believe in the *verbal inspiration* of the Bible.” To counter the teaching that not all parts of the Bible were inspired, one had to say, “I believe in the *verbal, plenary inspiration* of the Bible.” Then because some did not want to ascribe total accuracy to the Bible, it was necessary to say, “I believe in the *verbal, plenary, infallible, inerrant inspiration* of the Bible.” But then “infallible” and “inerrant” began to be limited to matters of faith only rather than also embracing all that the Bible records (including historical facts, genealogies, accounts of Creation, etc.), so it became necessary to add the concept of “*unlimited inerrancy*.” ***Each addition to the basic statement arose because of an erroneous teaching.***²³

It must be noted that the old Princeton theology did affirm that the plenary inspiration of the Holy Scriptures must necessarily extend to the words (ie, verbal inspiration). Charles Hodge made it clear that it is not just the thoughts, concepts, or doctrines in the Scriptures that are inspired but their very words. He taught that doctrines of the Scriptures are to be sought in the words, the two are inseparable. He wrote,

If the words—priest, sacrifice, ransom, expiation, propitiation, purification by blood, and the like—have no divine authority, then the doctrine which they embody has no such authority.

... Christ and his Apostles argue from the very words of Scripture. Our Lord says that David by the Spirit called the Messiah Lord, i.e., David used that word. It was in the use of a particular word, that Christ said (John x. 35), that the Scriptures cannot be broken. “If he call [sic] them gods unto whom the word of God came, and the Scriptures cannot be broken,” etc. The use of that word, therefore, according to Christ’s view of the Scripture, was determined by the Spirit of God. Paul, in Gal. iii.16, lays stress on the fact, that in the promise made by Abraham, a word used is singular and not

Can Verbal Plenary Inspiration Do Without Verbal Plenary Preservation?

plural, “seed,” “as of one,” and not “seeds as of many.” Constantly it is the very words of Scriptures which are quoted as of divine authority.

... All these, and similar modes of expression with which the Scriptures abound, imply that the words uttered were the words of God. ... The words of the prophet were the words of God, or he could not be God’s spokesman and mouth. It has also been shown that in the most formally didactic passage in the whole Bible on this subject (1 Cor. ii. 10-13), the Apostle expressly asserts that the truths revealed by the Spirit, he communicated in words taught by the Spirit.²⁴

Following the old but inadequate Princeton tradition, Presbyterian denominations and organisations have by and large affirmed merely the Scripture’s “plenary inspiration” but not its “*verbal* and plenary inspiration.” This is not to deny that some do indeed believe in verbal inspiration even without affirming the same. Nevertheless, the modernist/neo-evangelical versus fundamentalist battle for the Bible has so well developed the doctrine of the Bible that “verbal inspiration” has become an indispensable term for Biblical inerrancy in 20th century conservative evangelical and fundamental theology.²⁵ As such the doctrinal constitution or statements of faith of certain Bible-believing and Bible-defending churches or councils might require a much needed updating for the sake of clarity and precision in stating this Biblical truth.

Can Verbal Inspiration Do Without Verbal Preservation?

The Bibliological crisis that stems from Princeton theology has now led to the question of not just the Scripture’s verbal inspiration but also its verbal preservation. The modern opinion among reformed, evangelical and fundamental circles is that although the Scriptures are verbally and plenary inspired, they are not verbally and plenary preserved. As such the Church may be absolutely certain of the verbal plenary perfection of the Scriptures only in the past, that is in the autographs, but it may not be absolutely certain of the verbal plenary perfection of the Scriptures today, that is in the apographs.

One would think that the verbal and plenary inspiration of Scripture would naturally and automatically lead a person to believe in its verbal and plenary preservation, but sadly such logic is not so simple and obvious for such adherents who say,

We know for sure that the first Bible is perfect, but we cannot be so sure that the Bible in our hands today have no mistakes at all; and even if there

is such an errorless Bible today, we cannot know where it is because there are just too many different kinds of Bibles out there, and we just cannot tell which Bible is true and which is false.

Although we do not know where the perfect Bible is, we are dead against those who insist that they have in their hands a Bible that is 100% perfect without any mistake because of their belief that God has not only inspired His words 100% but also preserved His words 100% in the original languages to the last iota (Matt 5:18).

Pastors Charles Seet and Colin Wong, and others, in their paper, “Preserving Our Godly Path,” opposed the Verbal Plenary Preservation of the Holy Scriptures by quoting Rowland Ward, a minister of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia, who argued against verbal preservation and denounced the Textus Receptus as the best exemplar of the preserved text.²⁶ Ward believes that the Bible is infallible and inerrant to the “jot and tittle” only in the autographs, but denies that it is so infallible and inerrant in the apographs. Despite the Westminster Confession’s quotation of Matthew 5:18, Ward simplistically and illogically dismisses the special providential—“jot and tittle”—preservation of the Holy Scriptures supposing that

Matthew 5:18 (the jot and tittle passage) is not referring to the transmission of the text of Scripture but to the authority of God’s claims upon us. The transmission of Scripture is not such that the sources have been preserved with exactness in any particular manuscript but, as Owen noted, in all the manuscripts. And we cannot say that providence has preserved only some manuscripts since providence extends to all events and thus to the preservation of all the manuscripts. Nor can we say that providence tells us which manuscripts are the best ones: only manuscript comparison and analysis can do that. In short, “pure” does not mean “without any transcriptional errors” but it means something like “without loss of doctrines and with the text preserved in the variety of manuscripts.”²⁷

Several fallacious claims have been posited by Ward in his statement above. First, Ward claims that Matthew 5:18 concerns the authority and not the transmission of Scripture. This is a logical fallacy. The authority of Scripture is inextricably bound to its transmission and preservation by *providentia extraordinaria* or supernatural providence. The promise of the divine preservation of the inspired words of God to its last jot and tittle is true (unless one cares to spiritualise or explain away the Biblical text which is often the convenient route of escape by many who do not wish to face the truths of God’s Word plainly and literally due

to certain preconceived ideas or views). Equally significant is the Westminster Confession's employment of Matthew 5:18 as proof text for its statement on the special providential preservation of the Scriptures, highlighting in particular the Bible's *authenticity* and not merely its authority: "The Old Testament in Hebrew ... and the New Testament in Greek ... being immediately inspired by God, and, by His singular care and providence, kept pure in all ages, are therefore *authentic*."²⁸ On the meaning of the word "authentic," J S Candlish rightly commented,

It is obvious that, as the question here is as to the text of Scripture, the word authentic is used, not in the modern sense in which it has been employed by many ... as meaning historically true, but in its more *literal* sense, attested as a correct *copy* of the author's work.²⁹

William Orr likewise noted,

Now this affirms that the Hebrew text of the Old Testament and the Greek of the New which was known to the Westminster divines was immediately inspired by God because it was *identical* with the first text that God had kept pure in all ages. *The idea that there are mistakes in the Hebrew Masoretic texts or in the Textus Receptus of the New Testament was unknown to the authors of the Confession of Faith.*³⁰

Surely the 100% authenticity (or infallibility and inerrancy) of the Scriptures in the apographs or copies is the very reason why the Bible is 100% authoritative on every matter of faith and practice. How can the non-existent and intangible *autographa* or imperfect and corrupted *apographa* serve as the supreme and final authority of the Christian Faith? Surely they cannot!

Second, Ward errs when he says that preservation must be in "all the manuscripts" without distinction or discrimination. The fact is *not all* manuscripts are pure or uncorrupted. There exist manuscripts that show a corrupt hand. Dean J W Burgon had proven without doubt the corruptions that abound in the Alexandrian manuscripts of Westcott and Hort which he summarily dismissed as the "most scandalously corrupt copies extant."³¹ Thankfully, by God's special providence, these corruptions or corrupted manuscripts are in the minority. The majority of Greek manuscripts belonging to the Byzantine Text and the Textus Receptus display essentially the same readings.

Third, Ward holds to a rather uncertain or agnostic view of divine providence which allows for the preservation of only the doctrines of the Christian Faith but not the very words of Holy Scripture that God had

originally breathed out (*theopneustos*, 2 Tim 3:16). In other words, he denies verbal preservation in favour of conceptual preservation. But this is again not only biblically but also logically untenable, for how can there be doctrines or concepts without the words to explain or express them. Ward cited Owen, but for sure the distinguished puritan theologian did not advocate conceptual preservation over against verbal preservation as Ward would have us believe. Owen clearly believed in the preservation of the *words* of Scripture (ie, verbal preservation), not just the doctrines (ie, conceptual preservation), for he wrote, “Nor is it enough to satisfy us, that the *doctrines* mentioned are *preserved entire; every tittle and iota* in the Word of God must come under our care and consideration, as being, as such, from God.”³²

How easily “\$1000” becomes “\$7000” just by adding one stroke to the number “1,” and a “tie” becomes a “lie” when the stroke of the “t” is removed. Instead of “Blest be the *tie* that binds,” shall we now sing “Blest be the *lie* that binds?” Indeed, the tie that binds modernists, neo-evangelicals, and neo-fundamentalists is the lie that the Bible is imperfectly preserved with missing jots and tittles, denying Jesus’ clear and precise promise in Matthew 5:18 of the infallible preservation of His inerrant words. Meanings and figures change when we add to or subtract from God’s Word, even though it may just be a little bit. Did God allow His words to be changed, corrupted, or lost? Never! God by His infinite power and wisdom has ensured that every corruption to His Word is rejected, and every copying or printing mistake corrected! God is His own infallible Textual Critic, and we trust in His special providential work of preserving and restoring every jot and tittle of His words especially in the days of the Great Protestant Reformation and the age of the Printed Text so that His Word as a whole and in its parts right down to the last iota remains infallible and inerrant, and supremely authoritative in the faith and life of the Church.

Faithful Resolutions

In the 21st century Reformation movement, the Lord has raised a number of Christ-honouring institutions to take a declared position on the Biblical doctrine of the Verbal Plenary Preservation of Scriptures and to promote the Hebrew Masoretic Text and the Greek Textus Receptus underlying the Authorised or King James Bible.

By the International Council of Christian Churches (ICCC)

The ICCC is a worldwide fellowship of fundamental churches which are opposed to liberalism, ecumenism, charismatism, and neo-evangelicalism. Led by Dr Carl McIntire, its founding President, the ICCC in its World Congress held in Jerusalem in the year 2000 declared,

Believing the Holy Scriptures on the originals to be fully inspired with its words and genders and being complete as God's revelation to man without error;

Believing that God not only inspired the Bible without errors in fact, doctrine and judgment but preserved the Scriptures in all ages for all eternity as the Westminster Confession of Faith standard says—"the O.T. in Hebrew and the N.T. in Greek ... being immediately inspired by God and by his singular care and providence kept pure in all ages are therefore authentical ... They are to be translated into the vulgar language of every nation unto which they come;"

Believing the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, gave us a supernatural gift, and both inspired and preserved it. By inspired we mean that the Holy Spirit moved in the hearts of its human authors that they recorded the very words that God wanted written in the Bible using the personality and background of its writers but without error. "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." II Pet 1:21;

Believing God safeguarded the Bible in times past and will continue to do so in the future and all eternity. He preserved on Scripture, the Bible. "Heaven and earth shall pass away but my words shall not pass away;" Matt 24:35;

Believing the O.T. has been preserved in the Masoretic text and the N.T. in the Textus Receptus, combined they gave us the complete Word of God. The King James Version in English has been faithfully translated from these God-preserved manuscripts. Other good Protestant versions have been translated around the world in many languages based on the Masoretic and Textus Receptus until 1881 when Drs. Westcott and Hort used a shorter text removing many words, phrases and sections by following the eclectic watered down polluted Vaticanus and Sinaiticus manuscripts;

These manuscripts differ widely among themselves and with others amount to less than 5% of the manuscript evidence. God preserved the Textus Receptus in the majority text with 95%. This is called the traditional, or majority text. It is also called Eastern Byzantine text and also the manuscripts that have the longer and fuller texts; ...

We the International Council of Christian Churches meeting in Jerusalem, 8-14 November 2000 strongly urge the churches in their pulpits and people at large, to continue to use the time honoured and faithful longer translations and not the new shorter versions that follow in too many places the short eclectic texts. These are very similar to the shorter Westcott and Hort texts that remove or cast doubt on so many passages and words. Furthermore we are not against new versions as such but believe all true and faithful versions must be based on the traditional longer texts that the Holy Spirit preserved through the early century versions, the early church fathers and the faithful Textus Receptus.³³

By the Trinitarian Bible Society (TBS)

The TBS, in its latest position statement on the Bible as published in its *Quarterly Record*, April-June 2005, affirms in no uncertain terms the special providential preservation of the Scriptures, and specifically identifies the underlying texts of the KJV to be its definitive texts:

“The Trinitarian Bible Society Statement of Doctrine of the Holy Scripture” approved by the General Committee at its meeting held on 17th January 2005, and revised 25th February 2005 declares:

The Constitution of the Trinitarian Bible Society specifies the textual families to be employed in the translations it circulates. The Masoretic Hebrew and the Greek Received Texts are the texts that the Constitution of the Trinitarian Bible Society acknowledges to have been preserved by the special providence of God within Judaism and Christianity. Therefore these texts are definitive and the final point of reference in all the Society’s work.

These texts of Scripture reflect the qualities of God-breathed Scripture, including being authentic, holy, pure, true, infallible, trustworthy, excellent, self-authenticating, necessary, sufficient, perspicuous, self-interpreting, authoritative and inerrant (Psalm 19:7-9, Psalm 119). They are consequently to be received as the Word of God (Ezra 7:14; Nehemiah 8:8; Daniel 9:2; 2 Peter 1:19) and the correct reading at any point is to be sought within these texts.

The Society accepts as the best edition of the Hebrew Masoretic text the one prepared in 1524–25 by Jacob ben Chayyim and known, after David Bomberg the publisher, as the Bomberg text. This text underlies the Old Testament in the Authorised Version.

The Greek Received Text is the name given to a group of printed texts, the first of which was published by Desiderius Erasmus in 1516. The Society believes that the latest and best edition is the text reconstructed by F.H.A. Scrivener in 1894. This text was reconstructed from the Greek underlying the New Testament of the Authorised Version.³⁴

By the Dean Burgon Society (DBS)

The DBS was founded in the USA in 1978 to defend the Traditional Hebrew Masoretic Text and the Greek Textus Receptus underlying the King James Bible. Dr D A Waite and Dr David Otis Fuller were among the original founding members.

In its “Articles of Faith,” the DBS states:

We believe in the plenary, verbal, Divine inspiration of the sixty-six canonical books of the Old and the New Testaments (from Genesis to Revelation) in the original languages, and in their consequent infallibility and inerrancy in all matters of which they speak (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 Thessalonians 2:13). The books known as the Apocrypha, however, are not the inspired Word of God in any sense whatsoever. As the Bible uses it, the term “inspiration” refers to the writings, not the writers (2 Timothy 3:16-17); the writers are spoken of as being “holy men of God” who were “moved,” “carried” or “borne” along by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21) in such a definite way that their writings were supernaturally, plenary, and verbally inspired, free from any error, infallible, and inerrant, as no other writings have ever been or ever will be inspired.

We believe that the Texts which are the closest to the original autographs of the Bible are the Traditional Masoretic Hebrew Text for the Old Testament, and the traditional Greek Text for the New Testament underlying the King James Version (as found in “The Greek Text Underlying The English Authorized Version of 1611”).

We, believe that the King James Version (or Authorized Version) of the English Bible is a true, faithful, and accurate translation of these two providentially preserved Texts, which in our time has no equal among all of the other English Translations. The translators did such a fine job in their translation task that we can without apology hold up the Authorized Version of 1611 and say “This is the WORD OF GOD!” while at the same time realizing that, in some verses, we must go back to the underlying original language Texts for complete clarity, and also compare Scripture with Scripture.

We believe that all the verses in the King James Version belong in the Old and the New Testaments because they represent words we believe were in the original texts, although there might be other renderings from the original languages which could also be acceptable to us today. For an exhaustive study of any of the words or verses in the Bible, we urge the student to return directly to the Traditional Masoretic Hebrew Text and the Traditional Received Greek Text rather than to any other translation for help.³⁵

By the Far Eastern Bible College (FEBC)

The Far Eastern Bible College, founded by the Rev Dr Timothy Tow in 1962, in its Constitution states without equivocation its faith in God's forever infallible and inerrant words thusly:

We believe in the divine, Verbal Plenary Inspiration (Autographs) and Verbal Plenary Preservation (Apographs) of the Scriptures in the original languages, their consequent inerrancy and infallibility, and as the perfect Word of God, the Supreme and final authority in faith and life (2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:20-21; Ps 12:6-7; Matt 5:18, 24:35);

We believe the Hebrew Old Testament and the Greek New Testament underlying the Authorised (King James) Version to be the very Word of God, infallible and inerrant;

We uphold the Authorised (King James) Version to be the Word of God — the best, most faithful, most accurate, most beautiful translation of the Bible in the English language, and do employ it alone as our primary scriptural text in the public reading, preaching, and teaching of the English Bible.³⁶

May God's people not adore and exalt seemingly great scholars or schools of the past and the present, and deem them infallible and inerrant, for only the inspired and preserved words of God in the Holy Scriptures are infallible and inerrant, pure and perfect in every way, and our sole and supreme authority of faith and life to the glory of God. Amen.

Notes

¹ *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, sv "Alexander, Archibald," "Hodge, Charles," "Warfield, Benjamin Breckinridge," by M A Noll.

² Theodore Letis, *The Ecclesiastical Text*, 2nd ed (Philadelphia: Institute for Renaissance and Reformation Biblical Studies, 2000), 6.

³ Quoted by David Cloud, *Faith Versus the Modern Bible Versions* (Port Huron: Way of Life, 2005), 309.

⁴ Letis, *The Ecclesiastical Text*, 6, quoting Lefferts A Loetscher, *Facing the Enlightenment and Pietism* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1983), 228.

⁵ A title he earned for being the General Editor of the *Reader's Digest Bible*.

⁶ Bart D Ehrman, *Misquoting Jesus* (New York: HarperCollins, 2005), 11.

⁷ Ibid, "Acknowledgments." Ehrman dedicated his book to Metzger.

⁸ E F Hills, *Believing Bible Study* (Des Moines: Christian Research Press, 1977), 216-20.

⁹ Quoted by Letis, *The Ecclesiastical Text*, 8.

¹⁰ Charles Hodge, "Law of Criticism of the New Testament," as cited by Letis, *The Ecclesiastical Text*, 9.

Can Verbal Plenary Inspiration Do Without Verbal Plenary Preservation?

¹¹ Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986 reprint), 1:170.

¹² Letis, *The Ecclesiastical Text*, 11.

¹³ See Bruce Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, 3rd enlarged ed (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 119-146; Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, *The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 3-35; J Harold Greenlee, *Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 78-95; Daniel Wallace, "Inspiration, Preservation, and New Testament," in *New Testament Essays: In Honor of Homer A Kent Jr*, ed Gary Meadors (Winona Lake: BMH, 1991), 69-102.

¹⁴ Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology* (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1992 reprint), 1:106, emphasis mine. See also Robert Barnett, "Francis Turretin on the Holy Scriptures," a paper presented at the annual meeting of the Dean Burgon Society held at Calvary Baptist Church, Ontario, Canada, in 1995 (<http://www.deanburgonsociety.org/Preservation/barnett95.htm>, accessed on June 4, 2006).

¹⁵ See Theodore Letis, "B B Warfield, Common-Sense Philosophy and Biblical Criticism," in *Edward Freer Hills's Contribution to the Revival of the Ecclesiastical Text* (Philadelphia: Institute for Renaissance and Reformation Biblical Studies, 1987), 62-89; Jeffrey Khoo, "Sola Autographa or Sola Apographa: A Case for the Present Perfection and Authority of the Holy Scriptures," *The Burning Bush* 11 (2005): 3-19; American Presbyterian Church, "B B Warfield and the Doctrine of Inspiration," in <http://www.americanpresbyterianchurch.org/inspiration.htm>; and "B B Warfield and the Reformation Doctrine of the Providential Preservation of the Biblical Text," in <http://www.americanpresbyterianchurch.org/preservation.htm>, accessed on June 1, 2006.

¹⁶ Warfield, in his review of the textual critical theory and text of Westcott and Hort, wrote, "We cannot doubt but that the leading principles of method which they have laid down will meet with speedy universal acceptance. They furnish us for the first time with a really scientific method." *Presbyterian Review* 3 (1882): 355. Letis has rightly judged that Warfield's glowing review of the Westcott-Hort Critical theory and text "would forever endear it to conservatives in the United States." *The Ecclesiastical Text*, 17.

¹⁷ David B Calhoun, *Princeton Seminary: The Majestic Testimony 1869-1929* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1996), 113-4.

¹⁸ Letis, *The Ecclesiastical Text*, 19. For a most excellent defence of the authenticity of Mark 16:9-20, read J W Burgon, *The Last Twelve Verses of the Gospel According to S Mark Vindicated against Recent Critical Objectors and*

Established (Oxford: James Parker and Co, 1871), which has been reprinted by the Dean Burgon Society (www.deanburgonsociety.org).

¹⁹ Warfield wrote, "It may be said here, again, that thus a wide door is opened for the entrance of deceitful dealing with the Word of Life. The danger is apparent and imminent. But we cannot arbitrarily close the door lest we incur the same charge." *Presbyterian Review* 3 (1882): 347-8, as cited in Letis, *The Ecclesiastical Text*, 19.

²⁰ Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible* (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1948), 210-1.

²¹ The inconsistency of B B Warfield in separating Faith and Reason in his theological method was ably exposed by E F Hills, "A History of My Defence of the King James Bible," *The Burning Bush* 4 (1998): 99-105. For an excellent synopsis and analysis of modernism, rationalism, and naturalistic textual criticism, read Hills's, *The King James Version Defended* (Des Moines: Christian Research Press, 1984), 62-86. This book is now available online without charge: go to http://www.john3-16.connectfree.co.uk/efhills/efhills_index.html.

²² For a Bible-based and faith-based defence of the Christian Faith and Scripture against Dan Brown's attack on the Canon of Scripture through *The DaVinci Code*, and Princeton's assault on the traditional text and the Textus Receptus through the Critical Text of Bruce Metzger et al, and the promotion of the Gnostic Gospels by Elaine Pagels, see my papers, "The Blasphemy and Deception of *The DaVinci Code*" (co-authored with Suan-Yew Quek), *The Burning Bush* 12 (2006): 14-24; "The Judas Gospel: Bad News of Betrayal," *Faith and Freedom* (May 2006): 2, 11, 12. Both articles are available online at www.febc.edu.sg.

²³ Charles C Ryrie, *Basic Theology* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1986), 67.

²⁴ Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986 reprint), 1:164-5.

²⁵ See Quek Suan Yew, "Biblical Polemics: A Critical Analysis of Four Major Modern Religious Movements Which Contribute to the Ultimate Formation of the One World Church in the Light of Historic Fundamentalist Theology," unpublished ThD dissertation, Far Eastern Bible College, 2005.

²⁶ Charles Seet and Colin Wong, et al, "Preserving Our Godly Path," a paper presented to the Sunday School of Life Bible-Presbyterian Church on December 1, 2002. See amended version published in <http://www.lifebpc.com/ourstand/godlypath.htm> (accessed on June 1, 2006) against believers who seek to preserve godly paths by affirming the divine preservation of all the godly words in the original Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek language Scriptures underlying the Reformation Bibles best represented by the Authorised or King James Version, and denounce the corrupt Alexandrian or Westcott-Hort text underlying the modern Bible versions.

Can Verbal Plenary Inspiration Do Without Verbal Plenary Preservation?

²⁷ Rowland S Ward, "Recent Criticisms of the Westminster Confession of Faith," in <http://spindleworks.com/library/wcf/ward.htm#c>, accessed on June 1, 2006.

²⁸ The Westminster Confession of Faith, 1:8.

²⁹ J S Candlish, "The Doctrine of the Westminster Confession on Scripture," as quoted in Theodore Letis, *The Majority Text* (Philadelphia: Institute for Renaissance and Reformation Biblical Studies, 1987), 174, emphasis mine.

³⁰ William F Orr, "The Authority of the Bible as Reflected in the Proposed Confession of 1967," as quoted in Letis, *The Majority Text*, 174, emphasis mine.

³¹ J W Burgon, *The Revision Revised* (Collingswood: Dean Burgon Society, 1883), 16.

³² Quoted in Jeffrey Khoo, "John Owen on the Perfect Bible," *The Burning Bush* 10 (2004): 77.

³³ "ICCC 16th World Congress Statements," *Far Eastern Beacon* 32:7 (Christmas 2000):14, and cited by Jeffrey Khoo, *Kept Pure in All Ages: Recapturing the Authorised Version and the Doctrine of Providential Preservation* (Singapore: FEBC Press, 2001), 126-7. For a historical overview of Dr Carl McIntire's significant contribution to the defence of the historic Christian Faith, the infallibility and inerrancy of the Scriptures, and the reliability of King James Bible in the Bible Presbyterian Church, read Mrs Frank Mood, "The Bible Presbyterian Church and Dr Carl McIntire," in *The McIntire Memorial* (Seoul: Truth & Freedom Publishing Co, 2005), 117-125.

³⁴ "Statement of Doctrine of Holy Scripture," 10-11. For the complete document, go to www.trinitarianbiblesociety.com/site/qv/qv571.pdf. See also the Society's online articles at <http://www.trinitarianbiblesociety.org/site/onlinearticles.asp>.

³⁵ Dean Burgon Society, "Articles of Faith, Operation & Organization," as adopted at the Organisational Meeting at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, November 3-4, 1978 (http://www.deanburgonsociety.org/DBS_Society/articles.htm, accessed on June 27, 2006). See also D A Waite, "The Dean Burgon Society Deserves Its Name: Ten Reasons Why," at http://www.deanburgonsociety.org/DBS_Society/deserves.htm, accessed on June 27, 2006.

³⁶ "Statement of Faith," *Far Eastern Bible College Prospectus* (2005-2009): 11. For FEBC's defence of the Verbal Plenary Preservation of the Holy Scriptures and the King James Bible, go to <http://www.febc.edu.sg/Doctrine of Perfect Preservation.htm>.

INSPIRED TEXTUAL CRITICISM?

Jeffrey Khoo

Is the Biblical doctrine of the Verbal Plenary Preservation (VPP) of the Holy Scriptures “inspired perfect textual criticism?” VPP advocates say “No!” But VPP detractors persist in painting a different and distorted picture of their opponents. The skewed depiction of VPP by its detractors is yet another straw man that has been conveniently and desperately erected to knock down the 100% inspiration and the 100% preservation of the infallible and inerrant words of God.¹

Let it be stated again that VPP believers do not believe in “double inspiration,” “post-canonical inspiration,” or “inspired perfect textual criticism.” As a matter of fact, these are terms alien to the VPP doctrine, and none of our VPP writings use such terms to explain or describe the doctrine.

VPP is Not “Double Inspiration” or “Post-Canonical Inspiration”

VPP concerns *preservation*, not inspiration. VPP is distinguished from VPI (Verbal Plenary Inspiration). VPI is the one-time act of God in the past when He breathed out (*theopneustos*) the original language words in the autographs of the Holy Scriptures. VPP, on the other hand, is the continuous act of God in preserving the very same original language words in the apographs (or copies) of the Holy Scriptures we have in our hands today. In the VPP doctrine, we are dealing with inspired *words* of the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Scriptures, and *not* inspired men or methods, versions or translations.

Much as VPP believers hold the KJV in very high esteem, they do not believe in an “inspired KJV.” As such, they do not embrace a “doubly inspired” or “separately inspired” KJV. As a matter of fact, the Dean Burgon Society which believes in VPP and defends the KJV frowns upon any reference to the KJV as “inspired” or “given by inspiration.” The

Dean Burgon Society clearly states its official position on the Bible's "Inspiration" thus,

Whereas, in all of the official documents of the Dean Burgon Society, the terms "God breathed," or "inspired" are never used when referring to the King James Bible, but, on the contrary, there is a clear avoidance of calling the King James Bible "inspired," and

Whereas, in all of the official documents of the Dean Burgon Society, the terms "breathed out," "inspired," or "inspiration" are reserved exclusively for the Words of the original Hebrew/Aramaic and Greek manuscripts or for the exact copies of those Words that God has been [sic] preserved for us today, and

Whereas, in all of the official documents of the Dean Burgon Society, the terms used for the King James Bible (or Authorized Version) are as follows: (1) a "true, faithful, and accurate translation," (2) a translation that "has no equal among all of the other English translations," (3) "the Word of God," (4) "an accurate translation of the true, inerrant, infallible Word of God," (5) the "true Word of God" in a faithful language translation, (6) "the God-honored, most accurate, and best translation," (7) a translation that occupies an "honored position," (8) a translation that has our "confidence," and (9) we "continue to recommend its continued use in Bible believing church pulpits, Pastors' studies, home, Bible School classes, and formal classes in Bible Institutes, colleges and theological seminaries," therefore

Be It Resolved, that all members of the Dean Burgon Society and members of the Executive Committee and Advisory Council particularly follow the teachings and references found in our official documents when referring either to the original language texts of Hebrew/Aramaic or Greek or to the King James Bible, especially regarding the technical distinctions that are made therein with regard to "inspire," "inspiration," and other terms.²

The allegation that VPP means an "inspired KJV" is blatantly false. Why cannot Anti-VPPists deal with the fact that VPP means *a presently infallible and inerrant Scripture in the original languages—the Hebrew Masoretic Text and the Greek Textus Receptus*—on which the KJV is based? Is it because they cannot deal with the truth? Or is it because they have not the faith to believe that God has indeed preserved His words infallibly to the jot and tittle (Matt 5:18)?

Ironically, it is not VPP but Non-VPP or Anti-VPP proponents who are calling the KJV "inspired." For instance, Life Bible-Presbyterian Church, which is against VPP and calls it "schismatic," even "heresy," says this about the KJV, "We must declare the KJV Bible to be nothing

less than God's powerful inspired Word."³ Such a strong statement for the KJV could be misconstrued as Ruckmanism, and it would be better if Life Bible-Presbyterian Church sticks to the strict definition of Biblical "inspiration" (*theopneustos*) in Article 4.2.1 of her Constitution as meaning the Holy Scriptures in the "*original languages*" (2 Tim 3:16).

Now, if Life Bible-Presbyterian Church believes the KJV to be "nothing less than God's powerful inspired Word," why then is the Far Eastern Bible College and all VPP holders at fault for believing *the Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek words immediately underlying the KJV* to be nothing less than God's powerful inspired words, infallible and inerrant? Those who condemn VPP believers for believing in a Perfect Bible in the *Hebrew Old Testament and Greek New Testament behind the KJV* ought to do some self-examination: "And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but perceivest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Either how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me pull out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye" (Luke 6:41-42). Let us reason together: How can the KJV be "nothing less than God's powerful inspired Word" if its *underlying Hebrew and Greek Texts* are imperfect and contain mistakes? How can the KJV be good when its underlying texts or words are no good or not so good? "For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit" (Luke 6:43).

VPP is not "Inspired Perfect Textual Criticism"

The phrase, "inspired perfect textual criticism," is self-contradictory. Does a "Canine Feathered Cat" exist? Only in Aesop, one would think. It goes without saying that an "inspired perfect textual criticism" is a new and strange mythical creature of pure fiction.

As explained above, the word "inspired" is always used of the original language words of Scripture, not any man or method. All Scripture (*pasa graphe*) is God-breathed or inspired by God (*theopneustos*) as stated in 2 Timothy 3:16. Inspired Scripture or words is correct, but there are no inspired men, methods, translations, or textual criticism.

Furthermore, textual criticism is far from being a perfectly objective science. The textual critical game is played with man-made rules. I

wonder which textual critic on earth would be so foolhardy to claim infallibility for himself or his rules? A E Housman has judged correctly, “A textual critic engaged upon his business is not at all like Newton investigating the motions of the planets: he is much more like a dog hunting for fleas.”⁴

It must be put on record that believers of the 100% inspiration and the 100% preservation of the Holy Scriptures are not “estranged sons” of Benjamin Wilkinson (an SDA), as caricatured by Doug Kutilek, just because they share with Wilkinson the same belief here about the Scriptures. Such Kutilek logic and equation, if embraced, would make all monotheists like Jews and Christians “estranged sons” of Muslims! I eat rice, the Malays eat rice, am I therefore a Malay? What bad logic!

Alan McGregor of the Bible League (UK), hardly an SDA, agrees with Wilkinson’s belief and defence of the Special Providential Preservation of the Scriptures (*Providentia Extraordinaria* or VPP) and the complete trustworthiness and faithfulness of the KJV despite Wilkinson’s SDAism.⁵ It defies logic to throw out the baby with the bathwater. Enemies of the KJV and the VPP of Scriptures who castigate anyone and everyone who is Pro-KJV or Pro-VPP as holders of “double inspiration” or “inspired textual criticism” are theologically ignorant, blind, immature or hardened.

It is also alleged that VPP has “wrecked [sic] havoc and caused discord among brethren.” What a malicious allegation! The Bible teaches separation (as commanded by the Lord in 2 Cor 6:14-7:1 and 2 Thess 3:6-15). Is the Biblical doctrine of separation therefore schismatic? Only neo-evangelicals and ecumenists would think so. Why are so-called “fundamentalists” or “separatists” singing the same tune?

Has separation caused havoc in the church? If there is havoc, it is caused by Anti-VPPists who persecute Biblical separatists for their defence of the good old Reformation Bible and Text against the modern corrupted texts and cut-up versions of Westcott and Hort. Separation is sometimes inevitable, and always painful, but to malign as schismatic those who had separated from the old church with nothing to start a new church from scratch so that they can believe in the truth and practise their faith in peace is unjust to say the least. The Rev Dr Timothy Tow—founding father of the Bible-Presbyterian movement in Singapore and Malaysia, and founding pastor of Life Bible-Presbyterian Church—left

peaceably the old church in 2003 to found a new church, True Life Bible-Presbyterian Church, so that he might preach and teach without any hindrance the 100% perfection of Scripture without any mistake. He wreaked no havoc in Life Bible-Presbyterian Church which he had faithfully pastored for over 50 years. He simply refused to bow to the pressure put on him not to assert that the Bible today is 100% perfect. He simply wanted to remain true to the Dean Burgon Oath he had taken together with the faculty and directors of the Far Eastern Bible College, and to proclaim boldly and unequivocally that the Bible is 100% perfect without any mistake to the last syllable and letter, 100% inspired and 100% preserved in the original languages. As a Biblical fundamentalist and disciple of Dr Carl McIntire, he simply wanted to warn against the errors of Westcott and Hort, and the corruption that is found in the Alexandrian Text and in the modern perversions of the Bible.⁶ The Rev Dr Timothy Tow is ultimately a faithful disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ, for he believes without equivocation the Lord's infallible words of promise, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matt 24:35, Mark 13:31, Luke 21:33), and he believes the Lord fulfilled His promise in all the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek words underlying the good old Authorised Version or the King James Bible of the Great Protestant Reformation.

For many who believe in the Biblical doctrine of the VPP of Scripture, it has given them great hope and joy. Among brethren who submit themselves to the supreme authority of the Holy Scriptures, there is only great comfort and assurance to know that God's Word is presently infallible and inerrant to the last word, and to know with maximum certainty the precise location of God's infallible and inerrant words so that they might know how to live by God's every word (Matt 4:4).

Are non-TR, non-KJV believers or users "lacking in saving faith?" VPP believers are not so presumptuous as to deem whoever is non-TR or non-KJV unsaved. Dr Homer A Kent Jr, my highly esteemed NT professor at Grace Theological Seminary, under whose fine tutelage I excelled in my NT studies, is a godly, gracious, and gentle man. However, I cannot agree with his view that the TR and KJV are inferior, and the VPP of Scripture is non-biblical. Neither can I commend him for his role in the NIV. Notwithstanding my disagreement with him, I have never asserted that he is not saved or has lost his salvation. God forbid! Whether a person is saved or not is for each individual to ascertain for

himself based on the Holy Scriptures—God’s Perfect Yardstick on earth (Ps 12:6-7, 19:7). Let every man examine himself whether he be in the faith (2 Cor 13:5). Let every man be judged by Christ and His Gospel (1 Cor 15:1-4). God alone is the perfect Judge (1 Cor 4:3-5, Heb 12:23). Only God can see the heart (1 Sam 16:7, Ps 139:23-24, John 7:24). Furthermore, once a person is saved, he cannot be unsaved (Rom 8:28-39, Eph 1:13-14). “Salvation is of the LORD” (Jon 2:9).

Nevertheless, I submit that a denial of VPP would logically lead one to a denial of VPI for if God did not preserve His words infallibly, how can we be sure that He had inspired His words inerrantly? What is the use of VPI without VPP? Anti-VPPists could learn a thing or two from today’s preeminent textual-critical guru—Bart Ehrman—who is thoroughly consistent and brutally honest, and a “happy agnostic” to boot!¹⁷ Make no mistake about it—Dr Ehrman lives and breathes textual criticism! Having attained textual-critical nirvana, it is no wonder that he is so gnostically high in agnostic bliss. Where is God? “God is nowhere.” “Now here” or “no where?” God is no where and so is the Bible. How’s that for “inspired textual criticism?”

Notes

¹ For a Biblical defence of the doctrine of the special providential preservation or verbal plenary preservation of the Holy Scriptures, and the present infallibility and inerrancy of God’s Word in the Hebrew Masoretic Text and the Greek Textus Receptus underlying the KJV, go to <http://www.febc.edu.sg>, <http://www.truthbpc.com>, <http://www.deanburgonsociety.org>, <http://www.biblefortoday.org>, <http://www.trinitarianbiblesociety.org>.

² See D A Waite, “Bible Inspiration and the KJB” (www.deanburgonsociety.org/PDF/Bible_Inspiration.pdf, accessed August 13, 2006). See also D A Waite’s reply to Thomas Cassidy’s slander against Bible-Presbyterian pastors in Singapore, namely, S H Tow, Timothy Tow, Jeffrey Khoo, and Quek Suan Yew, concerning the KJV issue, and Cassidy’s disagreement with the DBS when it voted not to use the term “inspired” with reference to the KJV in 2001 (http://www.deanburgonsociety.org/DBS_Society/waite_reply.htm, accessed August 13, 2006).

³ “A Doctrinal Positional Statement of Life Bible-Presbyterian Church,” <http://www.lifebpc.com/aboutlifebpc/doctrinalposition.htm>, accessed August 13, 2006.

⁴ Christopher Kelty, Alfred Housman, and Scott McGill, “The Application of Thought to Textual Criticism by A.E. Housman,” *Connexions*, April 23, 2004, <http://cnx.org/content/m11803/1.2/>.

⁵ Alan J Macgregor, *Three Modern Versions: A Critical Assessment of the NIV, ESV and NKJV* (Wiltshire: The Bible League, 2004), 12-13.

⁶ Under the leadership of Dr Carl McIntire, the International Council of Christian Churches (ICCC) in Amsterdam (1998) and Jerusalem (2000) affirmed the Holy Scriptures to be “forever inerrant and infallible,” that “the O.T. has been preserved in the Masoretic text and the N.T. in the Textus Receptus, combined they gave us the complete Word of God. The King James Version in English has been faithfully translated from these God-preserved manuscripts.” (“ICCC 16th World Congress Statements,” *Far Eastern Beacon* [Christmas 2000]: 13). In 1998, the ICCC passed a statement on “Bible Versions:” “BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, that the International Council of Christian Churches, assembled in the historic English Reformed Church in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, observing its 50th Anniversary, August 11-15, 1998, urge all Bible-believing churches worldwide to use only the Authorised or KING JAMES VERSION in their services and in their teaching ministry and warn the followers of Christ against these innumerable ‘new’ bibles which are not translations at all, but revisions conforming to the personal bias and views of those who have originated them and who are profiting by commercial sales of such.” (“ICCC 50th Anniversary Conference Statements,” *Far Eastern Beacon* [November 1998]: 1).

⁷ Bart Ehrman, *Misquoting Jesus: The Story Behind Who Changed the Bible and Why* (New York: HarperCollins, 2005).

BRUCE METZGER AND THE CURSE OF TEXTUAL CRITICISM

Jeffrey Khoo

Bruce Manning Metzger passed away on February 13, 2007 at the age of 93. He taught New Testament language and literature at Princeton Theological Seminary (PTS) since 1938. He is known particularly for his textual criticism of the New Testament. For his textual-critical work, many are now singing his praises, and extolling him in no uncertain terms as one of Princeton's "greatest intellectual ornaments," and an "absolutely preeminent New Testament scholar." Iain Torrance, President of PTS, called Metzger, "the greatest American New Testament critic and biblical translator of the twentieth century."

Metzger's Influence

Metzger is adored by modern-day textual critics who hail him as a "legend." Here is one anecdote that shows how Metzger is practically worshipped, "Kathleen Maxwell told us in her presentation at the SBL in Edinburgh that she had phoned Bart Ehrman concerning a special feature in a manuscript (a red cross marking out the place where there was an illumination in the exemplar of the MS). Ehrman had told her to phone his Doktorvater Metzger to see if he had encountered this feature in MSS. Bart gave her the number and she got Metzger on the line. To us she remarked, 'I felt like I was calling God!'" If this is not blasphemy (cf Acts 12:20-23), it is surely idolatry! This is the curse of textual criticism—the glorification of the scholar and his mind, instead of Christ and His words.

Although Metzger has died, his books and his students live on. One of his students is bestselling author Bart Ehrman who under Metzger's tutelage ended up an agnostic. Metzger's mantle has fallen upon Ehrman, and the latter will no doubt continue the Bible-denying legacy of his master! Metzger's textbook on textual criticism—*The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*—has just been

revised and published with Ehrman as co-author and is likely to remain as the standard for all aspiring textual-critical scholars. Dan Wallace of Dallas Theological Seminary, a Metzger fan and TR/KJV-basher, wrote, “Metzger-Ehrman’s *Text of the New Testament* remains the standard handbook on NT textual criticism. Even with its few flaws, this volume should be read, underlined, digested, and quoted by all students of the NT text. It rightfully deserves to be within arm’s reach of all who study the sacred Greek Scriptures.” Wallace’s influence at Dallas will no doubt lead more Dallas students to close textual-critical encounters of the deadly Metzger-Ehrman kind.

At this juncture, let me offer a Biblical fundamentalist perspective of Metzger’s contributions to New Testament scholarship. Faithful and true Biblicists ought to be warned that Metzger’s scholarship is not one to be desired nor admired. Metzger could well be a gentle, courteous, and nice man as described in many a eulogy, but such adulations are no sure gauge of his biblical and theological orthodoxy. Let us beware lest we fall into the snare of unbelieving scholarship, and the seduction of worldly honour and glory. Every biblical scholar or theologian who is committed to the total infallibility and inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures, and the authenticity and integrity of the Greek New Testament of the Protestant Reformation which is the *Textus Receptus* must know that the adoption of Metzger’s philosophy and methodology will only lead to chronic uncertainty and perpetual unbelief of the total inspiration and perfect preservation of the Holy Scriptures.

Metzger Rejected

Let me share with you my experience. Metzger’s book on textual criticism—*The Text of the New Testament*—was introduced to me when I was a student at the Far Eastern Bible College (FEBC, 1985-1989). It was required reading for a couple of New Testament courses that I had to take. Those lecturers of mine had earned their theological degrees from top seminaries and universities in the USA and UK. They used and quoted Metzger favourably. When I myself pursued further studies in the States, at Grace Theological Seminary in the years 1989-1991, I found a modernist like Metzger highly regarded in what was a conservative evangelical and fundamentalist institution. (The Grace Seminary catalogue of 1989-1991 proudly advertised Bruce Metzger to attract prospective students. Page 63 of the catalogue contained a handsome

photo of Metzger with this caption, “Dr. Bruce Metzger, one of the dozens of noted authors and theologians who have lectured to Grace Seminary students.”)

By the grace of God, the contents of Metzger’s book, in particular his textual methodology and interpretation of history, never sat well with me. For instance, one lecturer at FEBC during my student days, quoting Metzger, taught that the teachings of Jesus were not unique to Him, but merely an improvement on the existing traditions Jesus had access to in His day. What an attack on the integrity of our Lord and His Word! Also, I was taught the so-called “eclectic” method of textual criticism which favoured the critical theories of liberal Anglicans, Westcott and Hort. It made me proud to think that I could judge or emend the Holy Scriptures based on human reasoning and man-made rules. For over a decade, I had used the modernistic United Bible Societies’ Greek New Testament edited by Metzger et al, but am thankful to the Lord for delivering me out of ignorance and error through the writings of J W Burgon, E F Hills and D A Waite. Dr Waite, who is President of the Dean Burgon Society, visited Singapore in 1992. He spoke at Calvary Pandan Bible-Presbyterian Church and FEBC on the textual issue and defended the KJV and its underlying texts. The glory of God and the logic of faith then led the Rev Dr Timothy Tow, the principal of FEBC and his faculty, to see the wonderful truth of the verbal and plenary preservation of the Holy Scriptures (Ps 12:6-7, Matt 5:18, 24:35). FEBC now requires the use of only the Traditional Hebrew Masoretic Text and the Greek Textus Receptus published by the Trinitarian Bible Society in its biblical language and literature classes. The KJV continues to be the only acceptable version for use in its English Bible courses.

Metzger’s Myth

Many an evangelical textual critic are impressed by the “awesome” footnotes of Metzger’s scholarly writings. Metzger’s texts and his annotated footnotes are said to be indispensable stuff in scholarly text-critical research. O, how we must be wary! Metzger’s “Bible” of textual criticism is filled with unbelief and deception. One example of deception is the myth Metzger concocted to question the authenticity of the Trinitarian verse called the “Johannine Comma” (1 John 5:7). Metzger in his textbook—*The Text of the New Testament*—pontificated, “Erasmus promised that he would insert the *Comma Johanneum*, as it is called, in

future editions if a single Greek manuscript could be found that contained the passage. At length such a copy was found—or was made to order!” For decades, Metzger’s story has been parroted by anti-preservationists, TR/KJV opponents as if it was gospel truth. Erasmus expert, Henk J de Jonge of Leiden University, in his paper on “Erasmus and the *Comma Johanneum*” has convincingly proven that Metzger’s story on Erasmus is utterly baseless. This was no small embarrassment to Metzger and all his followers. Metzger, however, did not remove his misleading story about Erasmus in subsequent editions of his book, but placed a corrigendum in a footnote on a distant page (p291) in his third, enlarged edition confessing that what he had written on page 101 about Erasmus and 1 John 5:7 “needs to be corrected.”

Metzger’s Ecumenism

Let it be known that Metzger was a fervent promoter and leader of the ecumenical movement. The ecumenical New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) of 1977–1990 was Metzger’s baby. Without Metzger there would be no NRSV. Metzger saw no better way to promote ecumenism than to produce a Bible that would unite both Protestant and Catholic elements. Metzger was actively involved in the translation of the Apocrypha and even expanded it to include 3rd and 4th Maccabees and Psalm 151. He did this to please the Roman Catholic Church and the Greek Orthodox Church. In 1976, he personally presented the ecumenical edition of the RSV to Demetrios I, the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople and titular head of the several Orthodox Churches. In 1993, Metzger presented a Catholic edition of the NRSV to Pope John Paul II at the Vatican. Why did he do all this? PTS President, Iain Torrance, tells us why, “Bruce Metzger understood and was passionate about the significance of biblical translation for ecumenical dialogue. ... It was important to him that Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox, and Protestant Christians be able to have recourse to a common biblical text as an instrument of unity.”

Is such an ecumenical ethos shared by Biblical fundamentalists and separatists? If not, why are fundamentalist pastors and scholars from Bob Jones University, Central, Detroit, Temple and other fundamental Baptist Seminaries which believe and practise separation commending and recommending Metzger, his ecumenical RSV/NRSV and the many

modern versions that stem from his corrupt Greek Text? Is this apostasy, hypocrisy, compromise, or what?

Metzger Defeated

“For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth” (2 Cor 13:8). Despite the evangelical/fundamentalist compromise today, and the denial of God’s special providence in the days of the Great Protestant Reformation in the restoration of His true Church and reception of His true Word, **the promise of God holds true for He has supernaturally preserved His inspired Hebrew Old Testament and Greek New Testament words on which the King James Bible—the Reformation Bible—is based, and has surely raised up in these last days a remnant of Biblicists from all over the world who remain true to the spirit of the Reformation, who refuse to kowtow to the ecumenical idolatry and textual-critical scholarolatry of this postmodern and neo-deistic age.** “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” (Gal 6:7).

THE BLASPHEMY AND DECEPTION OF *THE DA VINCI CODE*

Jeffrey Khoo and Quek Suan Yew

Caveat

Satan is a liar and a deceiver (John 8:44, Rev 12:9). Dan Brown's bestselling novel—*The Da Vinci Code* (Bantam Press, 2003; 593 pages)—is the latest Satanic attack against our Lord Jesus Christ and His inerrant Word. Brown seductively weaves a highly imaginative story in a vain attempt to prove that the Jesus believed by Christians today is not the same Jesus who lived in the first century. According to *The Da Vinci Code*, the true historical Jesus was only an ordinary man and not God at all.

The book is a most seductive and deceptive novel replete with hidden codes, murder, sex and intrigue. It seeks to debunk the common notion that the Holy Grail is the Cup of the Last Supper of Christ. The author asserts that the painting by Leonardo Da Vinci of the Last Supper reveals that the Holy Grail refers actually to Mary Magdalene who he says is the wife of Jesus Christ. Mary Magdalene is said to be pregnant when she was with Christ at His resurrection. Not only that, this lineage of Christ and Mary Magdalene continues to this very day. This is blasphemy in the highest degree.

Brown's attacks on Jesus Christ and the Holy Scriptures are not new. His blasphemous and deceptive views have been propounded for decades within the four walls of modernistic universities and liberal seminaries. Brown distills the academic jargon and weaves the views of liberalism into a mystery novel for the general audience, and for the money no less.

The Blasphemy of *The Da Vinci Code*

In his book, Brown attacks the inspiration, preservation, and canonicity of the Scriptures. The Bible he says, "is a product of *man*, ...

Not of God. The Bible did not fall magically from the clouds. Man created it as a historical record of tumultuous times, and it has evolved through countless translations, additions, and revisions. History has never had a definitive version of the book. ... [T]housands of documents already existed chronicling His life as a mortal man. To rewrite the history books, ... Constantine commissioned and financed a new Bible, which omitted those gospels that spoke of Christ's *human* traits and embellished those gospels that made him godlike. The earlier gospels were outlawed, gathered up, and burned."

As far as Brown is concerned, the historical and factual gospels have been destroyed in the 4th century. What remains today are the spurious and fictitious Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John that promote a mythical, godlike Jesus. So, all this while, Christians have been reading the wrong Gospels and believing in a false Jesus!

Truth of God's Perfection

Does Brown's unbelief make the faith of God without effect? "God forbid; yea, let God be true, but every man a liar" (Rom 3:4).

How do we know that the Bible today is truly the Word of God, perfect and without mistakes? Simply because God says so! The declaration, "Thus saith the LORD," or "Hear the Word of the LORD," or "The LORD spake ... saying," appears over 3,000 times in the Bible. Be not deceived, the Bible is altogether God's Word, not man's word. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God (*theopneustos*, literally, "God-breathed") 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 Tim 3:16-17). The Bible was written over a span of 1,500 years by more than 40 different writers, and despite all its diversity, its miraculous unity is obvious. It goes without saying that though the Bible has many writers, it has but one Author—God Himself. That every one of the OT prophecies concerning Christ's first coming has been fulfilled precisely proves the Bible's authenticity (eg, Isa 7:14 cf Matt 1:22-23).

How do we know that the Scriptures that we have today are the true ones, and not those that have been lost for over a thousand years? We know this because God promised to preserve His words perfectly and perpetually. Psalm 12:6-7 says, "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.” Jesus Himself promised, “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, Mark 13:31, Luke 21:33). “The Scripture cannot be broken” (John 10:35).

The true Bible can be easily identified. It is the one that has an unbroken lineage, fully and continuously preserved by God down through the ages, and always in the possession of His people. Thus, the perfect and true Scriptures are not in the lately found Alexandrian manuscripts underlying the modern corrupt versions (which incidentally present a less than divine Jesus preferred by Brown), nor are they in the newly discovered Dead Sea Scrolls and Nag Hammadi codices (Gnostic manuscripts from Egypt) as mentioned by Brown, but in the long-existing, time-tested and Christ-honouring Hebrew and Greek Scriptures underlying the good old Authorised Version.

Certainty of Christian Conviction

How can we be absolutely sure that the Scriptures we hold in our hands today are truly the infallible and inerrant Word of God? Faith is the answer! “But 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” (Heb 11:6). The logic of faith is the key to certainty. God says it, that settles it, we believe it! We do not see to believe; we believe in order to see.

The Apostle Peter told the Church to trust in “a more sure word of prophecy”—the Holy Scriptures—as written by eyewitnesses: “Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man (and certainly not by the will of Constantine): but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Pet 1:20-21).

If we are truly born again and the Spirit of God dwells within us, we cannot but know and believe the Truth of God’s Word. The Holy Spirit is “the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you” (John 14:17). “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth ... He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you” (John 16:13-14). “But the

anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him” (1 John 2:27).

Historical and scientific evidences that prove the Scriptures may be helpful, but ultimately, the only basis of our faith and practice must be the Scriptures and the Scriptures alone. The Perfect Bible (and we have it today and know where it is) is our supreme final authority. *Sola Scriptura!*

In *The Da Vinci Code*, it is Satan’s voice one hears. True Christians will not follow. Jesus said, “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they shall follow me: and I give unto them eternal life” (John 10:27-28).

We have experienced the good news and resurrection power of Christ in our life, and we cannot deny that our Lord and Saviour is indeed 100% God and 100% Man, and that His Word is 100% inspired and 100% preserved.

It goes without saying that *The Da Vinci Code* is truly Fiction. The Bible, on the other hand, is purely Fact. We have a Perfect Canon and a Perfect Text. May we never add to it, nor subtract from it (Rev 22:18-19), but love it and obey it (1 John 2:3-6)! “If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?” (Ps 11:3).¹

The Deception of *The Da Vinci Code*

The Da Vinci Code is a Satanic masterpiece. It is utterly deceptive, and particularly so in Chapter 55. In this chapter, one finds the two talking snakes, Teabing and Langdon, seducing Sophie with their sophistry. Alas, the helpless lass is mesmerised, and the serpentine duo go for the jugular with their venom of lies.

Deception #1: Da Vinci’s Fresco Tells the Truth, Not the Bible

The Da Vinci Code assumes that Leonardo was telling the truth concerning who Jesus was and what happened in His life. Teabing pontificates, “In fact, Da Vinci painted the true Grail.” At the end of the chapter, Teabing again presses the point that Da Vinci’s fresco is truthful and not the Bible, “You will be shocked to learn what anomalies Da Vinci included here that most scholars either do not see or simply choose to

ignore. This fresco [of the Last Supper], in fact, is the entire key to the Holy Grail mystery.”

Refutation #1

It must be said that Da Vinci, born in 1452 and died in 1519, was not an eyewitness to the Last Supper. How can his painting then be regarded as an authoritative depiction of that event? We should rather trust in eyewitness accounts. Matthew and John who were there recorded what happened during the Last Supper in their respective Gospels. The truth is not in the painting of Da Vinci, but in the testimonies of Matthew and John, and of Peter and Paul as found in Mark and Luke, who wrote under divine inspiration (2 Tim 3:16, 2 Pet 1:20-21).

One proof that Da Vinci’s fresco is historically unreliable is that he painted Jesus and His disciples dining at a long and high table with some sitting down and others standing up. The people in those days did not have their meals in such a way. In those days, they had their meals in a reclining posture. This fact is accurately reported in the Four Gospels where we find Jesus and His disciples reclining on mattresses around a low table during the Last Supper (cf John 13:23, 25).

Deception #2: If You Believe in the Bible, You Must be Stupid

In order to cause Sophie to doubt, Teabing made her read a couple of Da Vinci’s sayings that demean believers of the supernatural and miraculous. Quotation of Da Vinci #1 reads, “Many have made a trade of delusions and false miracles, deceiving the stupid multitude.” In other words, Sophie is made to think that anyone who believes that the Bible is a supernatural God-given Book, and that the miracles recorded therein are true, must be simple-minded and stupid.

Refutation #2

People ought to realise that Da Vinci is but a creature, and not the Creator. Da Vinci is dead, but Jesus is alive (1 Cor 15:1-20). As such, it is not what Da Vinci says in his paintings that we should worry about, but what Jesus the risen Lord says in His Word.

Who are the fools in God’s eyes? They are those who deny His existence and His miracles. Twice in the Psalms, God says, “The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God” (Pss 14:1, 53:1). The judgement of such fools as spoken of in Romans 1:18-22 applies to Teabing, Langdon, and not forgetting the author Brown himself, “For the wrath of

God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.” The truly blind are they who deny the miracle of creation, even the Creator God—the Lord Jesus Christ—Himself (John 1:3, Col 1:16).

Deception #3: If You Believe in the Bible, You Must be Blind

Quotation of Da Vinci #2 states, “Blinding ignorance does mislead us. O! Wretched mortals, open your eyes!” Teabing could be quoting Da Vinci out of context. Whatever the case may be, Teabing is trying to tell Sophie, “Don’t be blind! Don’t be misled! Stop believing in the Bible! Stop following Christ!”

Refutation #3

Da Vinci says “Blinding ignorance does mislead us,” and so it does. Jesus speaks against “blinding ignorance” as well, and calls on all to seek and know the truth. “Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts” (Isa 55:6-9).

From where do we seek the Lord? “Seek ye out of the book of the LORD, and read: no one of these shall fail” (Isa 34:16). Why the book of the Lord? Because “The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes” (Ps 19:7-8).

How should we seek the Lord? We should seek Him by faith, “But 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” (Heb 11:6). We do not see in order to believe, we believe in order to see. “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32). We should seek Him with great reverence, “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge” (Prov 1:7). “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding” (Prov 9:10).

Deception #4: The Bible is a Product of Man, Not of God

Teabing tells Sophie, “The Bible is a product of man, my dear. Not of God. The Bible did not fall magically from the clouds. Man created it as a historical record of tumultuous times, and it has evolved through countless translations, additions, and revisions. History has never had a definitive version of the book. ... More than *eighty* gospels were considered for the New Testament, and yet only a relative few were chosen for inclusion—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John among them.” Teabing lies to Sophie, “The Bible, as we know it today, was collated by the pagan Roman emperor Constantine the Great. ... Constantine commissioned and financed a new Bible, which omitted those gospels that spoke of Christ’s *human* traits and embellished those gospels that made Him godlike. The earlier gospels were outlawed, gathered up, and burned.”

Refutation #4

It is not true that the Four Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—were 4th century inventions of Constantine and the Nicaean Council. The Four Gospels were written in AD 40-50 shortly after Christ rose from the dead and ascended to heaven. The Early Church Fathers—Papias (in AD 110) and Irenaeus (in AD 180)—mentioned them by name and affirmed their Apostolic origins. It is thus not the over 80 gospels that Teabing mentioned that were the early and authentic Gospels but the Four that we have in the Canonical Scriptures today, totally inspired and entirely preserved to this day.

It must be pointed out that the over 80 gospels that Teabing regards as authentic do not paint Jesus as a mere mortal at all, but super-divine in a fairy-tale manner that can only come from the corrupt imaginations of unregenerate men. As a matter of fact, these false gospels deify Mary more than they do Jesus which eventually led to the Mary-worship that we see in the Roman Catholic Church today. It is no wonder that God’s people have always rejected those 80 gospels as spurious. A born-again,

Spirit-indwelt Christian (John 14:16-17, 1 John 2:27) when reading about the boyhood of Jesus in these false gospels can easily tell that they are myths and not truth (read *The Lost Books of the Bible*, especially 1 Infancy 14-15, about Jesus being bitten by a mad and demonised Judas, and Jesus being a proud and boastful show-off).

Teasing's claims that Constantine (1) was "a lifelong pagan who was baptized on his deathbed," and that he (2) financed a new Bible in AD 327 to consolidate his power as emperor, are lies. The truth is: (1) Constantine lived from AD 285-337, and became a Christian in AD 312—i.e. 25 years before his death! (2) The NT Canon as we know it today existed since the first century. By God's special providence, it was the Council of Carthage of AD 397 and not the Council of Nicaea AD 325 that settled the NT Canon; this happened 60 years after Constantine's death!

Brown says that the New Testament Canon is a human fabrication and thus should be dismissed or replaced. This attack must be refuted. It is vital that Biblical Christianity holds fast to the ancient Biblical Canon without change. The word "canon" refers to a measuring rod by which things are kept straight. It is used metaphorically in 2 Corinthians 10:12-18 to designate God's rule over our lives. The Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 10:12-18 wrote, "For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise. But we will not boast of things without our measure, but according to the measure of the rule (**canon**) which God hath distributed to us, a measure to reach even unto you. For we stretch not ourselves beyond our measure, as though we reached not unto you: for we are come as far as to you also in preaching the gospel of Christ: Not boasting of things without our measure, that is, of other men's labours; but having hope, when your faith is increased, that we shall be enlarged by you according to our rule abundantly, To preach the gospel in the regions beyond you, and not to boast in another man's line (**canon**) of things made ready to our hand. But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth." The canonicity of the Bible is thus "the quality or character of the Scriptures by which they are our rule of faith and life, as the infallible Word of God. As such, the Biblical Canon constitutes the divine authority of the Holy Scriptures.

The Church did not make the words of man to become the words of God as Brown asserts. The Word of God stands on its own, and declares itself to be the Word of God. The Bible is its own infallible authority. There is no higher authority than the Word of God itself. This is an acceptable tautological argument. In defense of this truth, J O Buswell correctly observed that “all factual existential statements may be regarded as circular. Why is a fact a fact, and why is it regarded as a fact? The only answer is, because it is a fact.”²² The Westminster Confession of Faith likewise states, “The authority of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed and obeyed, dependeth not upon the testimony of any man or church, but wholly upon God (who is truth itself), the author thereof; and therefore it is to be received, because it is the Word of God.”²³

The Word of God was canonised the moment it was written. The canonicity of Scripture finds its basis in the inspiration of Scripture. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 says, “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.” The Church at that time received the canonical words of the Apostles as the very words of God and not the words of man. 1 Thessalonians 2:13 states, “For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.” When heresies like Marcionism and Montanism arose, the pastors of the early church realised the need to identify the Canon so that their parishioners may know for sure the names and the number of the divinely inspired books. The Council of Laodicea (AD 363) listed the present number of 27 New Testament books. Athanasius also mentioned 27 in his Easter letter of AD 367 and these were recognised as the Canon at the Council of Hippo (AD 393) and the Third Synod of Carthage (AD 397). Since then, the New Testament Canon of 27 books was confirmed and fixed. The New Testament pseudepigrapha were all rejected as spurious and not as Holy Scripture. The identification of the Canon is the result of the special providential work of God through His Spirit-guided Church (John 16:13-14).

But Teabing says that the Scriptures “evolved,” and there is no such thing as a definitive version of the book. This is nonsense. The biblical doctrine of the Verbal Plenary Inspiration (VPI) and Verbal Plenary

Preservation (VPP) of the Scriptures tells us that we have an absolutely perfect and definitive Bible today as found in the infallible and inerrant Hebrew and Greek Scriptures underlying the Authorised King James Version. E F Hills rightly said that the logic of faith is the key to such a certainty, “You must begin with Christ and the Gospel and proceed according to the logic of faith. This will lead you to the Traditional text, the Textus Receptus and the King James Version.”⁴

Deception #5: Jesus was Only a Man, and Not God at All

Teabing says, “Jesus Christ was a historical figure ... a great and powerful man, but a man nonetheless. A mortal. ... Jesus’ establishment as ‘the Son of God’ was officially proposed and voted on by the Council of Nicaea. ... A relatively close vote at that. ... Many scholars claim that the early Church literally *stole* Jesus from His original followers, hijacking His human message, shrouding it in an impenetrable cloak of divinity, and using it to expand their own power.”

Refutation #5

The Council of Nicaea was convened to hear the case of Arius, a priest from Alexandria, who taught that Jesus was only half God and not fully God. Arius said that Jesus (1) was a creature and thus not the Creator, (2) had a beginning and thus not eternal, (3) was different from and not the same as God Himself. But God raised up a defender of the faith in Athanasius. In the Council of Nicaea, Athanasius argued from the Scriptures that the Lord Jesus Christ was fully God and fully Man (John 1:1, 14; Col 2:9; 1 Tim 3:16), eternally begotten of the Father, not created (John 1:3, 3:16, 18, 10:30; 1 John 4:9). Arius was declared a heretic. The vote was hardly close—315 for Athanasius and only 3 for Arius. Arius was defrocked and excommunicated.

Furthermore, Teabing’s claim that the deity of Christ was a New Testament invention is not true at all! It was not the New Testament that first spoke of the deity of Christ but the Old Testament. “We have also a more sure word of prophecy” (2 Pet 1:19). The Old Testament prophetic Scripture had already made mention of a coming Messiah who would be none other than God Himself. Isaiah 7:14 was one such prophecy, “Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.” Jesus Himself fulfilled this prophecy in 5 BC as announced by the angel Gabriel. Jesus was Immanuel, “*God with us*” (Matt 1:22-23). It is

significant to note that Isaiah's prophecy of the virgin-born Son of God was given 750 years before Jesus came. It goes without saying that the lie that Jesus was never God but made God by the Council of Nicaea in AD 325 was not Constantine's invention, but Teabing's.

Today, Arius' teaching is found in a cult called the Jehovah's Witnesses, and in the corrupt modern versions of the Bible (like the NIV) that are based on the Alexandrian text. It would be no surprise if Arius and his followers had altered the inspired text to create their own text to undermine the deity of Christ. It is indeed troubling to note that in the NIV, 1 Timothy 3:16 should read falsely, "He appeared in a body," which undermines His deity and humanity. The true reading is, "God was manifest in the flesh" (as accurately and faithfully translated from the original by the KJV) which tells us that Christ is *Theanthropos*—100% God and 100% Man. Deception abounds today not only in the cults that claim to be "Christian," but also in the modern versions that claim to be "Holy Bible."

Warning

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times, some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron" (1 Tim 4:1-2). In the face of such dangers, what must Christians do? The Apostle Paul exhorts, "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee" (1 Tim 4:16).

May the Lord protect His Church from falling into Satan's trap of deception.

Notes

¹ For further study, read Timothy Tow and Jeffrey Khoo, *A Theology for Every Christian: Knowing God and His Word* (Singapore: Far Eastern Bible College Press, 1998), downloadable for free.

² J O Buswell, *A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1962), 1:196.

³ Westminster Confession of Faith, I:4-5.

⁴ E F Hills, *The King James Version Defended* (Des Moines: Christian Research Press, 1984), 220. See also Jeffrey Khoo, "A Plea for a Perfect Bible," *The Burning Bush* 9 (2003): 1-15.

BOB JONES UNIVERSITY AND THE KJV***A Critique of From the Mind of God
to the Mind of Man***

Jeffrey Khoo

From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man (231 pages)—published in 1999 by Ambassador-Emerald International (Greenville SC, USA, and Belfast, N Ireland), and edited by James B Williams is the latest book to attack KJV-only advocates. KJV-only advocates (1) believe the King James or Authorised Version (KJV/AV) to be the most faithful, trustworthy, and accurate translation of the English Bible available today, and (2) contend that the English-speaking Church should use it alone. A number of books have already been written against the KJV by modernists and neo-evangelicals. *From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man*, however, is written by fundamentalists. Sadly, instead of defending God and His Word, we find fundamentalists singing the same anti-biblical tune of anti-fundamentalists. Sounding like modernists and neo-evangelicals, Williams scoffed at KJV-defending fundamentalists, calling them “unqualified”, “immature,” and a “cancerous sore” (4,7). Is there not treachery within the camp?

James B Williams, the general editor of the book, is on the Bob Jones University (BJU) Board of Trustees. The 19 who contributed to the book are professors, graduates, or friends of BJU. It is reported that Dr Bob Jones III—president of BJU—highly recommended the book in the 1999 World Congress of Fundamentalists, calling it the “most significant book for fundamentalism in this century.” It sold like hot cakes. A sad day for fundamentalism it was. By such an endorsement, BJU has kowtowed to the god of humanistic scholarship. *From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man* exalts man’s mind over God’s. It promotes unregenerate and modernistic scholarship, and downgrades spiritual and biblical discernment.

Now, let us examine the book chapter by chapter.

“Introduction: The Issue We Face” by James B Williams

From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man seeks to address the KJV controversy within fundamentalism. According to Williams, the view that the KJV should be the only translation used by fundamentalists “has created unnecessary confusion and division. ... [and] is doing more damage to the cause of Christ among Fundamentalists than any ... other controversies” (2).

Williams’s charge that KJV-only advocates have created “unnecessary confusion and division” is false. The only agenda KJV-only advocates have is to call the Church back to the traditional and preserved text of Scriptures as found in the KJV and its underlying Hebrew and Greek texts over against the plethora of modern and corrupted versions (or perversions) of the Bible. Why should fundamentalists who should be on the Lord’s side be angry with those from within their camp who refuse to bow the knee to the modern Baal of Textual Criticism and side with modern Balaams like Westcott and Hort? Williams is upset over the militancy of KJV-only advocates, but is this not what the Lord requires of His Church militant? When false teachers seek to destroy God’s Word and His Church, how can God’s people not be filled with righteous indignation and speak out passionately in defence of both the Living and Written Word? How can we not be like loyal David who declared, “Do not I hate them, O LORD, that hate thee? And am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies” (Ps 139:21-22)? Westcott and Hort and their cohorts are enemies of Christ and His Word. The prophet Jehu’s words to compromising Jehoshaphat apply equally to BJU, “Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord?” (2 Chr 19:1-2). The Bob Jones sanhedrin is telling KJV-only fundamentalists to shut up. But we reply with the Apostle Peter, “We ought to obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29).

The biblical voice of KJV-only advocates is one and is clear, namely this: We believe and teach that “the Texts which are closest to the original autographs of the Bible are the Traditional Masoretic Hebrew Text for the Old Testament, and the Traditional Greek Text for the New Testament underlying the King James Version.” And we believe and teach that

the King James Version (or Authorised Version) of the English Bible is a true, faithful, and accurate translation of these two providentially preserved Texts (ie, the Traditional Masoretic Hebrew Text and Traditional Greek Text underlying the KJV), which in our time has no equal among all of the other English Translations. The translators did such a fine job in their translation task that we can without apology hold up the Authorised Version of 1611 and say ‘This is the Word of God!’ while at the same time realising that, in some verses, we must go back to the underlying original language Texts for complete clarity, and also compare Scripture with Scripture (The Dean Burgon Society, Articles of Faith, Section II.A).

Wherein lies the confusion? The confusion is not caused by KJV-only advocates but by fundamentalists who blur the issue by being neutral, claiming to be “balanced” (9). What is BJU’s official position on Westcott and Hort, and modern versions? David L Turner in his book—*Standing Without Apology* (BJU Press, 1997)—on the history of BJU wrote,

The position of the school’s Bible Department was especially important. The statement authored by Stewart Custer and Marshall Neal was approved by the entire Bible faculty. ... the department believed “that *the text based upon the Alexandrian manuscripts is, as a whole, superior to the text based upon manuscripts of the Middle Ages.*” ... They concluded the statement by saying, “Christians should be *free to choose* and use either of these texts and still work together in harmony to teach and preach the Word of God to those who are without it.”

In keeping with the University’s commitment to *balance*, it is interesting to note that among the Bob Jones University graduate school Bible faculty, there are some who hold to the superiority of the Majority Text and others who hold to the Westcott and Hort Alexandrian Text. *None of the Bible faculty accepts the Textus Receptus of Erasmus as superior to either the Majority or Alexandrian texts.*

BJU adopts a neutral position on the Bible versions. This yes and no, neither for nor against, both-and equivocation of BJU is the cause of the confusion and division within fundamentalism. Was it not middle-of-the-road neo-evangelicalism that created the confusion that is plaguing Christendom today? In his excellent treatise—*The Tragedy of Compromise*—Ernest Pickering, quoting W B Riley, rightly warned against those “in-betweenites.” Sadly, on the KJV issue, Pickering has become an “in-betweenite” himself. He contributed to the confusion by writing a congratulatory preface to this so-called “balanced” (read

“compromising”) book. John Ashbrook warned others against the dangers of “New Neutralism” in his book by the same title. Like Pickering he too succumbed to the “Neutralism” he so ably exposed by contributing a neutral chapter to a neutral tome. It is this neutral attitude of BJU that is causing the confusion within fundamentalism! Dr Dell Johnson of Pensacola Theological Seminary has rightly called this neutralism and compromise “the leaven in fundamentalism.” Our plea to our fellow fundamentalists is one they know well: Be ye not unequally yoked together with Westcott and Hort!

“Our Final Authority: Revelation, Inspiration, Inerrancy, Infallibility, and Authority of the Bible” by Randolph Shaylor

Shaylor has done well to argue for the plenary and verbal inspiration of the Bible (19). He believes the Bible to be absolutely inspired in every detail, and without error in all matters (23). The scriptural texts he quoted as proof are the two classic passages on biblical inspiration: 2 Tim 3:15-16, and 2 Pet 1:21.

However, the shortcoming of Shaylor’s chapter is his failure to address the doctrine of biblical preservation. Many KJV-opponents deny the existence of this doctrine. Shaylor did not deny this doctrine, but he does seem confused over what preservation entails. In his brief two-sentenced paragraph on “The Preservation of Revelation,” he states his belief that God preserves His Word, then confuses it with the way He does it. Shaylor wrote, “God has made His revelation available to others than those to whom it was immediately given” How? “... by preserving His truth in written form” (16). This is a fine statement (though it would have been better if he had cited some proof-texts). God has indeed promised that His Holy Scriptures would not only be presented in all its purity to the Church then, but also to the Church now (Ps 12:6-7). But Shaylor reveals his confusion over preservation by saying that God “guaranteed the veracity of these writings by using the special method of imparting His truth that we know as inspiration.” God did not promise to preserve His Word by means of inspiration! This last statement should be placed under the section on inspiration, not preservation. Inspiration is miraculous, but preservation is providential. Inspiration is a non-repeatable work of God in history; preservation is a continuous work of God throughout history. I would therefore rephrase Shaylor’s statement this way, “*God imparted His truth without error in*

written form by using the special method known as divine inspiration, and guaranteed the veracity of these writings by means of another special method called providential preservation."

Shaylor's confusion over the twin doctrines of inspiration and preservation is compounded by his erroneous view that God's inspiration of His Word resides only in the autographs (ie, the author's actual scripts), and not the copies (regardless of whether it is a particular manuscript or a group of manuscripts) (22). What Shaylor is trying to tell us is that we can only be absolutely sure that the autographs are infallible and inerrant. Only the autographs are inspired, the copies are not. If what Shaylor says is true, then the Church today is bereft of the inspired Scriptures since we no longer have the autographs, only the copies. *From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man* touts itself as "a layman's guide to how we got our Bible." But its rejection of the doctrine of biblical preservation, telling us that only the autographs are inspired, undermines the layman's confidence on the Bible, and cast doubts in his mind over whether he has indeed the pure Word of God. Is not this agnostic view of our Scriptures today a stumbling block to the layman? The Lord's warning applies, "But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea" (Matt 18:6).

Shaylor went on to argue that nowhere does the Bible teach or even imply that the copies of Scripture are inerrantly and infallibly inspired (22). If Shaylor is right, then Jesus is wrong. Jesus testified that the OT Scriptures—the Law and the Prophets—that He had (which were copies and not the autographs) were infallible and inerrant to the jot and tittle, and must all be fulfilled (Matt 5:17-18). Jesus knew full well that His Word was not only divinely inspired, but also divinely preserved. This is clearly taught in Ps 12:6-7,

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.

Shaylor cites B B Warfield to support his view that inspiration extends only to the original autographs (25). We respect Warfield for his many conservative views, but he was wrong to limit the inspiration of the Bible only to the original autographs; inspiration should extend to the apographs (ie, copies) as well. Dr Edward F Hills, in his book—*The King James Version Defended*—explains why,

If the doctrine of *divine inspiration* of the Old and New Testament Scriptures is a true doctrine, the doctrine of the *providential preservation* of these Scriptures must also be a true doctrine. It must be that down through the centuries God has exercised a special, providential control over the copying of the Scriptures and the preservation and use of the original text have been available to God's people in every age. God must have done this, for if He gave the Scriptures to His Church by inspiration as the perfect and final revelation of his will, then it is obvious that He would not allow this revelation to disappear or undergo any alteration of its fundamental character"

... if the doctrines of the *divine inspiration* and *providential preservation* of these Scriptures are true doctrines, then the textual criticism of the New Testament is different from that of the uninspired writings of antiquity. The textual criticism of any book must take into account the conditions under which the original manuscripts were written and also under which the copies of these manuscripts were made and preserved. But if the doctrines of the divine inspiration and providential preservation of the Scriptures are true, then THE ORIGINAL NEW TESTAMENT MANUSCRIPTS WERE WRITTEN UNDER SPECIAL CONDITIONS, UNDER THE INSPIRATION OF GOD, AND THE COPIES WERE MADE AND PRESERVED UNDER SPECIAL CONDITIONS, UNDER THE SINGULAR CARE AND PROVIDENCE OF GOD.

In another book—*Believing Bible Study*—Hills warned,

If we ignore the providential preservation of the Scriptures and defend the New Testament text in the same way that we defend the texts of other ancient books, then we are following the logic of unbelief. For the special, providential preservation of the holy Scriptures is a *fact* and an important fact. Hence when we ignore this fact and deal with the text of the New Testament as we would with the text of other books, we are behaving as unbelievers behave. We are either denying that the providential preservation of the Scriptures is a fact, or else we are saying that it is not an important fact, not important enough to be considered when dealing with the New Testament text. But if the providential preservation of the Scriptures is not important, why is the infallible inspiration of the original Scriptures important? If God has not preserved the Scriptures by His special providence, why would He have infallibly inspired them in the first place? And if the Scriptures are not infallibly inspired, how do we know that the Gospel message is true? And if the Gospel message is not true, how do we know that Jesus is the Son of God?

It is a dangerous error therefore to ignore the special, providential preservation of the holy Scriptures and to seek to defend the New

Testament text in the same way in which we would defend the texts of other ancient books. For the logic of this unbelieving attitude is likely to lay hold upon us and cast us down into a bottomless pit of uncertainty. ...

The Bible teaches us that faith is the foundation of reason. *Through faith we understand* (Heb. 11:3). By faith we lay hold on God as He reveals Himself in the holy Scriptures and make Him the starting point of all our thinking. ...

Like the Protestant Reformers therefore we must take God as the starting point of all our thinking. We must *begin* with God. Very few Christians, however, do this consistently. For example, even when a group of conservative Christian scholars meet for the purpose of defending the Textus Receptus and the King James Version, you will find that some of them want to do this in a rationalistic, naturalistic way. Instead of beginning with God, they wish to begin with facts viewed apart from God, with details concerning the New Testament manuscripts which must be regarded as true (so they think) no matter whether God exists or not. ...

Conservative scholars ... say that they believe in the special, providential preservation of the New Testament text. Most of them really don't though, because, as soon as they say this, they immediately reduce this special providential preservation to the vanishing point in order to make room for the naturalistic theories of Westcott and Hort. As we have seen, some say that the providential preservation of the New Testament means merely that the same "substance of doctrine" is found in all the New Testament documents. Others say that it means that the true reading is always present in at least one of the thousands of extant New Testament manuscripts. And still other scholars say that to them the special, providential preservation of the Scriptures means that the true New Testament text was providentially discovered in the mid-19th century by Tischendorf, Tregelles, and Westcott and Hort after having been lost for 1,500 years.

If you adopt one of these false views of the providential preservation of Scriptures, then you are logically on your way toward the denial of the infallible inspiration of the Scriptures. For if God has preserved the Scriptures so carelessly, why would he have infallibly inspired them in the first place? It is not sufficient therefore merely to *say* that you believe in the doctrine of the special, providential preservation of holy Scriptures. You must *really* believe this doctrine and allow it to guide your thinking. You must begin with Christ and the Gospel and proceed according to the logic of faith. This will lead you to the Traditional text, the Textus Receptus, and the King James Version, in other words, to the common faith.

Not only was Warfield's definition of biblical inspiration faulty, he was also wrong to promote the destructive textual critical theories of Westcott and Hort. Many fundamentalists have unwittingly imbibed the

poison of Westcott and Hort through Warfield. BJU and other fundamentalist schools like Calvary Baptist Theological Seminary, Central Baptist Theological Seminary, Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary, Maranatha Baptist Bible College, Northland Baptist Bible College, and Temple Baptist Seminary (all listed on page iii), have all been infected by the Westcott and Hort leaven.

It will not do for Christians to affirm biblical inspiration, yet at the same time deny biblical preservation. Dr Timothy Tow has rightly said,

We believe the preservation of Holy Scripture and its Divine inspiration stand in the same position as providence and creation. If Deism teaches a Creator who goes to sleep after creating the world is absurd, to hold to the doctrine of inspiration without preservation is equally illogical. ... Without preservation, all the inspiration, God-breathing into the Scriptures, would be lost. But we have a Bible so pure and powerful in every word and it is so because God has preserved it down through the ages.

We affirm with the Westminster divines that our Old and New Testaments, “being immediately inspired by God, and *by His singular care and providence, kept pure in all ages*, are therefore authentic” (WCF 1:8).

Shaylor concludes his chapter by stating in bold, “**We have the Word of God**” (28). But the question remains, which and where? His idea of inspiration, that only the original autographs are inspired, which we do not have today, has left us without a Bible we can say with utmost confidence, “This is the Word of God, inspired, inerrant, intact.” If we follow Shaylor’s logic with regard to inspiration, we would not be able to say, “We have the Word of God.”

“Canonization and Apocrypha” by Paul W Downey

Downey provides a succinct, factual account of the process of biblical canonisation. However, Downey’s chapter is skewed by his comment that the KJV of 1611 “followed the Council of Trent, not the Reformers, in its treatment of the Apocrypha” (45). By so saying, Downey gives the distorted impression that the KJV translators had considered the Apocrypha as part of inspired Scripture. This cannot be further from the truth. It is without question, that the translators accepted these apocryphal books only for their historical value. They in no wise considered them to be inspired Scripture. Alexander McClure, in his

book—*The Translators Revived*—gave seven reasons why they rejected the Apocrypha:

1. Not one of them is in the Hebrew language, which was alone used by the inspired historians and poets of the Old Testament.
2. Not one of the writers lays any claim to inspiration.
3. These books were never acknowledged as sacred Scriptures by the Jewish Church, and therefore were never sanctioned by our Lord.
4. They were not allowed a place among the sacred books, during the first four centuries of the Christian Church.
5. They contain fabulous statements, and statements which contradict not only the canonical Scriptures, but themselves; as when, in the two Books of Maccabees, Antiochus Epiphanes is made to die three different deaths in as many different places.
6. It inculcates doctrines at variance with the Bible, such as prayers for the dead and sinless perfection.
7. It teaches immoral practices, such as lying, suicide, assassination and magical incantation.

Downey has thus unfairly portrayed the KJV as a Popish Bible because it included the Apocrypha. He cast a slur against the KJV by saying that the Puritans and Separatists rejected the KJV in favour of the Geneva Bible because the latter excluded the Apocrypha (45-6). But this is not the whole truth. Dr Errol F Rhodes and Dr Liana Lupas who edited *The Translators to the Reader: The Original Preface of the King James Version Revised*—present a more accurate picture

The books of the Apocrypha were included in the King James Version from the first as a matter of course, as they had been in all versions of the English Bible from the time of Wycliffe (c. 1384), *including the Calvinist Geneva Bible* of 1560. ... The deliberate omission of the Apocrypha from an English Bible is first noted in the 1640 edition of the Geneva Bible, ... Not until the nineteenth century, however, did the omission of the Apocrypha in Protestant Bibles become normal.

The Protestants in those days were obviously a victim of their times. Although the Apocrypha was found in Reformation Bibles (including the Geneva) since Wycliffe, it is clear that all of the Reformers opposed the Roman Catholic Church, and by the same token, rejected the Apocrypha as spurious. The feelings of the KJV translators, some of whom were Puritans, must necessarily be the same as those who produced the

Westminster Confession of Faith (1645). In no uncertain terms, the Westminster divines wrote,

The books commonly called Apocrypha, not being of divine inspiration, are no part of the canon of the Scripture, and therefore are of no authority in the Church of God, nor to be any otherwise approved, or made use of, than other human writings (WCF 1:3).

It is also significant to note that when it came to translating the Apocrypha, the KJV translators did not care very much for it. Scrivener wrote, “It is well known to Biblical scholars that the Apocrypha received very inadequate attention from the revisers of 1611 and their predecessors, so that whole passages remain unaltered from the racy, spirited, rhythmical, but hasty, loose and most inaccurate version ... made by Coverdale for the Bible of 1536.”

What can we say about this book—*From the Mind of God to the Mind*—which aims to present a “balanced” view on the KJV issue? So far, this reviewer gets the sense that instead of presenting a “balanced” view, the writers are bent on finding fault with the KJV.

“Let’s Meet the Manuscripts” by Minnick

Mark Minnick, in his chapter, dealt with the so-called science of textual criticism. He goes to great lengths to explain to the layman that textual criticism does not “criticise” the Bible but explains and analyses it (70-98). It ought to be noted that most KJV-only advocates do not dispute the need for constructive textual criticism that is founded on the principles of faith and spiritual discernment. What we are against is humanistic and modernistic textual criticism that seeks to take away God’s words from us. Such destructive textual criticism is found in these two infamous modernists—Westcott and Hort—who did not believe in the plenary, verbal inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. Westcott and Hort were translators of the Revised Version (RV). In their translation of 2 Tim 3:16, they questioned the doctrine of biblical inspiration by rendering the verse this way, “Every Scripture inspired of God is also profitable....” By placing the copula “is” after “inspired of God,” the clause is made to mean that not all parts of Scripture are inspired of God; only those portions which are inspired are profitable. The KJV translators, on the other hand, correctly placed the copula “is” right after “All Scripture:” “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable....” The KJV leaves no ambiguity whatsoever that all of Scripture is divinely

inspired. Westcott and Hort's alteration of the KJV's rendering of 2 Tim 3:16 in the RV evinces their limited inerrancy view of Scripture.

When the RV came out in 1881, Robert L Dabney, was furious over its rendering of 2 Tim 3:16, and wrote a scathing attack against it in the *Southern Presbyterian Review* (July 1881),

The poisonous suggestion intended is that, among the parts of the "scripture" some are inspired and some are not. Our Bible contains fallible parts! The very doctrine of the Socinian and Rationalist. This treacherous version the revisers (viz, Westcott and Hort) have gratuitously sanctioned!

Indeed as modernists, Westcott and Hort were not fit to handle the Scriptures. They cannot be trusted.

What is indeed strange is that Mark Minnick who quoted Dabney (90-91) cannot see that Westcott and Hort are not friends but enemies of the Bible. Their poisonous fruit reveals their reprobate root. In Matt 7:15-18, Jesus had warned,

Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

We would think Minnick—a BJU Bible Professor—would rise up in defence of the faith. Sadly, the opposite is true. He praised Westcott and Hort and called them "careful" textual critics (85). He adopts Westcott and Hort's destructive textual critical method.

Minnick believes in the Westcott and Hort lie that the difference between their revised Greek text and the traditional Greek text is no more than "a thousandth part of the entire text," which he adds is no more than "one page of my entire Testament" (86). Scrivener's Greek Text published in 1881, and reprinted by the Dean Burgon Society Press in 1999, compared the Textus Receptus with the Westcott and Hort Text. Scrivener's comparison reveals 5,604 places where the Westcott and Hort Greek Text differed from the Textus Receptus. His footnotes show that Westcott and Hort changed a total of 9,970 Greek words either by addition or subtraction. That is almost 50 pages of my entire Testament.

Minnick went on to argue that fundamentalists should view the Westcott and Hort text positively as did C H Spurgeon, G Campbell

Morgan, Alexander MacClaren, C I Scofield, H A Ironside and others (87-8). As a fundamentalist, Minnick ought to know that our faith must rest not on man (no matter how conservative they might be) but on the Bible alone. *Sola Scriptura*! Minnick's mention of those great preachers of the past only goes to prove that the leaven of Westcott and Hort's destructive textual criticism had also infected them. The leaven has indeed spread far and wide. "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" (Gal 5:9).

The general pro-Westcott-Hort slant in Minnick's chapter is not only seen by what he says, but also what he does not say. The great textual scholar—Dean J W Burgon—who defended the KJV is often neglected or ignored by supporters of the modern versions. Minnick is no exception. Burgon is markedly absent in Minnick's discussion about the text. Who is Dean Burgon? Why should he be taken seriously? I will leave Hills to introduce him to you:

John William Burgon (1813-1888) became an outstanding English scholar and textual critic. Burgon was born at Smyrna, the son of an English merchant. He studied at London University (1829-1830) and then was engaged for a time in his father's business. In 1841 he returned to his studies, entering Oxford University. He received his BA, MA, and BD degrees from Oxford in the years 1845, 1848, and 1871, respectively. He was elected fellow of Oriel College, Oxford, in 1848. He was appointed Gresham professor of divinity at Oxford in 1867. He became vicar of St Mary's Church, Oxford, in 1863, and he was appointed Dean of Chichester in 1876.

Burgon was no mean theologian, and his preaching was well attended. He was the author of numerous publications, including sermons, tracts, commentaries, and biographies. But as he pressed his studies of the New Testament text, he became best known for his work in the sphere of NT textual criticism.

Burgon's lively literary style could possibly be traced to his early days in Smyrna, Turkey; his mother being a native of that country, and his father an English merchant there. At any rate he developed a warm and enthusiastic nature, not typically English, together with a forthright and honest character which would not allow him to accept pseudo-textual criticism.

Being driven by the desire to get to the bottom of the false statements being made by the reigning Critics of his day, Burgon devoted the last 30 years of his life to disprove them. Believing firmly that God had providentially preserved the true text of the New Testament, he set out to

discover how the depraved and corrupt readings developed. This required him to travel widely. In 1860, for instance, he traveled to the Vatican Library to personally examine Codex B. And in 1862 he traveled to Mt Sinai to inspect the many manuscripts there. Later he made several tours of European libraries, examining and actually collating NT manuscripts wherever he went. At the same time he was compiling his massive Index of the NT Quotations in the Church Fathers, which is deposited in the British Museum, but never published.

Throughout his life Burgon remained unmarried, and no doubt this had some bearing on the fact that he, as he put it, was willing to spend an entire 13-hour day to establish the authenticity of a single letter of the New Testament Text. His masterly accumulation of evidence first became apparent when he confronted the Critics with his 300-page book—*The Last Twelve Verses of the Gospel According to Saint Mark*—in 1871. His evidence was so complete, and his arguments so unassailable that no one tried to refute this book—either point by point, or in total. When the English Revised Version appeared in 1881, he was asked to review it for the *Quarterly Review*. The result was the printing of his review articles in a book which he entitled, *The Revision Revised*. During all of his active life Burgon was accumulating notes and research data in order to establish what he called *The Traditional Text of the Holy Gospels* as the historically authentic and proven Word of God. After his death in 1888, his long-time friend and co-worker—the Rev Edward Miller—gathered together the Dean's notes and issued the two valuable books entitled, *The Traditional Text of the Holy Gospels*; and *The Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text of the Holy Gospels* (both 1896).

Through all these works runs Burgon's fundamental thought, viz, that the textual criticism of the Scriptures must be according to the analogy of faith, and because of this it must be different from the textual criticism of any other book. On this he wrote, "That which distinguishes Sacred Science from every other Science which can be named is that it is Divine, and has to do with a Book which is inspired, and not to be regarded upon a level with the Books of the East, which are held by their votaries to be sacred. ... Even those principles of Textual Criticism which in the case of profane authors are regarded as fundamental are often out of place here" (*Traditional Text*, 9). In this Burgon was diametrically opposed to the other 19th century critics, notably Westcott and Hort, who stated plainly that textual criticism of the Bible should be handled in the same way as with any other book. But Burgon, who never lost sight of the special providence of God which has presided over the transmission of the New Testament down through the ages, expressly set out to maintain against all opponents that the Church was divinely guided to reject the false readings of the early centuries, and to

gradually accept the true text. He denied that he was claiming a perpetual miracle that would keep manuscripts from being depraved at various times, and in various places. But “The Church, in her collective capacity, has nevertheless—as a matter of fact—been perpetually purging herself of those shamefully depraved copies which once everywhere abounded within her pale” (*The Revision Revised*, 334-5). He believed that just as God gradually settled the Canon of the New Testament by weaning His churches from non-canonical books, so He did with the Text also.

Not being willing to dig to the depths that Burgon dug, and not being able to disprove Burgon’s facts, his opponents (particularly Westcott and Hort) refused to accept his challenges. They adopted a course of simply portraying Burgon as some kind of Don Quixote who jousts at obstacles too hard for him to understand. Or else they pictured him as too violent in his statements, and thus as if he were a madman, they ignored him. In textual criticism textbooks it has become a tradition to hold Burgon up to ridicule, as if he were an obscurantist who foolishly challenged the “assured results” of modern scholarship. This gross misrepresentation is gradually being exposed by the simple expedient of reproducing Burgon’s books. The scholarly, close-reasoned, fact-filled works of Burgon have persuaded many a scholar in this last part of the 20th century that God indeed has not abandoned His words from the day after they came abroad, but has instead guided His children so as to preserve every jot and tittle of His Word. The Traditional Text (or, Byzantine Text, as it is called today) being virtually the same in the manuscripts from the 4th century onward, is proof enough of the doctrine of God’s preservation of the Text, according to Burgon’s reasoning, and his massive accumulation of evidence.

Dean Burgon had an extremely high view of God’s Word. He believed in a 100% inerrant Bible. He said,

The Bible is none other than the voice of Him that sitteth upon the throne. Every book of it, every chapter of it, every verse of it, every syllable of it, every letter of it, is direct utterance of the Most High. The Bible is none other than the Word of God, not some part of it more, some part of it less, but all alike the utterance of Him that sitteth upon the throne, faultless, unerring, supreme.

At every annual convocation, the faculty of the Far Eastern Bible College take an oath of allegiance to the Holy Scriptures based on Burgon’s words. Whose side are you on? Burgon or Westcott and Hort? If you are on the Lord’s side, you would support the former and not the latter.

Minnick lacked discernment and wisdom when he labeled KJV-only advocates “unscripturally divisive” (98). He then reassured his readers

that the poisoned waters of Westcott and Hort are safe. He believes the corrupt Westcott and Hort text is superior to the Textus Receptus, and quoting Scofield, condescendingly said that Westcott and Hort “have cleared the Greek Textus Receptus of minor inaccuracies” (96). He also believes that the older but corrupt Alexandrian or Minority Text is to be valued and preferred over the readings of the Majority Text (96).

Is the Alexandrian or Minority Text that good? Dean Burgon in his 550-page magnum opus—*The Revision Revised*—has convincingly proven that the Alexandrian manuscripts of Westcott and Hort are among the most corrupt copies of the New Testament in existence. He said that the Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus are

most scandalously corrupt copies extant:—exhibit the most shamefully mutilated texts which are anywhere to be met with:—have become ... the depositories of the largest amount of fabricated readings, ancient blunders, and intentional perversions of Truth,—which are discoverable in any known copies of the Word of God.

It is significant to note that those two codices run against the readings of the majority (99%) of Greek New Testament manuscripts (over 5000) we have today. To prove the point, let me just cite one example from Dean Burgon to show how corrupt the 5 uncials—Sinaiticus (Ⲛ), Alexandrinus (A), Vaticanus (B), Ephraemi Rescriptus (C), and Bezae Cantabrigiensis (D)—Westcott and Hort deemed most reliable really are. The passage under consideration is the Lord’s Prayer in Luke 11:2-4. The findings of Burgon are as follows:

1. D inserts Matt 7:7, “Use not vain repetitions as the rest: for some suppose that they shall be heard by their much speaking. But when ye pray ...”.
2. B and Ⲛ removed 5 words “Our,” and “which art in heaven.”
3. D omits the definite article “the” before “name,” adds “upon us,” and rearranges “Thy Kingdom.”
4. B removes the clause, “Thy will be done, as in heaven, also on the earth.” Interestingly, Ⲛ retains these words, but adds “so” before “also,” and omits the article before “earth” agreeing for once with A, C, and D.
5. Ⲛ and D changed the form of the Greek word for “give.”
6. Ⲛ omits definite article before “day by day.”

7. D, instead of the 3 last-named words, writes “this day” (from Matt), substitutes “debts” for “sins” (also from Matt), and in place of “for we ourselves” writes “as also we” (again from Matt).
8. \aleph shows great sympathy with D by accepting two-thirds of this last blunder, exhibiting “as also [we] ourselves.”
9. D consistently read “our debtors” in place of “every one that is indebted to us.”
10. B and \aleph canceled the last petition “but deliver us from evil,” going against A, C, and D.

Dean Burgon astutely judged,

So then, these five ‘first-class authorities’ are found to throw themselves into *six different combinations* in their departures from S. Luke’s way of exhibiting the Lord’s Prayer,—which, among them, they contrive to falsify in respect of no less than 45 words; and yet *they are never able to agree among themselves as to any single various reading*; while *only once* are more than two of them observed to stand together,—viz. in the unauthorized omission of the article. In respect of 32 (out of the 45) words, *they bear in turn solitary evidence*. What need to declare that it is *certainly false* in every instance? Such however is the infatuation of the Critics, that the vagaries of B are all taken for gospel. Besides omitting the 11 words which B omits jointly with \aleph , Drs. Westcott and Hort erase from the Book of Life those other 11 precious words which are omitted by B only. And in this way it comes to pass that the mutilated condition to which the scalpel of Marcion the heretic reduced the Lord’s Prayer some 1730 years ago, (for mischief can all be traced back to *him!*), is palmed off on the Church of England by the Revisionists as the work of the Holy Ghost!

So what is the bottom line? Should fundamentalists use the Westcott and Hort text and method? Our BJU friends should listen to Dr Alfred Martin, former Vice-President of Moody Bible Institute:

The only road to progress in New Testament textual criticism is repudiation of their (ie, Westcott and Hort) theory and all its fruits. Most contemporary criticism is bankrupt and confused, the result of its liaison with liberal theology. A Bible-believing Christian can never be content to follow the leadership of those who do not recognize the Bible as the verbally inspired Word of God. The Textus Receptus is the starting-point for future research, because it embodies substantially and in a convenient form the traditional text.

“The History of the Textus Receptus” by John E Ashbrook

Ashbrook’s chapter employs a “soothe then slap” approach to evaluating the Textus Receptus, and its first editor—Erasmus. Ashbrook begins by praising Erasmus for his genius as a biblical and textual scholar, and then castigates him as a modernist (102). It is very careless of KJV critics to label Erasmus a modernist. Erasmus, like Luther, had his doctrinal weaknesses, but he was hardly a modernist. Modernists like Westcott and Hort have a very low view of Scripture. Erasmus on the other hand had a high view of Scripture evinced by his painstakingly edited Greek New Testament which in no small way aided the cause of the Reformation. Like the Reformers, Erasmus desired the Scriptures to be translated into all languages so that every one could read it and know Christ for himself. Hear his testimony:

I would have the weakest woman read the Gospels and the Epistles of St. Paul ... I would have those words translated into all languages, so that not only Scots and Irishmen, but Turks and Saracens might read them. I long for the plowboy to sing them to himself as he follows the plow, ... Other studies we may regret having undertaken, but happy is the man upon whom death comes when he is engaged in these. These sacred words give you the very image of Christ speaking, healing, dying, rising again, and make Him so present, that were He before your very eyes you would not more truly see Him.

Ashbrook disparagingly says that Erasmus was “a loyal son of the Catholic Church” (102). This is another misrepresentation. Erasmus publicly exposed the heresies and superstitions of the Roman Catholic Church. This angered the pope so much that he branded Erasmus “an impious heretic,” and banned his books from being read by Catholics. The pope evidently was able to see that Erasmus was a Reformer at heart. However, as a Reformer, Erasmus’s main fault was in his failure to separate from the false Catholic Church (cf 2 Cor 6:14-7:1). Luther succeeded in his reformation because he did it from without, but Erasmus failed because he chose to do it from within. Nevertheless, as someone had observed, it was Erasmus who laid the egg of the Reformation, and Luther was left to hatch it.

Ashbrook is unhappy with people who scoff at Westcott and Hort just because they were textual critics (104, 108). He contends that KJV advocates who reject Westcott and Hort as textual critics, must likewise reject Erasmus for he too was a textual critic. We do not dispute that

Erasmus did the work of textual criticism, but the question is not on textual criticism per se, but the type of textual criticism employed. Westcott and Hort invented a textual critical method which sought to take God's Word away from God's people. The amount of verses Westcott and Hort scissored out from our Bible is equivalent to that of First and Second Peter. Erasmus, on the other hand, did not engage in this type of deconstructive textual criticism. Erasmus's textual critical work was guided by the common faith, ie, the belief that God had providentially preserved the Scriptures down through the ages. Edward F Hills said,

In the days of Erasmus, ... it was commonly believed by well informed Christians that the original New Testament text had been providentially preserved in the current New Testament text, primarily in the current Greek text and secondarily in the current Latin text. Erasmus was influenced by this common faith and probably shared it, and God used it providentially to guide Erasmus in his editorial labors on the Textus Receptus.

What sets Erasmus apart from Westcott and Hort was his belief that God has kept His Word intact down through the centuries. This caused him to edit the Greek New Testament with great reverence, taking care not to snip away God's Word. Westcott and Hort's textual critical work was quite different. Both denied the doctrines of inspiration and preservation, and thus had no qualms whatsoever in spurning the majority of New Testament Scripture that God had preserved for His people down through the ages in favour of two extremely corrupted texts which the Church had already seen fit to discard.

If Erasmus was such a faithful textual critic, then how would one explain the charge that in his hurry to complete his Greek text, he translated the last few verses of Revelation from Latin to Greek because the last page of his manuscript on Revelation was missing? Hills gave another side to this,

The last six verses of Codex 1r (Rev. 22:16-21) were lacking, ... According to almost all scholars, Erasmus endeavoured to supply these deficiencies in his manuscript by retranslating the Latin Vulgate into Greek. Hoskier, however, was inclined to dispute this on the evidence of manuscript 141. In his 4th edition of his Greek New Testament (1527) Erasmus corrected much of this translation Greek (if it was indeed such) on the basis of a comparison with the Complutensian Polyglot Bible ...

It is customary for naturalistic critics to make the most of human imperfections in the Textus Receptus and to sneer at it as a mean and almost sordid thing. ... But those who concentrate in this way on the human factors

involved in the production of the Textus Receptus are utterly unmindful of the Providence of God. For in the very next year, in the plan of God, the Reformation was to break out in Wittenberg, and it was important that the Greek New Testament should be published first in one of the future strongholds of Protestantism by a book seller who was eager to place it in the hands of the people and not in Spain, the land of the Inquisition, by the Roman Church, which was intent on keeping the Bible from the people.

Ashbrook is right to observe that the view of biblical preservation “must be accepted by faith,” but wrong to say that this faith is based on “human assumption” (106). This belief on biblical preservation is based not on human assumption but divine revelation (Exod 32:15-19, 34:1-4, Pss 12:6-7, 78:1-8, 105:8, 119:89, 111, 152, 160, Prov 22:20-21, Eccl 3:14, Jer 36:30-32, Matt 4:4, 5:17-18, 24:35, John 10:35, Col 1:17, 1 Pet 1:23-25, Rev 22:18-19).

“Printed Greek Texts” by William H Smallman

Smallman’s chapter presents a succinct update on the history of the printed Greek texts. However, in his evaluation of the two distinct families of printed Greek texts, viz, the Minority/Westcott-Hort/Critical text, and the Majority/Textus Receptus/Traditional text, it is unfortunate that he favours the so-called “eclectic” text or “balanced” approach which is essentially pro-Westcott and Hort.

In his opening discussion, Smallman says that the first printed Greek text (which became the Textus Receptus) by Erasmus was “hastily edited,” and that he used only “half dozen or so manuscripts” (169-70). This invariably gives the layman the impression that the Textus Receptus was a result of sloppy work. Is this an accurate portrayal of Erasmus and his work? Hills rose to Erasmus’s defence,

By his travels [Erasmus] was brought into contact with all the intellectual currents of his time and stimulated to almost superhuman efforts. He became the most famous scholar and author of his day and one of the most prolific writers of all time, his collected works filling ten large volumes As an editor also his productivity was tremendous. Ten columns of the catalogue of the library in the British Museum are taken up with the bare enumeration of the works translated, edited, or annotated by Erasmus, and their subsequent reprints. Included are the greatest names of the classical and patristic world, such as Ambrose, Aristotle, Augustine, Basil, Chrysostom, Cicero, and Jerome. An almost unbelievable showing.

To conclude, there was no man in all Europe better prepared than Erasmus for the work of editing the first printed Greek New Testament text, and this is why, we may well believe, God chose him and directed him providentially in the accomplishment of this task.

Did Erasmus employ other manuscripts besides those five he had when preparing his Greek text? Hills answered,

The indications are that he did. ... It is well known also that Erasmus looked for manuscripts everywhere during his travels and that he borrowed them from everyone he could. Hence although the Textus Receptus was based mainly on the manuscripts which Erasmus found at Basel, it also included readings taken from others to which he had access. It agreed with the common faith because it was founded on manuscripts which in the providence of God were readily available.

To those who sought to demean Erasmus and the Textus Receptus, Dean Burgon had this to say, “to describe the haste with which Erasmus produced the first published edition of the NT, to make sport about the copies which he employed, all this kind of thing is the preceding of one who seeks to mislead his readers to throw dust in their eyes, to divert their attention from the problems actually before them.” I cannot agree more.

When it came for Smallman to describe the Westcott and Hort text, he called it “an important development,” and hailed the Codex Sinaiticus as “one of the finest quality manuscripts” in existence (172). He said that the Westcott and Hort text “produced a revolution,” which led to “a new quest to define the original text,” to be “based on new witnesses ... and on new approaches to interpreting the variants.” He also noted that the Westcott and Hort text and its offshoots contain “significant differences” from the Textus Receptus (171). Were those differences for the better or for the worse? Are the verses removed from the Textus Receptus by Westcott and Hort authentic or spurious? Smallman in his attempt to maintain his balancing act refused to say or commit himself. He wrote evasively, “It is not the purpose of this essay to debate the fundamentals of Wescott [sic] and Hort’s principles and canons” (173).

Smallman considers the modern, critical Greek texts of Nestle and Aland (NA), and the United Bible Societies (UBS) to be the “Standard Greek Testament.” He said, “The establishment of the United Bible Societies/Nestle-Aland Text as standard is accepted by many virtually without argument” (179). He also says that this “Standard Greek Text”

“has been achieved by the majority of textual scholars who prefer the minority of manuscripts” (179). Despite the fact that this so-called “Standard Greek Text” is based only on a “minority of the manuscripts” (ie, the corrupt Alexandrian manuscripts), Smallman has interestingly nothing negative to say about it. Like the modernists and neo-evangelicals, he takes the eclectic view that the critical UBS and NA Greek texts are truly “scholarly” and “balanced” vis-a-vis the Textus Receptus.

Is the UBS and NA Greek texts truly eclectic (ie, a mixture of all available texts), or is it really the Westcott and Hort text disguised; a wolf in sheep’s clothing? According to Radmacher and Hodges, the new “Textus Receptus” of the UBS and NA “do not differ a whole lot from the text produced by Westcott-Hort in 1881.” Gordon Fee, who is no fundamentalist, also acknowledged, “[In] Modern textual criticism, the ‘eclecticism’ of the UBS, RSV, NIV, NASB etc., ... recognizes that Westcott-Hort’s view of things was essentially correct.” Thus the term “eclectic” is but a smokescreen.

The UBS Greek Text itself when it first came out acknowledged that its work was carried out “on the basis of Westcott and Hort’s edition of the Greek New Testament.” It is thus no surprise that the first two editions of the UBS text relegated the *pericope de adultera* (John 7:53-8:11) from its original and traditional place to the end of the Gospel; this to show that the passage is considered non-authentic. This clearly reveals a Westcott and Hort attitude. Like Westcott and Hort, the UBS editors accepted without question the omission of those verses in the corrupt Alexandrian manuscripts over against the Traditional and Majority Text. It is interesting to note that the third edition transposed John 7:53-8:11 back to its original location. Are the editors now admitting their error in rejecting the pericope? Although the pericope is now returned to its rightful place, the passage is enclosed by double brackets. What do these double brackets mean? The UBS editors say, “Double brackets in the text indicate that the enclosed passages which are usually rather extensive are known not to be a part of the original text.” Not only this precious passage, but also Mark’s last 12 verses are also assigned double brackets. The UBS editors would like us to know that both passages are not inspired Scripture. Do you not see the forked tongue of the snake here? Why are fundamentalists hissing to the same tune? Are the last 12 verses of Mark, the *pericope de adultera* (John 7:53-8:11), the Johannine

Comma (1 John 5:7-8), and a host of other verses Westcott and Hort removed from the Textus Receptus, divinely inspired? If you are looking to Smallman for answers, look no more! He is so “balanced,” he leaves you clueless.

Smallman would neither debate nor examine Westcott and Hort, but would spend three full pages (172-5) explaining their textual critical method which he deemed “profitable” (173), as compared to only half a page for the Textus Receptus (180). Do you not see the bias? Dean Burgon was only given cursory mention. Smallman did not consider Burgon’s books in defence of the Textus Receptus and KJV to be worth his time. Yet, Smallman was quick to use Burgon when it came time to undermine the layman’s confidence on the KJV. He quoted Burgon as saying,

Once for all, we request it may be clearly understood that we do not, by any means, claim perfection for the Received Text. We entertain no extravagant notions on this subject. Again and again we shall have occasion to point out ... that the Textus Receptus needs correction (182).

But Smallman should not have stopped there, giving a skewed picture. Burgon went on to express how deeply he appreciated the Textus Receptus,

We do but insist, (1) That it is an incomparably better text than that which either Lachmann, Tischendorf, or Tregelles has produced: infinitely preferable to the ‘New Greek Text’ of the Revisionists (viz, Westcott and Hort). And, (2) That to be improved, the Textus Receptus will have to be revised on entirely different ‘principles’ from those which are just now in fashion. Men must begin by unlearning the *German (ie, liberal) prejudices* ... and address themselves, instead to the stern logic of *facts*.

In his conclusion, Smallman reveals his confusion. He wrote quite rightly that

The divine preservation of the Scriptures is a fact that gives great assurance to those who read the Bible today. It is the Word of God, and every “jot and tittle” of it is kept intact for the readers of successive generations (182).

But in the next sentence he turns agnostic: “Still, our certainty of the preservation of the text does not identify which text family is the object of that providential oversight.” To him, the text is preserved in all the texts whether corrupt or not. Such a position is clearly illogical, and contradictory. I would urge readers to listen to Hills instead of Smallman, Let me repeat Hills’s most pertinent warning here,

It is a dangerous error therefore to ignore the special, providential preservation of the holy Scriptures and to seek to defend the New Testament text in the same way in which we would defend the texts of other ancient books. For the logic of this unbelieving attitude is likely to lay hold upon us and cast us down into a bottomless pit of uncertainty. ...

The Bible teaches us that faith is the foundation of reason. *Through faith we understand* (Heb. 11:3). By faith we lay hold on God as He reveals Himself in the holy Scriptures and make Him the starting point of all our thinking. ...

Like the Protestant Reformers therefore we must take God as the starting point of all our thinking. We must *begin* with God. Very few Christians, however, do this consistently. For example, even when a group of conservative Christian scholars meet for the purpose of defending the Textus Receptus and the King James Version, you will find that some of them want to do this in a rationalistic, naturalistic way. Instead of beginning with God, they wish to begin with facts viewed apart from God, with details concerning the New Testament manuscripts which must be regarded as true (so they think) no matter whether God exists or not. ...

Conservative scholars ... say that they believe in the special, providential preservation of the New Testament text. Most of them really don't though, because, as soon as they say this, they immediately reduce this special providential preservation to the vanishing point in order to make room for the naturalistic theories of Westcott and Hort. As we have seen, some say that the providential preservation of the New Testament means merely that the same "substance of doctrine" is found in all the New Testament documents. Others say that it means that the true reading is always present in at least one of the thousands of extant New Testament manuscripts. And still other scholars say that to them the special, providential preservation of the Scriptures means that the true New Testament text was providentially discovered in the mid-19th century by Tischendorf, Tregelles, and Westcott and Hort after having been lost for 1,500 years.

If you adopt one of these false views of the providential preservation of Scriptures, then you are logically on your way toward the denial of the infallible inspiration of the Scriptures. For if God has preserved the Scriptures so carelessly, why would he have infallibly inspired them in the first place? It is not sufficient therefore merely to *say* that you believe in the doctrine of the special, providential preservation of holy Scriptures. You must *really* believe this doctrine and allow it to guide your thinking. You must begin with Christ and the Gospel and proceed according to the logic of faith. This will lead you to the Traditional text, the Textus Receptus, and the King James Version, in other words, to the common faith.

Can we be certain of God's Word? God in Prov 22:20-21 says, "Have not I written to thee excellent things in counsels and knowledge, That I might make thee know *the certainty of the words of truth*; that thou mightest answer the words of truth to them that send unto thee?" Be sure of this: God wants us to have certainty concerning His Words.

"The Making of the King James Version" by John C Mincy

Despite its helpful historical data, this chapter misrepresents the KJV translators in a most misleading way. In support of modern and corrupt versions, Mincy argued that the KJV translators themselves "viewed even the worst English versions as the Word of God" (141). He quoted them as saying, "Now to answer our enemies; we do not deny, rather we affirm and insist that the very worst translation of the Bible in English issued by Protestants contains the word of God, or rather, is the word of God." This statement is most illogical and totally unbiblical!

Were the KJV translators capable of those words; the ones who extolled truth and condemned error? Consider what they wrote in their preface—"The Translators to the Readers,"

But now what piety without truth? What truth (what saving truth) without the word of God? What word of God (whereof we may be sure) without the Scripture? The Scriptures we are commanded to search (John 5.39; Isaiah 8.20). They are reprov'd that were unskilful in them, or slow to believe them (Matthew 22.29; Luke 24.25). They can make us wise unto salvation (2 Timothy 3.15). If we be ignorant, they will instruct us; if out of the way, they will bring us home; if out of order, they will reform us; if in heaviness, comfort us; if dull, quicken us; if cold, inflame us. *Tolle, lege, Tolle, lege*, Take up and read, take up and read the Scriptures ... The Scriptures then being acknowledged to be so full and so perfect, how can we excuse ourselves of negligence, if we do not study them? ... It is not only an armor, but also a whole armory of weapons, both offensive and defensive; whereby we may save ourselves and put the enemy to flight. It 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. It is not a pot of Manna, or a cruse of oil, which were for memory only, or for a meal's meat or two; but as it were a shower of heavenly bread sufficient for a whole host, be it never so great, and as it were a whole cellar full of oil vessels; whereby all our necessities may be provided for, and our debts discharged. In a word, it is a panary of wholesome food, against fenowed traditions; a physician's shop ... of preservatives against poisoned heresies; a pandect of profitable laws against rebellious spirits; a treasury of most

costly jewels against beggarly rudiments; finally, a fountain of most pure water springing up unto everlasting life. ... Happy is the man that delighteth in the Scripture, and thrice happy that meditateth in it day and night.

Could the men who penned the above words have sanctioned a corrupted translation of the Scriptures? Would they have cried, *Tolle, lege, Tolle, lege*, if John 1:29 had read thus, “Behold the *Pig* of God, which taketh away the sin of the world?” If the “fountain of most pure water” had been polluted by enemies of the Word in such a way, I am quite certain that the KJV translators would have cursed that version for blasphemy, and cast it into the fire. It is truly absurd for Mincy to think that the KJV translators humoured wicked versions. Indeed the Puritans among the KJV translators appealed to the king for a new English Bible because the Bible as found in the Communion book was according to them, “a most corrupted translation.” Evidently, corrupt translations did not sit well with them at all.

The question remains: Did the KJV translators really say that the “worst” versions are acceptable? They certainly did not. Mincy’s quotation of the KJV translators is taken from Rhodes and Lupas’s *paraphrase* (published by the American Bible Society in 1997) of their original statement. It is obvious that Rhodes and Lupas felt quite free to change the original intent of those words, taking them out of context. How did the original version read especially in context?

Now to the latter we answer, that we do not deny, nay, we affirm and avow, that the very *meanest* translation of the Bible in English set forth by men of our profession (for we have seen none of theirs of the whole Bible as yet) containeth the word of God, nay, is the word of God: as the King’s speech which he uttered in parliament, being translated into French, Dutch, Italian, and Latin, is still the King’s speech, though it be not interpreted by every translator *with the like grace*, ...

It is clear that by the word “meanest” they did not mean “worst” (ie, “evil in the highest degree”). Who would dare mistranslate the king’s speech? Clearly they were not talking about sense but *style*. By “meanest” they meant *poor in literary grace*. When beginning Greek students translate their Greek Bible into English, it may be rough and wooden; but if literal and precise, it is the Word of God.

“The Changing King James Version,” by Mark R Simmons

In this chapter, Simmons ridicules KJV-only advocates by setting up a straw man. He calls KJV-only advocates overly simplistic for believing that the actual “1611” KJV is the “preserved” Word of God (161). Of course, no right thinking KJV defender would say that. First, KJV-only advocates believe that the preserved text is the Hebrew and Greek text that underlies the KJV. The Masoretic Hebrew Old Testament (Ben Chayyim edition, 1524-5), and the Greek Textus Receptus (Beza’s 5th edition, 1598) on which the KJV is based are the preserved Old Testament, and New Testament text respectively. Second, when KJV defenders say they uphold the KJV of 1611, they do not mean the exact 1611 edition. KJV defenders like their detractors know that the KJV currently in print is the 1769 edition. The KJV was originally published in the year 1611. To identify certain things by their year of origination is common practice. For example, Biblical Theological Seminary was founded in the year 1971. It was not known as “Biblical Theological Seminary” at that time but “Biblical School of Theology.” When there was a name change in 1978, did the school also change its year of establishment? Of course not! It remained 1971. Likewise, to refer to the present edition of the KJV as the KJV of 1611 is neither unusual, nor deceptive; it simply reflects history.

Simmons exaggerates when he says that the KJV is “extremely difficult” to understand because “over four thousand words in the King James Bible are not found in even the best of our one volume English dictionaries today” (153). There are just about 200 archaic words in the KJV, and most of these words can be found in our Webster’s, Oxford, and Chambers dictionaries. The recently published *Defined King James Bible*, edited by Dr D A Waite and his son, has footnoted the modern meaning of all archaic words in the KJV. There is really no excuse now not to use the KJV just because some of its words are archaic.

Anti-KJVists often ridicule the use of the “thees” and “thous” in the KJV, simply because these archaic pronouns are no longer common today. But is this a good reason to abandon the KJV? In an article entitled, “Is a Pronominal Revision of the Authorised Version Desirable?,” Dr Oswald T Allis wrote,

It is a well-known fact that in contemporary English the forms *thou*, *thy*, *thine* have almost disappeared from secular use. They are largely restricted

to the language of religious devotion, in which they are constantly employed, and which is largely formed by, and owes its peculiarities to, the Authorised Version. Consequently, it is often asserted or assumed that the usage of the AV represents the speech of 300 years ago, and that now, three centuries later, it should be changed to accord with contemporary usage. But this is not at all a correct statement of the problem. The important fact is this. The usage of the AV is *not* the ordinary usage of the early seventeenth century: it *is* the Biblical usage based on the style of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures. The second part of this statement needs no proof and will be challenged by no one. It is undeniable that where the Hebrew and Greek use the singular of the pronoun the AV regularly uses the singular, and where they use the plural it uses the plural. Even in Deuteronomy where in his addresses, and apparently for rhetorical and pedagogical effect, Moses often changes suddenly, and seemingly arbitrarily, from singular to plural or from plural to singular, the AV reproduces the style of the text with fidelity. That is to say, the usage of the AV is *strictly Biblical*.

If the fundamentalists who wrote *From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man* believe in verbal inspiration, they should be quick to defend the use of the “archaic” pronouns of the KJV which accurately render in English the singular and plural pronouns of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures. It would indeed be a contradiction in faith and practice for them to consider the “thees” and the “thous” to be unimportant and insignificant.

Simmons also makes a big deal out of the many revisions of the KJV (156-165). The KJV of 1611 went through a number of revisions soon after publication but all of which were completed in 1629. The revisions that occurred between 1611 and 1629 were due to printing errors. These errors were corrected by the KJV translators themselves, namely Samuel Ward and John Bois. In the course of typesetting, the printers had inadvertently left out words or phrases; all such typographical errors were corrected. Another revision of the KJV was done between 1762 and 1769. This revision had to do with spelling. For example, old forms which had an “e” after verbs, and “u” instead of “v,” and “f” for “s” were all standardised to conform to modern spelling. For example, “feare” is “fear,” “mooued” is “moved,” and “euill” is “evil,” and “alfo,” is “also.” All these Gothic and German spelling peculiarities have been Romanised by 1769. It is important to note that the 1769 edition is essentially the same as the 1611.

“English Versions Since 1880,” by J Drew Conley

Conley in his article cast KJV-only advocates in a bad light. Quoting the KJV translators who said that the Bible should be translated into the language of the common man, he obliquely accused those who insist that the “archaic” KJV alone is the acceptable English Bible for hiding God’s Word from people just like the Romanists in days gone by (187-9). Conley argues that the profound changes in English since the 1600s has caused many words in the KJV to

come up blank in the reader’s thinking—or worse, misunderstood ... And when the text is the Bible, lack of understanding does spiritual harm. ... For me to expect members of the congregation—especially new converts—to devote themselves to profitable study of a Bible in an unfamiliar language is certainly wishful thinking at best” (183).

Conley’s concern over the “understandability” of the KJV is well taken, but his solution to the difficulty is a step backwards, not forwards. For young believers, it is not just the archaisms in the Bible that may pose some difficulty, but also the many hard theological terms. How should the pastor advise the young believer? Use the NIV, or TEV, or CEV, or RSV, or NASB, or the Living Bible? This would be like giving a baby milk laced with cyanide! Conley rightly says that the pastor has a duty “to communicate God’s truth so others understand” (192). He continues,

There are words of such great theological significance that they should never be replaced. A preacher should define them, explain them, and illustrate them so that others can make them their own. *Justification, sanctification, glorification, propitiation, atonement, reconciliation*, understood by few except those who have been taught the gospel, have been too precisely defined over the years to abandon them without grave consequences” (192).

If pastors have a duty to explain all those important theological terms to their congregation so that they might understand, why cannot they do the same for the archaic words in the KJV? Furthermore, why cannot the young believer be taught to use the dictionary to locate the meaning of those words, or better still, why cannot the pastor present to him a copy of *The Defined King James Bible*? Why should the young Christian be told to throw out his KJV and get an NIV or some other perversion of the Bible just because of some old words?

The excuse not to use the KJV because it contains archaic words is really quite flimsy. When we read a modern book, do we not find words

that we do not understand? When we encounter such difficulties in our reading, what do we do? Throw the book away? or hit the dictionary? We go to the dictionary. We search for the meaning, and we become the wiser for it. We are not fools are we? Why should God's Word in the KJV be treated so disrespectfully, that when we come across difficult terms, it is beneath us to turn the dictionary? Should modern English versions be preferred over the KJV? Dr Robert B Alter (PhD, Harvard) in 1996, wrote, "Modern English versions put readers at a grotesque distance from the ... Bible. To this day, the Authorized Version of 1611 (the "King James Bible") ... for all its archaisms ... remains the closest we have yet come to the distinctive experience of the original." Therefore, stick to the KJV, and use the dictionary!

The neo-evangelical spirit that pervades this book—*From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man*—is clearly seen in Conley's approach to the versions. One would think Conley, a fundamentalist pastor, would be careful to guide his sheep to the right pasture with regard to the versions. Instead, we find him saying that his chapter is not "intended to be a critique or a recommendation of any version" (195). He will not tell the layman (and mind you, this book is supposed to be a guide for the layman) which version is good and which is bad. As God's under-shepherd, he is telling the Lord's sheep, "There are weeds, thistles, and grass out there. I do not wish to tell you where to go, or what to eat; just go take your pick." But wait, Conley does not do even that. In a footnote, he recommends the following versions which he says "are valuable for serious Bible study" (195): the Revised Version, American Standard Version and the New American Standard Bible (NASB). Note that all three are based on the corrupt text of Westcott and Hort. In a whisper, he tells the sheep, "Go eat the weeds and the thistles." It is thus no surprise that Conley writes sympathetically of the liberal and ecumenical Revised Standard Version (RSV). He quotes without any refutation that the RSV embodies "the best results of modern scholarship" (198). He quotes the RSV as saying that the KJV has "grave defects" without any rebuttal whatsoever, except for a cowardly parenthetical remark, "their words, not mine" (198).

What is truly troubling is Conley's tacit approval of the RSV's heterodox translation of the עלמה ('*almah*) of Isa 7:14 as "young woman" instead of "virgin" (199). He justifies the RSV by pointing out that Matthew's quotation of Isa 7:14 in the RSV reads "virgin." Why did

Conley not defend the orthodox translation of Isa 7:14 as found in the KJV over against the RSV? Perhaps Conley holds to the neo-evangelical view that Isa 7:14 has two fulfilments: one in the time of Isaiah, and the other in the time of Christ. If Conley does allow for such a translation and interpretation of Isa 7:14, he is no fundamentalist. It is well known that in 1952, when the RSV was released, fundamentalist scholars took the RSV to task for its heretical treatment of Isa 7:14. Conley must surely know this, yet he does not seem to care.

If Conley is sympathetic to the RSV, he is enthusiastic about the NASB. He says the NASB

incorporates the *gains* made by the discoveries of additional manuscripts (ie, Alexandrian manuscripts) ... and has thus proven of *great value* in discerning the underlying text. To some its strength carries with it a weakness—that of falling short of a smooth English style. Others fault it, along with almost all the modern versions for the Greek textual family it uses. Neither charge is totally fair to this *excellent* tool for Bible study” (201).

Conley tells his readers that he will neither recommend nor critique, but does not his remarks about the NASB sound like a recommendation? The layman would do well to note that the NASB, though rather literal, is unreliable because it is based on the corrupt Westcott and Hort text.

If the layman wants to find guidance on which English versions are reliable and which are not, he would do well to skip Conley, and find it somewhere else. One good source is *A Brief History of English Bible Translations* by Laurence M Vance.

“Conclusion: The Response to These Facts,” by Keith E Gephart

Gephart reiterates the aim of the book which is to fault certain fundamentalists for taking a pro-KJV or KJV-only position. He says, “As always, Fundamentalism’s greatest difficulties are caused by those within its own ranks who by some actions, statements, or doctrinal positions bring embarrassment and unnecessary discord” (211). Such rhetoric is no different from that of Ahab to Elijah, “Art thou he that troubleth Israel?” (1 Kgs 18:17).” Like Elijah we reply, “I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father’s house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and thou hast followed Baalim” (1 Kgs 18:18). KJV-only advocates have been faithful to the Hebrew and Greek texts God has

inspired and preserved down through the ages. Pan-Versionists like Gephart have shunted from the traditional and preserved text to embrace the modernist and critical text of Westcott and Hort, the UBS, and NA. The old, conservative textual line began in the time of the Apostles, and preserved all through the centuries by God, culminating in the Textus Receptus of the 16th century Reformation. This line continued until Satan introduced a new, modernistic line in the Westcott and Hort text of 19th century liberalism. Know that the 19th century was a time of great unbelief when new-fangled “isms” like Evolutionism, Liberalism, Freudianism, Marxism, and Ecumenism came into being. It looks like modern fundamentalists instead of traveling on the “good old gospel train,” have hopped onto the new and seductive Westcott-Hort train which will only lead to unbelief and apostasy. Hills has rightly warned that those who take an eclectic view of providential preservation of Scriptures (ie, the Textus Receptus is good, but so is Westcott and Hort; the KJV is good, but so are all the modern versions) “are logically on [their] way toward the denial of the infallible inspiration of the Scriptures.” Let me also repeat the good advice of Martin:

The only road to progress in New Testament textual criticism is *repudiation* of their (ie, Westcott and Hort) theory and all its fruits. Most contemporary criticism is bankrupt and confused, the result of its liaison with liberal theology. A Bible-believing Christian can never be content to follow the leadership of those who do not recognize the Bible as the verbally inspired Word of God. The Textus Receptus is the starting-point for future research, because it embodies substantially and in a convenient form the traditional text.

Gephart enjoins all his readers to be like the noble Bereans who searched the Scriptures (214). Yes, it is vitally important for all true theologues to search the Scriptures. However, it is equally important also for them to ensure that the Scriptures they search from is truly the Word of God, accurately and faithfully translated from the original. The reason is plain and simple: If you are not reading from a pure and unadulterated Word, you will not find the truth for which you seek.

Let me give an example. In the KJV, Ps 12:6-7 reads, “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 *perserve them* from this generation for ever.” It is very clear from this text that God has promised to preserve *His Word*: He will keep and preserve “them,” ie, His

“words” (v6). But in the NIV, we find something quite different, “And the words of the LORD are flawless, like silver refined in a furnace of clay, purified seven times. O LORD, you will *keep us* safe and *protect us* from such people forever.” Note the change from “keep them” and “preserve them” (KJV) to “keep us” and “protect us” (NIV). The NIV changed the pronouns from the third person plural (“them”) to the first person plural (“us”). The NIV has changed the Word of God here. In the Hebrew text, the first word is תשמרם (*tishmerem*). The *-em* suffix is third plural, “them,” not “us.” He will keep “them” (so KJV) is correct. The second word is תצננו (*titzrennu*). The *-ennu* suffix is third singular with the energetic *nun*, meaning literally, “every one of them,” and not “us.” We therefore find Ps 12:6-7 teaching us that God will preserve His Word as a whole (plenary preservation), and His Word in its parts (verbal preservation). But the NIV by way of a “dynamic” (read “demonic”) method has corrupted the text, and by so doing, removed the doctrine of Bible preservation from the Scriptures. By all means, search the Scriptures, but make sure you search from the right one!

Gephart accuses KJV-only advocates of “pride and prejudice” (215). He behaves very much like David’s eldest brother—Eliab—who scolded David for wanting to fight the Philistine giant—Goliath. David wanted to defend God’s name, but Eliab rebuked him saying, “I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle” (1 Sam 17:28). This same charge is now leveled against KJV-only fundamentalists by their fellows. We reply with David, “What have I now done? Is there not a cause?” (1 Sam 17:29). Indeed, there is! There is a battle for truth to be fought today. It is against the Westcott-Hort Goliath! Are you a David, or an Eliab?

If the fundamentalists of this book—*From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man*—will not hear us, then let them hear from Dr Ian Paisley who is a friend of BJU and a prominent leader of the World Congress of Fundamentalists:

I believe the Bible is the verbally inspired Word of the living God and because the Authorised Version is a faithful English translation of the original Hebrew of the Old Testament and the original Greek of the New Testament, it is the very Word of God in my mother tongue. Being a translation does not alter one iota of its integrity, inerrancy and infallibility as God’s Word. ...

I believe this English Authorized Version is unsurpassably pre-eminent over and above all other English translations, because like the blessed Joseph there rests upon it the blessing of the heavens above and of the deep that lieth under (Genesis 49:25).

I cry out “There is none like that, give it me,” and in so doing I nail the Satanic lie that the Authorized Version is outdated, outmoded, mistranslated, a relic of the past and only defended by stupid, unlearned, untaught obscurantists.

As its deriders and revilers pass on to the judgment of the thrice holy God whose revelation they despise, the Old Book,

“Incomparable in its faithfulness, majestic in its language, and inexhaustible in its spiritual fruitfulness, continues to reveal to millions the matchless grace of Him whose name is THE WORD OF GOD, and who is crowned with glory and honour.”

I believe this Book will always be the unsurpassable pre-eminent English version of the Holy Bible and no other can ever take its place.

To seek to dislodge this Book from its rightful pre-eminent place is the act of the enemy, and what is attempted to put in its place is an intruder - an imposter - a pretender - a usurper.

We plead with BJU and fellow fundamentalists who love God and His Word to defend the KJV, and defend it only. “Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord?” (2 Chr 19:1-2). Be like David who had the mind of God to fight Goliath. If we have the mind of God, we must also have the heart of God: “Do not I hate them, O LORD, that hate thee? And am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies” (Ps 139:21-22).

THE EMERGENCE OF NEO-FUNDAMENTALISM

One Bible Only? or “Yea Hath God Said?”

Jeffrey Khoo

False doctrine does not meet men face to face, and proclaim that it is false. It does not blow a trumpet before it, and endeavour openly to turn us away from the truth as it is in Jesus. It does not come before men in broad daylight and summon them to surrender. It approaches us secretly, quietly, insidiously, plausibly, and in such a way as to disarm man’s suspicion, and throw him off his guard. It is the wolf in sheep’s clothing, and Satan in the garb of an angel of light, who have always proved the most dangerous foes of the Church (J C Ryle, *Warnings to the Churches*, 56).

The Differences Between Historic Fundamentalism and Neo-Fundamentalism in Their Respective Views on Biblical Inspiration and Preservation	
Historic Fundamentalism	Neo-Fundamentalism
The perfect, infallible and inerrant Bible is not only in the Autographs but also in the existing and tangible Apographs (the Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek Scriptures on which the KJV is based).	The perfect, infallible and inerrant Bible is only in the non-existent and intangible Autographs (the actual Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek Scriptures penned by the Prophets and Apostles).
The Autographs are entirely preserved. We have all of God’s Word today (100%). Every word and every doctrine preserved (i.e. verbal preservation).	The Autographs are essentially preserved. We have most of God’s Word today (99%). Every doctrine preserved, but not every word (i.e. conceptual preservation).
The biblical basis for the doctrine of 100% preservation of the Scriptures is found in Matt 5:18 as stated in the Westminster Confession. Other verses are Ps 12:6-7, Matt 24:35, Mark 13:31, Luke 21:33.	There is no biblical basis for the doctrine of 100% preservation of the Scriptures. All Scripture verses supporting preservation like Matt 5:18 are explained away.
There are no mistakes whatsoever in the Bible. Discrepancies like the one found in 2 Kgs 8:26/2 Chron 22:2 are only apparent and not actual errors.	There are no mistakes in the Bible that should cause any worry. Allows for insignificant mistakes or minor errors (e.g. 2 Kgs 8:26/2 Chron 22:2).

One Bible Only? (238 pages, edited by Roy E Beacham and Kevin T Bauder, and published by Kregel in 2001) should be retitled, *Yea, Hath God Said?* (Gen 3:1). In this book, one hears again the seductive “scholarly” hissing of the snake that seeks to cast a doubt in the hearts and minds of God’s people concerning what God says of His perfectly inspired and absolutely preserved Scriptures. On page 22, they pose the question: “Does the Bible promise that all of God’s words will be preserved?” KJV/TR-Only advocates affirm the twin doctrines of the verbal and plenary inspiration and preservation of God’s words, yea even to the jot and tittle (Matt 5:18), but these so-called Baptist fundamentalists, who teach at Central Baptist Theological Seminary of Plymouth, Minnesota, answer with a rhetorical “Did God say it?” “*Yea, hath God said?*”

Having questioned the Word of God, they had the cheek to describe themselves as belonging to the “conservative wing of fundamentalism”. What a betrayal! Had they not identified themselves, I would have thought they were modernists or at least neo-evangelicals. But they say they are “fundamentalists”! They are no fundamentalists if they question God and His Word like this. If they are truly fundamentalists, they ought to be ashamed of themselves. Dr Carl McIntire has rightly said, “The worst sin today is to say that you agree with the Christian faith and believe in the Bible, but then make common cause with those who deny the basic facts of Christianity. Never was it more obviously true that he that is not with Christ is against Him.” They undermine God’s Word and the faith of God’s Church by denying that God’s people have God’s infallible and inerrant Word today. Are we seeing the emergence of a new breed of left-wing fundamentalism—the rise of a Neo-fundamentalism?

Now, let us examine the book chapter by chapter.

“The Richness of Scripture” by Douglas R McLachlan

In his preface, McLachlan, the president of Central Seminary, affirms the inerrancy and infallibility of the Bible, but only “in the autographs” (10). McLachlan explains that the autographs or original manuscripts of Scripture are no longer in existence. What the Church has today are the manuscript copies which reflect about 2000 variant readings, “*none of which*”, assures McLachlan, “affects the overall theology of Bible-believing Christians” (10).

There is no denial that there are variant readings in the over 5000 New Testament manuscripts we have today, but McLachlan is truly naïve to think that no fundamental doctrines are affected by any of these variants. It is clearly evident that certain manuscripts have been purposely doctored to undermine the fundamental doctrines of the Christian Faith. These corrupt manuscripts belong to the Alexandrian text-type which liberal scholars parroting Westcott and Hort claim to be the best and most reliable. But the oft-neglected Dean J W Burgon has proven beyond doubt that the Alexandrian codices of Sinaiticus and Vaticanus hailed by Westcott and Hort to be as good as the autographs are among the “*most scandalously corrupt copies extant:—exhibit the most shamefully mutilated texts which are anywhere to be met with:—have become ... the depositories of the largest amount of fabricated readings, ancient blunders, and intentional perversions of Truth,—which are discoverable in any known copies of the Word of God*” (*Revision Revised*, 16). One well-known example of corruption which affects doctrine is found in 1 Tim 3:16. The inspired text reads *Theos ephanerothe en sarki*, “**God** was manifest in the flesh” (KJV), but the Alexandrian text altered the inspired text to read, *Hos ephanerothe en sarki*, “**He** appeared in a body” (NIV). By changing “God” to simply “He” the Alexandrian scribes have effectively cancelled the Godhood of our Lord in the original inspired Scripture, and by so doing robbed the Church of a most precious and wonderful proof for the deity of Christ.

Some may take this lightly, “Why are you so hard on Westcott and Hort and the Alexandrian text? It is just one word or one verse in the Bible. It is not that bad!” Whether this is excusable or not, let the Apostle James be the judge, “For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all” (Jas 2:10). The same applies to those who attempt to corrupt the Bible: *Whoever corrupts one word or one verse in the Bible is guilty of corrupting all of the Bible*.

The question remains: Is corruption in the Alexandrian text found only in this single place? Most definitely not! Dean Burgon in examining the two highly prized codices of Westcott and Hort, viz., the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus found many omissions, additions, substitutions, transpositions and modifications in them, and these alterations “*are by no means the same in both. It is in fact easier to find two consecutive verses in which these two MSS. differ the one from the other, than two consecutive verses in which they entirely agree*” (*Revision Revised*, 12).

Yet these most untrustworthy and grossly mutilated manuscripts are what the modern Bible translators rely on to translate their modern versions.

Now McLachlan refuses to take a stand against the corrupt Westcott and Hort text. He is against “becoming frozen in time by anchoring to and absolutizing only one English translation or one narrow family of Greek manuscripts” (12). He wants to be “very balanced” to accept the whole “kettle of textual soup”. He recommends the textual-critical recipe of neo-evangelical charismatic—Gordon Fee—to make this large “kettle of textual soup” edible (11). Hence the book title—*One Bible Only?*. McLachlan and his faculty want to be very broad to embrace all kinds of manuscripts and versions whether corrupt or not. They despise the narrow way of just one Bible and one Preserved Text. To them, it is simply foolish to adopt the narrow way. But what did Jesus say? “Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it” (Matt 7:13-14). It would be wise to follow Jesus, not McLachlan.

The bottom line is this: Not all the Bibles are the same. That is a fact! The Alexandrian manuscripts that underlie the modern translations are plagued throughout with all kinds of fabricated readings that are out of harmony with the majority of extant and faithfully transmitted manuscripts. Most of the Bible versions today are based on corrupt manuscripts as compared to the KJV which is based on the providentially preserved text that has been “kept pure in all ages” (*Westminster Confession of Faith*, 1.8). As such, it is not a both-and but an either-or commitment. It is either the Christ-exalting and faith-producing KJV or the modern Christ-denying and money-making perversions. As Jesus has said, “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon” (Matt 6:24). Similarly, no one can serve two Bibles! We have *Only One God* and He has given us *Only One Bible*!

Over against the denials and doubts cast by *One Bible Only?*, Statement #11 of the International Council of Christian Churches (ICCC) 16th World Congress, Jerusalem 2000, affirms this: “Believing God safeguarded the Bible in times past and will continue to do so in the future and all eternity. He preserved **ONE Holy Scripture, the Bible**. ‘Heaven and earth shall pass away but my words shall not pass away;’

Matthew 24:35. Believing the O.T. has been preserved in the Masoretic text and the N.T. in the Textus Receptus, combined they gave us the *complete* Word of God.”

“The Issues at Hand” by Kevin T Bauder

Bauder strongly objects to the fundamentalist movement that recommends the King James Version as the only acceptable English Bible for the Church. Bauder is troubled by the rise of the King James-Only movement and disturbed that “Churches and fellowships ... began to pressure their preachers to use only the King James for public reading and teaching. Resolutions were passed honoring the King James Version and recommending its exclusive use” (15). Why should he be so troubled by this? Did he not entertain the possibility that the KJV could be a superior version in terms of its text and translation (18)? What is wrong if conservative Christians feel that it is the only Bible they should use?

Bauder claims that “historic fundamentalists were not King James Only.” This is however not the observation of James Barr who wrote, “For fundamentalist society as a whole the Authorized Version functioned as the direct and immediate expression or transcript of divine revelation ... The virtual use of only one English version, and it is one originating within very traditional early seventeenth-century Christianity, thus indirectly but very powerfully supported the alienation of the fundamentalist public from, and its opposition to, the positions, interests and methods from which all biblical criticism grew and on which it depended” (*Fundamentalism*, 210-211). Barr, who is no friend of fundamentalism, appears more honest with the facts than the fundamentalists of Central Seminary. Dr Robert Gromacki of Cedarville College, in his New Testament Survey textbook, affirms the KJV “as *the* text of fundamentalism” (*New Testament Survey*, xii). Dr Ian Paisley, a prominent leader of the World Congress of Fundamentalism, upholds the KJV as the only Bible fundamentalists should use. Without mincing his words he wrote, “I believe this Authorised Version is unsurpassably pre-eminent over and above all other English translations, ... I cry out ‘There is none like that, give it me,’ and in so doing I nail the Satanic lie that the Authorised Version is outdated, outmoded, mistranslated, a relic of the past and only defended by stupid, unlearned, untaught obscurantists. ... I believe this Book will always be the unsurpassable pre-eminent English version of the Holy Bible and no other can ever take its place. To seek to

dislodge this Book from its rightful pre-eminent place is the act of the enemy, and what is attempted to put in its place is an intruder - an imposter - a pretender - a usurper” (*My Plea for the Old Sword*, 10-11). In similar fashion, Dr Carl McIntire and the International Council of Christian Churches (ICCC) in two recent World Congresses, in Amsterdam 1998 and in Jerusalem 2000, affirmed the exclusive KJV stance of historic fundamentalism.

Indeed, there is today a God-driven movement at the grassroots level towards the KJV and the Textus Receptus. But the “scholars” today are trying their level best to stop it. This is hardly strange since it is usually the saints and not the scholars that are sensitive to the Truth. History has shown that the seminaries are the ones that go apostate first. But the Lord will always preserve His Church from being totally devastated by heresy. Has He not promised, “and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matt 16:18)? There will always be a faithful remnant. What Bauder has observed is the work of the common faith of the faithful Church to insist on the use of the best English version of the Bible today which is the KJV. But now you have so-called “scholars” from the seminaries who seek to undermine the Ecclesial Faith in its movement towards one Bible only! Dr Paisley’s warning is timely, “No Bible believer should be deceived by the parading of great names in the field of Biblical ‘scholarship’, when these very men are but the parrots of the rationalists of another century. The case they present is not their own but a modern presentation of an ancient heresy” (*My Plea for the Old Sword*, 13). This surely applies to *One Bible Only?* and its authors.

I am thankful for Bauder’s concession that it is not irresponsible of certain Pro-KJV advocates to assert the superiority of the KJV among English Bible versions, and its underlying Hebrew and Greek Text (18). He acknowledges that there are moderate Pro-KJV advocates who are vehemently opposed to the heretical views of Ruckman (19). Such a position is clearly articulated by Dr D A Waite in his book—*Defending the King James Bible: A Four-fold Superiority*. The KJV ought to be the only Bible the English Church should use because it is superior in terms of its (1) *Text* (Traditional and Preserved Hebrew Masoretic and Greek Received Text), (2) *Translation technique* (verbal or formal rather than dynamic equivalence), (3) *Translators* (Bible-believing and Bible-defending scholars who had a thorough mastery of the biblical languages

and an impeccable command of the English language), and (4) *Theology* (upholding every fundamental doctrine of the Historic Christian Faith). Bauder cannot but admit that the KJV is the only translation that meets all four criteria (19).

What then is the problem? It is this: *One Bible Only?* argues that “the King James is not the only true Bible in the English language” (19). Its authors insists that modern Bible perversions that are based on the corrupt Westcott and Hort text must be allowed in the churches and be regarded as the Word of God. They are in effect saying, “The NIV, NASB, RSV, TEV, CEV, ESV, NLT etc., though based on the highly corrupt Westcott and Hort Text *are not dangerous to use.*” Does this make sense to you, my dear reader? If I were to tell you, “This glass of milk though laced with arsenic is not dangerous to drink,” what would you think of me? I do not have to tell you this, but Bauder is dispensing dangerous counsel most unbecoming of a fundamentalist! The authors of *One Bible Only?* are advocating a sort of pluralism. With regard to Bible versions, they want to go ecumenical! Can Truth and Error be mixed? How quickly they have forgotten 2 Cor 6:14! If they persist in this error, Central Seminary will soon become Central Cemetery! God forbid that this should happen, but history does often repeat itself!

What is the real danger of *One Bible Only?* It is this: the false teaching that the Church *today* is bereft of an absolutely infallible and inerrant Bible. Bauder does not believe that the God who perfectly inspired His Word has also perfectly preserved His Word. He affirms Verbal Plenary Inspiration (VPI) but denies Verbal Plenary Preservation (VPP). He spent seven whole pages (20-26) arguing that we do not have an infallible and inerrant Bible today by denying the doctrine of VPP. By denying VPP, Bauder might as well deny VPI for what is the use of an infallible and inerrant Bible yesterday but not today? Dr Paisley was absolutely correct to say, “The verbal Inspiration of the Scriptures demands the verbal Preservation of the Scriptures. Those who would deny the need for verbal Preservation cannot be accepted as committed to verbal Inspiration. If there is no preserved Word of God today then the work of Divine Revelation and Divine Inspiration has perished” (*My Plea for the Old Sword*, 103). Dr Timothy Tow, founding pastor of the Bible-Presbyterian Church in Singapore and principal of the Far Eastern Bible College, likewise wrote, “We believe the preservation of Holy Scripture and its Divine inspiration stand in the same position as providence and

creation. If Deism teaches a Creator who goes to sleep after creating the world is absurd, to hold to the doctrine of inspiration without preservation is equally illogical. ... Without preservation, all the inspiration, God-breathing into the Scriptures, would be lost. But we have a Bible so pure and powerful in every word and it is so because God has preserved it down through the ages" (*A Theology for Every Christian: Knowing God and His Word*, 47).

Bauder in denying VPP not only goes against a long string of biblical texts that teach the twin doctrines of VPI and VPP (Exod 32:15-19, 34:1-4; Deut 4:2; Ps 12:6-7, 78:1-8, 105:8, 119:89-90, 140, 151-152, 160; Prov 22:20-21, 30:6; Eccl 3:14; Jer 36:27-32; Matt 4:4, 5:18, 24:35; Mark 13:31; Luke 21:33; John 10:35; 2 Tim 3:16-17; 1 Pet 1:23-25; 2 Pet 1:19-21; Rev 22:18-19), he is also against the great Confessions of Faith that affirm the same. The Presbyterian *Westminster Confession of Faith* (1643-48) states, "The Old Testament in Hebrew ... and the New Testament in Greek ... being immediately inspired by God, and, by His singular care and providence, kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentical; so as, in all controversies of religion, the Church is finally to appeal unto them." The Baptist *New Hampshire Confession* (1833) similarly states, "We believe that the Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired, and is an infallible and inerrant treasure of heavenly instruction; that it has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter ... and therefore is, and shall remain to the end of the world, the true centre of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions should be tried." The *Helvetic Consensus Formula* is even stronger than the Westminster Confession and the New Hampshire Confession in its affirmation of providential preservation: "God, the supreme Judge, not only took care to have His Word, which is the 'power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth' (Rom 1:16), committed to writing by Moses, the prophets, and the apostles, but has also watched and cherished it with paternal care ever since it was written up to the present time, so that it could not be corrupted by craft of Satan or fraud of man. Therefore the church justly ascribes it to His singular grace and goodness that she has, and will have to the end of the world, a 'sure word of prophecy' (2 Pet 1:19) and 'holy Scriptures' (2 Tim 3:15), from which, though heaven and earth perish, 'one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass' (Matt 5:18)." There is no denying that the doctrine of VPI and VPP

are historically fundamental doctrines affirmed by both Presbyterian as well as Baptist Protestant churches since the 16th century Reformation.

**“The Background and Origin of the Version Debate” by
Douglas K Kutilek**

Kutilek begins by caricaturing Pro-KJV advocates as people who believe that the KJV is more inspired than the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures, and that a person cannot be saved unless he uses the KJV (27). Who are these people? He lists the following names: Benjamin G Wilkinson, James Jasper Ray, David Otis Fuller, Peter Ruckman and Edward F Hills. He equates D A Waite and David Cloud with Peter Ruckman. This is not just a gross misrepresentation, but outright dishonesty. It is common knowledge that both Dr Waite and Mr Cloud in their writings have strongly denounced the KJV as “doubly inspired” and “advanced revelation” heresy of Ruckman. A simple search in the internet would bear this out. Kutilek is malicious.

It is also ridiculous to allege that Pro-KJV advocates would deem a person unsaved unless he uses the KJV. Let me ask Mr Kutilek: Can a person be saved by reading a tract, a testimony, or a Christian novel? Is a person automatically or necessarily saved if he hears the gospel preached from the KJV? Is a Roman Catholic or a member of a cult saved if he uses and keeps on using the KJV?

Can a person be saved through the NIV? The Trinitarian Bible Society answers: “The NIV contains enough truth to be used of the Holy Spirit to draw a man to the Saviour. But although it contains truth, *is it the very Word of God?* If not, Christians must be urged to return to the truth.” We do not deny that sinners may be saved through corrupt or mutilated versions if such versions contain enough of the gospel. This however does not mean that God sanctions such versions or that the Church should continue using them. God holds all His people responsible for using the most faithful translation based on the purest text.

It looks like *One Bible Only?* to make its case needed a spin-doctor, and who better than Kutilek? Well, it must be noted that Kutilek did an exquisite job in transgressing the 9th commandment (Exod 20:16).

Kutilek then attempts to psychoanalyse the KJV/TR-Only movement. He says that the KJV/TR-Only mindset is a result of its need for certainty. Kutilek says that the Christian can be certain about the

doctrines of salvation and have full assurance of everlasting life because “God explicitly states them in His Word,” but he objects to any kind of certainty with regard to the providential preservation of God’s Word (28). He argues that God’s people can only be certain of an inspired Bible as originally given, but they cannot be at all certain that they will continually have an inspired Scripture. Quoting Burgon, he says that God “[n]ever made any promise in the Scripture of the inerrant and infallible transmission of the Bible from the originals” (28). We do not deny that copying mistakes were made during the transmission process. However, this in no way negates the fact that despite the copying mistakes made in the transcription process, God providentially made sure that none of His words would be lost. The great 17th century Calvinist theologian—Francis Turretin—rightly said that God cannot be at all careless in providentially preserving His words—“Nor can we readily believe that God, who dictated and inspired each and every word to these inspired (*theopneustois*) men, would not take care of their *entire* preservation. If men use the utmost care diligently to preserve their words (especially if they are of any importance, as for example a testament or contract) in order that it may not be corrupted, how much more, must we suppose, would God take care of his word which he intended as a testament and seal of his covenant with us, so that it might not be corrupted.” Turretin does not deny scribal errors in the *copying process* but he says that “even if some manuscripts could be corrupted, *yet all could not*” (*Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:71-72).

Kutilek denies the doctrine of biblical preservation. Quoting Burgon, Kutilek says there is no biblical basis whatsoever “that the original autographs of Scripture have been perfectly preserved in a particular text, text family, or English translation” (28, 49). If Burgon were alive today, he would surely have disavowed any association with Kutilek and would have castigated his erroneous views. Consider what Burgon had written concerning the inspired Scriptures, “There exists no reason for supposing that the Divine Agent, who in the first instance thus gave to mankind the Scriptures of Truth, straightway abdicated His office; took no further care of His work; abandoned those precious writings to their fate. ... all down the ages the Sacred Writings must needs have been God’s peculiar care; that the Church under Him has watched over them with intelligence and skill; has recognised which copies exhibit a fabricated, which an honestly transcribed text; has

generally sanctioned the one, and generally disallowed the other. I am utterly disinclined to believe—so grossly improbable does it seem—that at the end of 1800 years 995 copies out of every thousand, suppose will prove untrustworthy; and that the one, two, three, four or five which remain, whose contents were till yesterday as good as unknown, will be found to have retained the secret of what the Holy Spirit originally inspired. I am utterly unable to believe, in short, that God’s promise has so entirely failed, that at the end of 1800 years much of the text of the Gospel has in point of fact to be picked by a German critic out of a waste-paper basket in the convent of St. Catherine; and that the entire text had to be remodeled after the pattern set by a couple of copies which had remained in neglect during fifteen centuries, and had probably owed their survival to that neglect; whilst hundreds of others had been thumbed to pieces, and had bequeathed their witness to copies made from them” (*The Traditional Text*, 11-12).

Quoting Burgon, Kutilek argued against the divine promise of the providential preservation of the original Holy Scriptures. He quoted Burgon as saying, “... That by a perpetual miracle, Sacred Manuscripts would be protected all down the ages against depraving influences of whatever sort, was not to have been expected; certainly, was never promised” (28). Let me quote Burgon in context, and you, the reader, can judge for yourself whether the good Dean believed in the special providential preservation of the Scriptures or not: “The Church, remember, hath been from the beginning the ‘Witness and Keeper of Holy Writ.’ Did not her Divine Author pour out upon her, in largest measure, ‘the Spirit of Truth;’ and pledge Himself that it should be that Spirit’s special function to ‘*guide*’ her children ‘*into all the Truth*’? ... That by a perpetual miracle, Sacred Manuscripts would be protected all down the ages against depraving influences of whatever sort,—was not to have been expected; certainly, was never promised. But the Church, in her collective capacity, hath nevertheless—as a matter of fact—been perpetually purging herself of those shamefully depraved copies which once everywhere abounded within her pale” (*Revision Revised*, 334-335). As much as the Lord had guided His Church in identifying the New Testament Canon, so also did He guide her to identify the NT Text which Burgon averred was not the Revised and Apostate Text of Westcott and Hort, but the Received and Preserved Text of the 16th Century Protestant Reformation.

As regards the KJV, Burgon wrote, “Our Authorised Version is the one religious link which at present binds together ... millions of English-speaking men scattered over the earth’s surface. Is it reasonable that so unutterably precious, so sacred a bond should be endangered, for the sake of representing certain words more accurately,—here and there translating a tense with greater precision,—getting rid of a few archaisms? It may be confidently assumed that no ‘Revision’ of our Authorised Version, however, judiciously executed, will ever occupy the place of public esteem which is actually enjoyed by the work of the Translators of 1611,—the noblest literary work in the Anglo-Saxon language. We shall in fact never have *another* ‘Authorised Version.’ ... As something *intended to supercede* our present English Bible, we are thoroughly convinced that the project of a rival Translation is not to be entertained for a moment. For ourselves, we deprecate it entirely” (*Revision Revised*, 113-114). Does not Dean Burgon sound very KJV-Only? Till today the KJV remains the best selling Bible.

Did Dean Burgon believe in an existing infallible and inerrant Bible? There is no question he did. Using the analogy of Jesus Christ as God incarnate—the *Theanthropos*—forever, Burgon argued, “As He was *perfect and faultless*, so do we deem it (i.e. the Scriptures) *infallible* also, *without spot or blemish* of any kind. We reject as monstrous any ‘theory of Inspiration,’ (as it is called,) which imputes blunders to the work of the Holy Ghost. ... How mysterious is the record,—so methodical, so particular, so unique; *preserving the very words* which were syllabled in Paradise, and describing transactions which no one but the Holy Ghost is competent to declare! Come lower down, and where will you find more beautiful narratives,—still fresh at the end of three and four thousand years,—than those stories of Patriarchs, Judges, Kings, which wrap up divinest teaching in all their ordinary details: where *every word* is weighed in a heavenly balance, fraught with a divine purpose, and intended for some glorious issue: ... Surely we have become too familiar with the providence which has *preserved to us the very words* of the four Evangelists, if we can bend our thoughts in the direction of the Gospel without a throb of joy and wonder not to be described, at having so great a treasure placed within our easy reach. Can it indeed be, that I may listen while the disciple whom Jesus loved is discoursing the miracles, and recalling the sayings of his Lord? May I hear St. Peter himself address the early Church,—or know the *precise words* of the message which St. Jude

sent to the first believers,—or be shown the Epistle which the Lord’s cousin addressed ‘to the Twelve Tribes scattered abroad’? How does it happen that the Book is not *for ever in our hands* which comes to us with such claims to our undivided homage?” (*Inspiration and Interpretation*, 4, 6).

How infallible and inerrant is the Bible? Dean Burgon was at his best when he answered thus, “The Bible is none other than *the voice of Him that sitteth upon the Throne!* Every Book of it,—every Chapter of it,—every Verse of it,—every word of it,—every syllable of it,—(*where are we to stop?*)—every letter of it—is the direct utterance of the Most High!—*pasa graphe theopneustos*. ‘Well spake the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of’ the many blessed Men who wrote it.—The Bible is none other than *the Word of God*: not some part of it more, some part of it less; but all alike, the utterance of Him who sitteth upon the Throne;—absolute,—faultless,—unerring,—supreme!” (*Inspiration and Interpretation*, 89).

Kutilek put words into the mouths of Pro-KJV principals by saying that they believe the KJV to be as inspired and as infallible and inerrant as the original language Scriptures. We make no such claim. We believe that “the King James Version (or Authorised Version) of the English Bible is a *true, faithful, and accurate* translation of these two providentially preserved Texts [Traditional Masoretic Hebrew Text and Traditional Greek Text underlying the KJV], which in our time has no equal among all of the other English Translations. The translators did such a fine job in their translation task that we can without apology hold up the Authorised Version and say ‘This is the Word of God!’ while at the same time realising that, in some verses, *we must go back to the underlying original language Texts* for complete clarity, and also compare Scripture with Scripture” (*The Dean Burgon Society, “Articles of Faith,” section II.A*). No translation can claim to be 100% equivalent to the original language Scriptures, but if it is a true, faithful, accurate translation based on the preserved text, it is the Word of God. The Textus Receptus is like the platinum yardstick of the Smithsonian Institute, accurate to the last decimal point. The KJV on the other hand is like the wooden yardstick used in the homes and shops. Would anyone deny that the common yardstick though not the perfect yardstick of the Smithsonian Institute is any less a yardstick and fit to measure?

I think you can see clearly now how spin-doctor Kutilek has not only distorted and misrepresented Hills, Fuller, Waite, Cloud et al, but

also Burgon, by telling us that the eminent Dean of Chichester, who fought so hard against Westcott and Hort and their corrupt Greek Text and KJV Revision, did not believe he had an infallible and inerrant Bible, quoting him out of context. It must be brought to your attention that when Burgon spoke of “mistakes,” he was talking about Transcription, and not the Text itself! This is a significant distinction. Burgon also had a very high view of the KJV and cautioned any revision of it.

Kutilek laments that the KJV/TR-Only movement has caused “conflict and division,” and is “destructive and distractive” (49). Does not Kutilek understand that Truth is a Sword that divides? Jesus said, “I came not to send peace, but a sword” (Matt 10:34). Peace and unity at the expense of truth and purity is utter folly (read my paper, “Love Divides, Truth Unites” in *The Burning Bush* 6 [2000]: 1-6). Kutilek wants those who believe in an infallible and inerrant Bible today to shut up. It would be very easy for those who believe in the verbal plenary inspiration and preservation of the Holy Scriptures to simply keep quiet and let things be. But that would be treachery! “For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ” (Gal 1:10). “We ought to obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29). (Read Dr John C Whitcomb, “When Love Divorces Doctrine and Unity Leaves Truth” in my book, *Biblical Separation: Doctrine of Church Purification and Preservation* [Singapore: FEBC Press, 1999], 106-114.)

Our earnest contention for the inerrancy and infallibility of an extant Bible in the original languages is not an act of schism but of love for both God and man. We are intent on teaching “all the counsel of God” (Acts 20:27); we can do no less. Like the biblical doctrine of separation, the doctrine of the verbal plenary preservation taught in the Holy Scriptures and affirmed in the Reformation creeds is sorely neglected today. It is about time the Church be indoctrinated with the twin doctrines of verbal plenary inspiration and verbal plenary preservation in order to be vaccinated against the diseases of limited inerrancy and imperfect preservation as taught by neo-evangelicalism and neo-fundamentalism respectively.

**“The Old Testament Text and the Version Debate” by
Roy E Beacham**

In Beacham’s chapter, we see Darwinian rationalism in action. Beacham believes in the “evolution” of the Hebrew Scriptures. He wrote that because the Hebrew Scriptures “evolved” (58, 63), “it is impossible to suppose that Jewish scholars in the first century A.D. restored all of the very words of the original writings exactly as they were originally written” (62). His view of the Hebrew Scriptures is not only *atheistic* (he denies God’s providential preservation of His Scripture), but also *agnostic* (he denies the Church today can be certain she has an absolutely inerrant and infallible Scripture). No reader will fail to see that God is totally left out of the picture in his treatment of the history of the Hebrew Scriptures.

Beacham says that it is impossible to be sure that the Jewish people themselves had an inerrant and infallible Hebrew Old Testament at the time of the first century. Well, let us hear what the Lord Jesus Christ Himself had said about the divinely inspired Hebrew Scriptures in AD 27. Jesus in no uncertain terms declared that the Hebrew Scriptures the Jews had at that time, *which were not the autographs*, were word perfect to the jot and tittle, “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. 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 5:17-18). I believe Jesus, not Beacham. (More on Matt 5:17-18 later on.)

Beacham’s chapter is nothing more than a Bible-doubting and faith-denying chapter. Beacham’s Hebrew Bible contains mistakes. Only Moses, David and the Old Testament prophets had perfect Bibles, but poor us, we do not have such perfect Bibles today! We Christians in this age are somehow less privileged. God did not care to preserve all of His words for us.

I submit to you that Central Seminary’s imperfectly preserved Bible is no different from Fuller Seminary’s limitedly inerrant Bible. Neo-evangelicalism has a new sister in neo-fundamentalism. God’s people had an infallible and inerrant Bible then but not now. What good is the Bible if it was perfect only then, but not now? What use is it to believe in a perfect God who is unable to preserve for us His infallible and inerrant Word? If God is incapable of preserving His words, how can we be sure

He is able to preserve our salvation to the very end? We can have no confidence in the salvation He offers.

In Neo-fundamentalism, I see a strain of Neo-theism. The current Neo-theism questions God's omniscience; *One Bible Only?* questions God's omnipotence. Dr Carl McIntire was prophetic when he described this present compromising age of weak evangelical/fundamentalist scholarship: "What is so interesting about all this is that, in talking about the mighty acts of God and trying to make out of our God a great and powerful God, they have produced for us a God who is unable to give us a record that is true" (*McIntire Maxims*, 8).

In Beacham's chapter, I hear not the voice of my Saviour, but the voice, nay, the noise of a stranger. I will not follow (John 10:27).

"The New Testament Text and the Version Debate" by W Edward Glenny

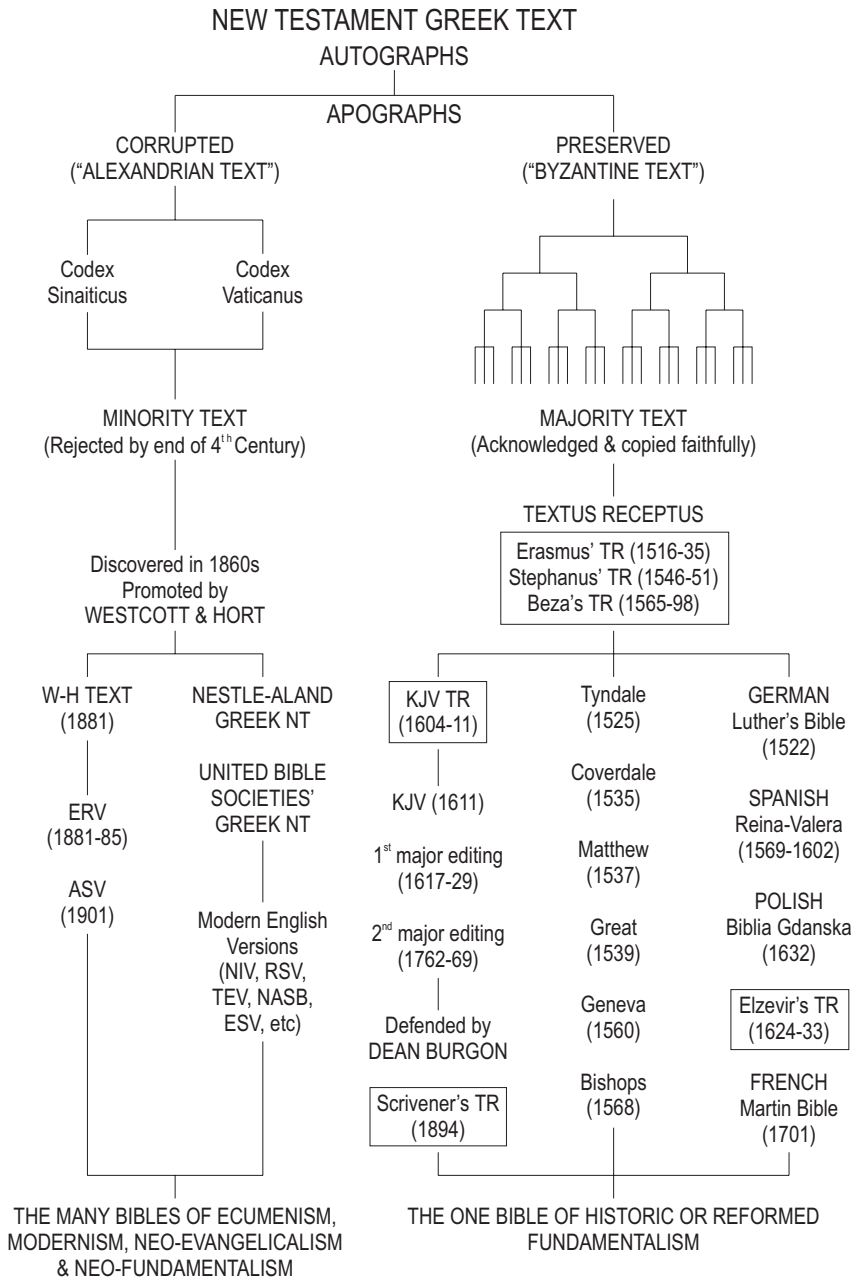
Glenny continues with *One Bible Only?*'s goal in undermining the inerrancy and infallibility of the Holy Scriptures. With a scholarly air, he sniffs at the Textus Receptus and hawks the Westcott and Hort text as the superior text. He swallows hook, line and sinker the Westcott and Hort theory that earlier, more difficult, and shorter readings are the better readings as opposed to the later, easier, and longer readings of the Traditional Text (79). He touts the Alexandrian text-type as "the best text-type now extant," citing modernists Metzger and Aland for support (96). What a travesty of conservative biblical scholarship when slow-to-believe fundamentalists kowtow to the Bible-denying scholarship of theological modernism! Dean Burgon and Dr E F Hills would have been much safer guides!

It is thus no surprise that Glenny should blunder in disparaging the Traditional Text. Just like Westcott and Hort, Glenny would like to play textual-critical pope. Believing the Traditional Text to be inferior, he wrote, "The fact that no Greek manuscript with this text type is known from before the fourth century makes it questionable whether it existed before that time" (78). This allegation is blatantly false. It ought to be noted that this whole "text-type" paradigm and "recension" myth is a dreamt-up invention of Westcott and Hort and textual critics of their mould to confuse the transmission history of the original Scriptures in support of their Critical Text. Dean Burgon has rightly and justifiably

written off the imaginary recension of the Traditional Text concocted by Westcott and Hort: “They supply no information. They are never supported by a particle of intelligible evidence. They are often demonstrably wrong, and *always* unreasonable. They are *Dictation*, not *Criticism*. ... they are perceived to be the veriest *foolishness* also” (*Revision Revised*, 95; see also “John William Burgon and the New Testament” by Wilbur N Pickering in *True or False?* ed David Otis Fuller, 216-257). If we really want to talk about text-types and textual history, there are basically and clearly only two lines: the preserved and the corrupted (see “The Transmission of the NT Greek Text” chart on page 19).

It is equally false for Glenny to say that the antiquity of the Traditional or Preserved Text cannot be proven. Dr Harry Sturz (who incidentally is no friend of TR/KJV preservationists) in his study of the early papyri concluded in no uncertain terms that there is “valid evidence that distinctive Byzantine (Traditional) readings were not created in the fourth century (contra Westcott and Hort) but were already in existence before the end of the second” (*The Byzantine Text Type and New Testament Textual Criticism*, 69). It is therefore wrongheaded to consider the Traditional Text to be late and fabricated (the pontification of neo-evangelical Daniel Wallace and charismatic Gordon Fee notwithstanding). As a fundamentalist, Glenny ought to be quick to defend the inerrancy of Scripture, but we find him doing just the opposite, undermining the Scriptures whenever he gets the opportunity.

Glenny favours the ever-changing Greek Text of the United Bible Societies now in its 4th revised edition, and that of Nestle-Aland which has already gone through a whopping 27 revisions (79). The above Critical Greek Texts are offsprings of the corrupt Westcott and Hort Text. The Textus Receptus, on the other hand, since the Reformation period has remained essentially a uniform text until Anglican liberals Westcott and Hort came into the scene with their Revised Greek Text. Instead of trusting in the providentially guided textual decisions of Erasmus, Stephanus, Beza, and finally the KJV translators who were no doubt Bible-believers and Bible-defenders with a high view of Scripture, Glenny would rather trust the textual-critical work of Westcott and Hort who not only denied the historicity of the creation account in Genesis, but also the inerrancy of Scripture. Hort wrote this of Darwin’s theory of evolution, “But the book which has most engaged me is Darwin.



Whatever may be thought of it, it is a book that one is proud to be contemporary with. I must work out and examine the argument in more detail, but at present my feeling is strong that the theory is unanswerable” (Hort, *Life*, I:416). Hort’s sidekick Westcott believed the first three chapters of Genesis to be myth, “No one now, I suppose, holds that the first three chapters of Genesis, for example, give a literal history. I could never understand how any one reading them with open eyes could think they did” (Westcott, *Life*, I:78). Can we trust Westcott and Hort in making correct judgements concerning the text when they show themselves to be entirely faithless in God’s record of His creation? By faith we believe in the truthfulness of the Genesis account that God created this whole universe out of nothing (*ex nihilo*) in six literal days by the power of His Word. “Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear” (Heb 11:3). “But 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” (Heb 11:6).

Westcott and Hort’s denial of biblical inerrancy is seen in their translation of 2 Tim 3:16. In their English Revised Version (ERV), they rendered the verse this way, “Every Scripture inspired of God is also profitable....” By placing the copula “is” after “inspired of God,” the clause is made to mean that not all parts of Scripture are inspired of God; only those portions which are inspired are profitable. The KJV translators, on the other hand, correctly placed the copula “is” right after “All Scripture:” “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable....” It is no wonder that when the ERV came out in 1881, the great Presbyterian scholar, Robert L Dabney, wrote a scathing attack against Westcott and Hort’s rendering of 2 Tim 3:16 in the *Southern Presbyterian Review* of July 1881, “The poisonous suggestion intended is that, among the parts of the ‘scripture’ some are inspired and some are not. Our Bible contains fallible parts! The very doctrine of the Socinian and Rationalist. This treacherous version the revisers [viz. Westcott and Hort] have gratuitously sanctioned!” Indeed as modernists, Westcott and Hort were not fit to handle the Scriptures. They cannot be trusted. I cannot but agree with Dabney who soundly castigated the corrupt Greek Text of Westcott and Hort and their English Revised (Per)Version as coming from “the mind of infidel rationalism” (quoted in Paisley, *My Plea for the Old Sword*, 14).

Glenny disparages the *Textus Receptus* of Erasmus by the oft-heard Westcott-Hort complaint that Erasmus edited his text hastily and carelessly (82). We do not deny the fact that the very first edition of Erasmus's Text was less than perfect. Erasmus was hurried by his publisher to meet the deadline. To be fair, it must be told that Erasmus took pains to correct whatever mistakes there were in his subsequent editions in 1519, 1522 and 1527. Stephanus who took over the editing of the *Textus Receptus* relied on Erasmus's last two editions and not his first for sure. This age-old tactic to cast doubt on Erasmus's *Textus Receptus* was ably denounced by Dean Burgon, "To raise an irrelevant discussion, at the outset, concerning the *Textus Receptus*:—to describe the haste with which Erasmus produced the first published edition of the N.T.:—to make sport about the copies which he employed:—all this kind of thing is proceeding of one who seeks to throw dust into their eyes:—to divert their attention from the problem actually before them:—*not*—(as we confidently expect when we have to do with such writers as these)—the method of a sincere lover of Truth" (*Revision Revised*, 17-18).

Glenny then went on to undermine the classic biblical proof-text for the doctrine of the Trinity, namely, 1 John 5:7 (83). He repeated Metzger's myth that Erasmus promised to include 1 John 5:7 if a Greek manuscript could be presented to him that contained the text (83). H J De Jonge of the faculty of theology, Leiden University, an authority on Erasmus, has convincingly argued, giving evidence that Metzger's view on Erasmus's promise "has no foundation in Erasmus's work. Consequently it is highly improbable that he included the difficult passage because he considered himself bound by any such promise" (cited in Michael Maynard, *A History of the Debate Over 1 John 5:7-8*, 265; full bibliography of primary source: Henk J De Jonge. "Erasmus and the Comma Johanneum." *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 56 [1980]: 381-89). Metzger eventually admitted his error in the 3rd edition of his book—*The Text of the New Testament*—but hid it under a footnote on a distant page (how convenient!). For further study, read my paper, "Does a Clear, Biblical Proof Text Exist for the Doctrine of the Trinity?: A Preliminary Examination of the Antiquity and Authenticity of the Johannine Comma (1 Jn 5:7f)," *Foundation*, May-June 2000, 34-5; reprinted in *50 Years Building His Kingdom*, Life Bible-Presbyterian Church anniversary magazine, 2000, 87-8.

Glenny says, “The history of the TR leaves no doubt that the text has changed many times. This is a major problem for those who claim that it exactly represents the originals” (86). Let me say that it is only a problem to Glenny, not to those who hold to a TR-superiority position. Dr Hills provides a better interpretation and perspective of the history of the TR: “The texts of the several editions of the Textus Receptus were God-guided. They were set up under the leading of God’s special providence. Hence the differences between them were kept down to a minimum. But these disagreements were not eliminated altogether, for this would require not merely providential guidance but a miracle. In short, God chose to preserve the New Testament text providentially rather than miraculously, and this is why the several editions of the Textus Receptus vary from each other slightly” (*The King James Version Defended*, 222-223).

Which of the TRs then exactly represents the originals? Dr Hills answered, “The answer to this question is easy. We are guided by the common faith. Hence we favor that form of the Textus Receptus upon which more than any other God, working providentially, has placed the stamp of His approval, namely, the King James Version, or, more precisely, the Greek text underlying the King James Version” (*The King James Version Defended*, 223). Thus Dr Waite’s personal conviction that “the *words* of the Received *Greek* and Masoretic *Hebrew* text that underlie the *King James Bible* are the very *words* which God has *preserved* down through the centuries, being the exact *words* of the *originals* themselves”, with which Glenny has taken issue, is entirely defensible. Simply apply the logic of faith, and apply it consistently.

The doctrine of the special providential preservation of Scripture as affirmed in the Reformation creeds demands such a view of an inerrant and infallible original language Scripture that underlies the KJV. Reformed author, G I Williamson, did write to this effect in his commentary on the *Westminster Confession* concerning preservation, “This brings us to the matter of God’s ‘singular care and providence’ by which He has ‘kept pure in all ages’ this original text, so that we now actually possess it in ‘authentic’ form. And let us begin by giving an illustration from modern life to show that an original document may be destroyed, without the text of that document being lost. Suppose you were to write a will. Then suppose you were to have a photographic copy of that will made. If the original were then destroyed, the photographic

copy would still preserve the text of that will *exactly the same as the original itself* (emphasis his). The text of the copy would differ in no way whatever from the original, and so it would possess exactly the same ‘truth’ and meaning as the original. Now of course photography was not invented until long after the original copy ... had been worn out or lost. How then could the original text of the Word of God be preserved? The answer is that God preserved it by His own remarkable care and providence” (*The Westminster Confession of Faith*, 15).

Glenny goes on to contend that the KJV of 1611 is different from the KJV printed today. He went on to argue that the 1769 edition of the KJV which is the KJV being used today differs from the 1611 KJV “in at least 75,000 details” (90). He then ridiculed the Pro-KJV position with these words, “for the King James-Only advocate, such differences are more than an embarrassment; they are a contradiction of the King James-Only position. How can the KJV be inspired and yet have errors in it that should be changed?” (91). Let me answer Glenny’s false charge. No sane Pro-KJV defender would ever say that the KJV is “inspired” in the same way the original Scriptures were. No right thinking Pro-KJV advocate would say that the KJV is “advanced revelation” and hence superior to the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures. That is Ruckman’s heretical position, not Burgon, Fuller, Hills, Waite, Cloud, nor mine. It is absolutely misleading to say that “there are 75,000 details of differences” as Glenny would have us believe. Dr Waite through personal study discovered that the differences between the 1611 and 1769 KJV have mainly to do with spelling and punctuation (*Central Seminary Refuted on Bible Versions*, 73-76). The KJV of 1611 and that of 1769 are essentially the same.

“The Preservation of Scripture and the Version Debate” by W Edward Glenny

The most damaging chapter of *One Bible Only?* is this very chapter that denies God’s special providential preservation of His Holy Scriptures. Glenny says yes to the total inspiration of Scripture but no to its entire preservation. Glenny says that “The Scriptures teach inspiration and inerrancy in relation to only the original autographs” (103). For support, he cites the [Neo]-Evangelical Theological Society’s (ETS) statement on biblical inerrancy: “The Bible alone, and the Bible in its entirety, is the Word of God written and is therefore inerrant in the autographs” (102). Let me just point out that the ETS statement is too

general to be definitive. Although it says that inerrancy is in the autographs, it does not say at all that it is confined to the autographs *alone*. Thus, the ETS statement does not necessarily support Glenný's theory of *Sola Autographa*.

The whole concept of *Sola Autographa* is a new doctrine introduced by 19th century liberalism, picked up by 20th century neo-evangelicalism, and now championed by 21st century neo-fundamentalism. The 16th century Reformation scholars have always spoken in terms of *Sola Scriptura*, and not *Sola Autographa*. They always assumed the infallibility and inerrancy of Scripture in terms of *Autographa cum Apographa*. Prof Richard Muller of Calvin Theological Seminary rightly observed, "The Protestant scholastics do not press the point made by their nineteenth-century followers that the infallibility of Scripture and the freedom of Scripture from error reside absolutely in the *autographa* and only in a derivative sense in the *apographa*; rather, the scholastics argue positively that the *apographa* preserve intact the true words of the prophets and the apostles and that the God-breathed (*theopneustos*, q.v.) character of Scripture is manifest in the *apographa* as well as the *autographa*. In other words, the issue primarily addressed by the seventeenth-century orthodox in their discussion of the *autographa* is the continuity of the extant copies in Hebrew and in Greek with the originals both *quoad res*, with respect to the thing or subject of the text, and *quoad verba*, with respect to the words of the text" (*Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms*, s.v. "autographa").

If one were to ask Glenný whether he has an infallible and inerrant Bible today, his answer would have to be no. Do we have all of God's inspired words today? Glenný answers, "We might have lost a few words through negligence, but the amount that has been lost is so minimal that it has no effect on overall doctrine and little, if any, on historical or other details" (121). In other words, the Church today has only a 99% and not a 100% inspired Scripture because God has allowed perhaps 1% of His inspired words to be lost. But Glenný assures us that the 1% that is lost does not affect our doctrine, nor our salvation. What foolish thinking! What dangerous teaching! It directly opposes what Jesus said in Matt 4:4, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by *every word* that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." If Jesus said "every word" of Scripture is important for His people, surely He would preserve every inspired word for His people throughout the ages. Jesus does not lie. I

believe Jesus' injunction that man should live by His "every word" is true. And for the Christian in every generation to live by His "every word", He must necessarily preserve His "every word". I believe Jesus kept His promise, and He as God surely cannot fail.

Glenny quoted six modern confessions (one from a theological society that militant fundamentalists would deem neo-evangelical, and five from theological seminaries mostly Baptist of the same anti-preservationist stripe) to argue that only the Autographs were inspired, infallible and inerrant. Glenny quoted notorious anti-KJV advocate, Dan Wallace of Dallas, to argue that "the doctrine of preservation was not a doctrine of the ancient church", and that the doctrine of preservation "first appeared in a church creed in the Westminster Confession of 1647" (116). The implication is that such a doctrine never existed until it was stated in a 17th century creed, in the Westminster Confession of Faith. By the same logic, one would also have to conclude that the doctrine of the 100% deity and 100% humanity of Christ in one Person never existed prior to its appearance in the 4th century Athanasian Creed! What ill logic! The doctrine of the 100% inspiration and 100% preservation of God's Holy Word existed even before the Westminster Confession as much as the doctrine of the 100% deity and 100% humanity of Christ existed before the Athanasian Creed. The doctrine of 100% inspiration and 100% preservation of God's words in the Holy Scriptures is not a new doctrine but a very old one. It certainly did not begin with D A Waite, nor E F Hills, nor J W Burgon, but with the Holy Scripture itself. The doctrine of preservation is as old as the Bible. Why is the Bible our Supreme, Final, and All-sufficient Authority in faith and life? It is precisely because it is God's Perfect Word, infallible and inerrant, even today!

Now Glenny says he believes in providential preservation. This is what he says, but what does he *mean*? Do know that when Glenny says he believes in preservation, he does not mean *entire* preservation but *essential* preservation; it is *conceptual* preservation, not *verbal* preservation; only the *vital doctrines* are preserved, not the *inspired words* (122).

Does the Bible teach partial and conceptual preservation or plenary and verbal preservation? The Bible and the Protestant Church creeds affirm the latter. The Reformed Confessions in both Presbyterian and Baptist circles affirm not just the 100% inspiration of the Autographs, but

also the 100% preservation of the Autographs in the faithful Apographs that have come down to us today. The Westminster Confession of Faith (1.8) for instance states, “*The Old Testament in Hebrew (which was the native language of the people of God of old), and the New Testament in Greek (which, at the time of the writing of it, was most generally known to the nations), being immediately inspired by God, and, by His singular care and providence, kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentic; so as, in all controversies of religion, the Church is finally to appeal unto them.*” Note that the Westminster Confession did not use the term “Autographs” but spoke of the Scriptures in terms of the original languages (Hebrew OT and Greek NT). The Westminster Confession clearly affirms the 100% inspiration (“immediately inspired by God”) and 100% preservation (“by His singular care and providence, kept pure in all ages”) of the Holy Scriptures in the original languages.

Francis Turretin as quoted earlier expounded on the early confessional doctrine of Biblical preservation and understood it to mean “entire preservation”: “Nor can we readily believe that God, who dictated and inspired each and every word to these inspired (*theopneustois*) men, would not take care of their *entire* preservation.” Know that Turretin was no ordinary theologian. His Systematic Theology textbook was used in Princeton Seminary until Warfield came into the scene with his radical and new “Autographal” view of the original text which opened the door to liberal textual criticism that has spawned a whole new generation of critical texts and modern perversions of the Scriptures that seek to displace the time-tested and time-honoured TR and KJV.

Glenny says that there is no biblical basis whatsoever to believe that God has preserved His inspired Scripture perfectly so that none of His words would be lost. He claims that “not only is Scripture without a verse to explain how God will preserve His Word, but no statement in Scripture teaches that God did preserve perfectly the original text of Scripture in one manuscript, one family of manuscripts, or even in all of the manuscripts” (123). Such a deistic view of God and His Scripture is indeed strange considering that it comes from the mouth of a “fundamentalist” who claims to believe only the Bible (*Sola Scriptura*). Glenny says he believes in the providential preservation of Scripture, but cannot prove his belief from the Scriptures. He admits there is no biblical basis for his belief. On what does he base his faith then? His faith is based on the “evidence of history” (121). Now any honest historian

would acknowledge that what is called “evidence of history” may be interpreted in a number of ways. From the human perspective, there is no such thing as one history but many histories. History is subject to human interpretation and thus cannot be an infallible authority. Only the infallible Scripture which is not only inerrant in matters of faith but also science, history and geography can serve as our infallible Guide in interpreting the things of the cosmos. It is only when we read history through the lens of God’s Word will we interpret history accurately. Every fundamentalist knows that the supreme and final authority of faith is the infallible and inerrant Scriptures. Glennly has therefore undermined *Sola Scriptura* here.

Glennly undermined not only *Sola Scriptura*, but also the many verses that teach the providential preservation of the Scripture, the more important ones being Matt 5:18 and Ps 12:6-7 (116-121). On Matt 5:18, Glennly said, “This passage is not speaking about the continual preservation, through written copies, of the exact words found in the autographa; it is declaring that all of the prophecies in the OT that pointed to Christ will be fulfilled down to the smallest detail. ... Matthew 5:18 does not even refer to the NT text, let alone speak of its perfect, supernatural preservation” (116). I am amazed by Glennly’s muddled theology and constipated interpretation of Matt 5:18. From where did he learn his theology and hermeneutics? Glennly says that Matt 5:18 does not mean preservation at all. His constipated exegesis has led him to conclude that the text merely speaks of the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies. Not only that, he contends that the verse has nothing to do with the New Testament whatsoever.

First, let me demonstrate how Glennly is theologically muddled. When theologians want to prove the verbal inspiration of Scripture, which verse would they cite? Where in the Bible are we taught that every word of the Bible is inspired to the last jot and tittle? Is it not Matt 5:18? In *The Moody Handbook of Theology*, Paul Enns wrote, “In His use of the Old Testament Christ gave credence to the inspiration of the entire Old Testament. In Matthew 5:17-18 Christ affirmed that not the smallest letter or stroke would pass from the law until it would be fulfilled. In v.17 He referred to the law or the prophets, a common phrase designating the entire Old Testament. In this rather strong statement, Jesus affirmed the inviolability of the entire Old Testament and thereby affirmed the inspiration of the entire Old Testament.” So this verse does not only mean

the fulfillment of prophecies as Glennly would have us believe, but the inspiration of the entire Old Testament. If Glennly is correct that this verse cannot be applied to the providential preservation of the Old Testament, then by the same token it cannot be used for the verbal inspiration of the Old Testament either. If we apply Glennly's hermeneutics on Rev 22:18-19, then we must also say that God forbade the tampering of the Book of Revelation only, and not the rest of the Bible. Does this make sense? It goes without saying that Glennly's hermeneutical method is utterly flawed.

Second, does Matt 5:18 refer only to the Old Testament and cannot in any way include the New? And does not Matt 5:18 teach just the verbal inspiration but also verbal preservation of the entire Scripture? Let us hear from Matthew Henry: "Heaven and earth shall come together, and all the fulness thereof be wrapt up in ruin and confusion, rather than any word of God shall fall to the ground, or be in vain. *The word of the Lord endures for ever*, both that of the law [i.e. OT], and that of the gospel [i.e. NT]. ... for whatever belongs to God, and bears his stamp, be it ever so little, shall be preserved." Here in Matthew Henry we find a sane and sound exposition of this precious verse. The original language Scriptures are not only fully inspired but also entirely preserved, and as such we can say that we have the infallible and inerrant Word of God today!

Not only Matthew Henry, the Trinitarian Bible Society (TBS) uses Matt 5:18 to prove the entire preservation of Holy Scripture as well. The TBS booklet on *The Greek New Testament* states, "God has promised in His Word that He would not only preserve His Word for generations to come, but that His Word was permanent and would be kept free from corruption. Matthew 5:18 states '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.' ... These verses demonstrate that God has not left His church for centuries without an authoritative copy of the Word of God, but that God's people down through the ages have faithfully copied and recopied copies of the original autographs. The church all over the world has used the Traditional Text in all its various forms, and God has seen fit to multiply multitudes of copies and has brought salvation to many generations through this preservation process."

It is important to note again that both the Westminster Confession and the Helvetic Consensus Formula cite Matt 5:18 as proof for the divine inspiration and providential preservation of the Holy Scriptures.

The clear and categorical statements of 100% inspiration and 100% preservation made by the Westminster divines were what led Pittsburgh Prof William F Orr to conclude, “this affirms that the Hebrew text of the Old Testament and the Greek of the New which was known to the Westminster divines was immediately inspired by God because it was *identical* with the first text that God had kept pure in all the ages. *The idea that there are mistakes in the Hebrew Masoretic texts or in the Textus Receptus of the New Testament was unknown to the authors of the Confession of Faith.*”

Not only did Glenny fallaciously dismiss Matt 5:18, but also Ps 12:6-7 as a proof-text for the preservation of God’s words (119-120). Ps 12:6-7 reads, “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.” Glenny denies that the words “keep them” and “preserve them” in verse 7 refer to “the words of the LORD” in verse 6. He interprets verse 7 to mean the preservation of God’s people (v5) rather than God’s words (v6). He argues, “The pronoun *them* in verse 7 (‘thou shalt keep them’) cannot refer to the ‘words’ of verse 6 for grammatical reasons. It refers to the ‘poor’ and the ‘needy’ of verse 5. ... Hebrew grammar requires that it be the righteous whom God is keeping and preserving in verse 7. In Hebrew, nouns and pronouns have gender and number, and the gender and number of each pronoun normally should be the same as that of its antecedent. The pronoun *them* (v.7a) is a masculine suffix whereas the noun *words* (v.6a) is feminine. Furthermore, in the Hebrew text verse 7b reads, ‘You will preserve *him* from this generation for ever.’ ... This connection is clear in the Hebrew because the pronoun on the verb *preserve* (v7b) is third person, masculine, and singular” (119-120).

All this sounds very good and convincing, but Glenny conveniently hides (if he indeed knows his Hebrew grammar) the fact that his explanation is not the only way in which the text can be read in Hebrew grammar. Gesenius’s *Hebrew Grammar* (440) states, “Through a weakening in the distinction of gender, which is noticeable elsewhere ... And which probably passed from the colloquial language into that of literature, masculine suffixes (especially in the plural) are not infrequently used to refer to feminine substantives.” Waltke and O’Connor’s *Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (302) likewise states: “The masculine pronoun is often used for a feminine antecedent.” Glenny

purposely misleads when he says that “pronouns *normally* should be the same as that of its antecedent.” Gesenius says it is *not normal*, for masculine pronominal suffixes, in this case “them” in verse 7 “*are not infrequently* used to refer to feminine substantives,” i.e. the “words” (feminine noun) in verse 6. Waltke and O’Connor say the same, “The masculine pronoun [i.e. “them” in verse 7] is often used for a feminine antecedent [i.e. “words” of verse 6].

Glenny also argues from grammar that the word “them” in “thou shalt preserve *them*” should be rendered as “him” and not “them”. That is because it is in the Hebrew “third person, masculine, and singular”. Although Glenny has declined the pronoun correctly, he neglects to tell his readers of another grammatical rule that comes to play when a verb with a pronominal suffix contains the energetic *nun*. The Rev S Y Quek of the Far Eastern Bible College offers this grammatical counterpoint in support of the KJV reading, “It is true that the pronominal suffix for ‘preserve them’ in verse 7b is a third person masculine singular suffix (‘him’). Why did the KJV translators translate it as ‘them?’ The key is that in the addition of the suffix, the Holy Spirit wanted to emphasise the verb ‘preserve’ so that an ‘energetic *nun*’ (the letter ‘n’) is added before attaching the pronominal suffix. When this occurs an additional rule comes into operation in the Hebrew language. There is no masculine plural pronominal suffix in the third person when the energetic *nun* is applied to a verb (see Gesenius, *Hebrew Grammar*, 157-158, section 4, I). Hence the Scripture writer, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, used the singular masculine pronominal suffix, retaining the same gender as in ‘keep them’ (verse 7a). Therefore it is again very legitimate and consistent with Hebrew grammar for the KJV translators to translate the masculine singular pronoun suffix with the energetic *nun* as a masculine plural pronoun—“them.”

In defence of the doctrine of preservation and the KJV rendering of Ps 12:6-7, let me direct you to the Rev Peter W Van Kleeck, a Baptist pastor and theologian who earned his double Masters from Westminster and Calvin Seminaries, and was Director of the Institute of Biblical Textual Studies. In his book—*Fundamentalism’s Folly?*—Van Kleeck took to task the nonsense spouted by Central Seminary in *One Bible Only?*. Van Kleeck under the section, “The Churchly Tradition’s Rendering of Psalm 12:7,” did a historical study of the interpretation of this verse in an attempt to refute Edward Glenny who dogmatically

asserted that this verse cannot at all mean the preservation of Scripture. Allow me to quote Van Kleeck: "The evidence shows that the churchly tradition allows 'them' the breadth to include *both people and God's words* in its interpretation. ... the modern versions elect to overlook the Reformation's Hebrew basis for translation in Psalm 12:6-7; and the churchly tradition is censored in the new versions and by Central Seminary by not including a translation and interpretation that is broad enough to include both oppressed people and God's words. Glenny's modern, sectarian approach to the text had again limited the scope of his exegesis. By so doing he has wrongly argued the false claim that there is no text of Scripture that teaches providential preservation, and thereby fails to meet the criterion of his premise." It ought to be highlighted that *One Bible Only?* is an anti-preservationist book that has bowed the knee to the textual-critical Baal of Westcott and Hort, and has undermined God's providential work over His Sacred Text during the Great Reformation of the 16th century. And by so doing, they have done a great disservice to the fundamentalist cause. No wonder Van Kleeck calls it "Fundamentalism's Folly".

Under the section "Biblical Problems", Glenny reveals that he does not believe he has an infallible and inerrant Scripture today. In Glenny's mind, God has *not* preserved 100% of His words. Based on such a presupposition he allows and even recommends the "scholarly" approach of "conjectural emendations" to the Hebrew text as introduced by liberal scholars. Glenny desires to follow the liberal scholarly guild of Bible correctors, but soothes his fundamentalist conscience by saying that he is "forced" to do so (114).

In which places must the Bible be corrected? Glenny cites a number of mistakes in the Bible: 2 Sam 8:4/1 Chron 18:4, 2 Kgs 8:26/2 Chron 22:2, 2 Kgs 24:8/2 Kgs 24:15. He pontificates, "These obvious discrepancies in the KJV and the Hebrew manuscripts on which it is based show that none of them perfectly preserved the inspired autographa" (115). He goes on to demean Bible preservationists by saying that they do not grapple with the problems, or pretend that they do not exist. Of course, this is far from true.

Now, let us grapple with these so-called "Biblical Problems" or biblical discrepancies. We do not run away from the fact that there are such differences, contradictions, discrepancies in the Scriptures but the question that needs to be asked is: Are such differences, contradictions,

discrepancies in the Bible merely apparent or actual errors? Based on the biblical presupposition that we have a 100% inspired and 100% preserved Scripture, we conclude that these discrepancies are only apparent and not actual errors at all. Over against the modernist approach of conjectural emendations, fundamentalist scholars solve such “problems” by employing principles of harmonisation. Such differences can be easily reconciled. There are often several possible solutions. True fundamentalists would employ the Pauline hermeneutics in their approach to discrepancies in the Bible, which is “let God be true, but every man a liar” (Rom 3:4). Fundamentalists should never in any way say the Bible contains mistakes. Our Bible is perfect, infallible, inerrant, and we mean what we say, unlike Glenny and his company.

As regards 2 Kgs 8:26 and 2 Chron 22:2 which read 22 years and 42 years respectively in the *original Hebrew language Scripture*, it ought to be pointed out that even the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* lists no textual variants. In other words, every existing Hebrew manuscript reads 22 and 42 respectively in those two verses. This reveals that no copying mistakes were made, for if they were indeed scribal errors, the Masoretes would have corrected them; why did they allow these “mistakes” to remain unless they were not mistakes at all but were the very inspired words of the original writers? Now the NIV and NASB went against the Hebrew Bible and the KJV by changing 2 Chron 22:2 to read 22 instead of 42, making it agree with 2 Kgs 8:26. Is this acceptable? Is Glenny now going to say that the NIV and NASB can be more inspired than the Hebrew Scripture? Is this not a sort of NIV/NASB Ruckmanism? Glenny treads on dangerous waters for he is evidently more comfortable with Speculative Modernist Theology than Fedeistic Fundamentalist Theology.

I find myself in partial agreement with Glenny when he wrote, “The historical evidence for the preservation of God’s Word is similar to the evidence we use to determine the limits of the biblical canon. No explicit statement in Scripture details every book that is to be included in the canon, but we hold fast to our conviction concerning the sixty-six books in the canon on the basis of the historical evidence” (122). Glenny went on to quote J R McRay to support his case, “The formation of the NT canon must, therefore, be regarded as a process rather than an event.” Glenny affirms the historical evidence but denies the more important biblical evidence. KJV/TR defenders, however, believe in the doctrine of

Bible preservation precisely because it is taught in the Scriptures, and see God's providential hand at work in preserving His inspired words in history. History is certainly His Story. God is sovereign, omnipotent and omniscient, and surely the entire preservation of His very own words to the jot and tittle is not something beyond His control, power and wisdom.

As Glenny affirms, providential preservation is a "process". The Trinitarian Bible Society (TBS) affirms this as well, and proves it through the biblical and historical arguments. The TBS booklet on *The Greek New Testament* states, "God has promised in His Word that He would not only preserve His Word for generations to come, but that His Word was permanent and would be kept free from corruption. Matthew 5:18 states '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.' ... These verses demonstrate that God has not left His church for centuries without an authoritative copy of the Word of God, but that God's people down through the ages have faithfully copied and recopied copies of the original autographs. The church all over the world has used the Traditional Text in all its various forms, and God has seen fit to multiply multitudes of copies and has brought salvation to many generations through this preservation *process*."

The question we need to ask now is this: Is there a historical precedent that can be cited to prove that the process of divine preservation of Scripture can result in a standard or a fixed text? The answer is yes. The historical precedent is in the canonisation of the New Testament. All the inspired New Testament books were completed by AD 90 when the Apostle John wrote the last book of Revelation, and God warned against adding to or subtracting from His Word in Rev 22:18-19. However, we know that in the first few centuries, there were uninspired men who penned spurious writings and passed them off as Scripture. Some of these were the Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Nicodemus, the Epistle of Barnabas, etc. Nevertheless, none of the inspired books of Scripture have been lost or obscured in the canonical process. By the providential guidance of the Holy Spirit, God's people were led to identify the 27 books to become our NT Canon, no more, no less. There was a terminus to the canonisation of Scripture at the Council of Carthage in AD 397. In like manner, the Lord allowed copyist errors and corruptions to enter during the transcription process through the pen of fallible scribes. Nevertheless, His providential hand kept His inspired

words of Scripture from being lost. In light of God's providence, that nothing happens by chance, and that history is under His sovereign control, I believe that in the fulness of time—in the most opportune time of the Reformation when the true church separated from the false, when the study of the original languages was emphasised, and the printing press invented (which meant that no longer would there be any need to handcopy the Scriptures thereby ensuring a uniform text)—God restored from out of a pure stream of preserved Hebrew and Greek manuscripts, the purest Hebrew and Greek Text of all—the Text that underlies our KJV—that accurately reflects the original Scriptures.

That the providential preservation of Scripture sees its historical parallel in the providential canonisation of Scripture was Dean Burgon's thinking as well. Dr Hills wrote of Burgon: "Burgon ... never lost sight of the special providence of God which has presided over the transmission of the New Testament down through the ages, expressly set out to maintain against all opponents that the Church was divinely guided to reject the false readings of the early centuries, and to gradually accept the true text. He denied that he was claiming a perpetual miracle that would keep manuscripts from being depraved at various times, and in various places. But 'The Church in her collective capacity, has nevertheless—as a matter of fact—been perpetually purging herself of those shamefully depraved copies which once everywhere abounded with her pale' (*The Revision Revised*, 334-5). He believed that just as God gradually settled the *Canon* of the New Testament by weaning His churches from non-canonical books, so He did with the *Text* also."

Having said this, I must add that I am quite sure Glenny would disagree with my interpretation of history as much as I disagree with his. Wherein lies the disagreement? In this: Glenny believes that "God has providentially preserved the text of Scripture in multiple manuscripts throughout history so that none of its doctrinal content is lost or affected adversely" (122). I, on the other hand, believe that God has providentially preserved the text of Scripture in the majority of the manuscripts throughout history so that none of its inspired words is lost or corrupted totally. In other words, Glenny believes in conceptual preservation, whereas I in verbal preservation.

Glenny's position on preservation is quite similar to the liberals and neo-evangelicals who argue for conceptual inspiration against verbal inspiration. Fundamentalists have always believed in the verbal plenary

inspiration of the Scriptures, and by the same token it is only biblical and logical that they should believe in the verbal plenary preservation of the Scriptures. Why would God want to inspire His words without wanting to preserve every one of them? The deistic heresy that God inspired His Word but did nothing to preserve it must be rejected. No one denies that some copying mistakes were made during the transmission process. But the question is: Did God lose the words of the originals when the “autographs” were destroyed? Although the Church does not have the autographa (the very first scripts) today, she has the apographa (copies) which reflect the autographa. Providentially speaking, the autographa were *neither lost nor destroyed*.

It is quite illogical to say that only the doctrines are preserved, but not the words. Without the words, where the doctrines? Without the chicken, where the egg? Every word of Scripture is important for Biblical doctrine, even the jots and the tittles. By way of illustration, a comma can change the meaning of a whole sentence. Consider this: “No man is without sin” and “No, man is without sin.” See what a difference a tiny comma can make!

The doctrine of the special providential preservation of Scripture is intrinsically linked to the doctrine of the miraculous inspiration of Scripture. To deny one is to deny the other. Dr E F Hills was extremely astute to observe that a fallacious view of preservation would invariably lead one to a denial of the inspiration of the Scripture: “Conservative scholars ... say that they believe in the special, providential preservation of the New Testament text. Most of them really don’t though, because, as soon as they say this, they immediately reduce this special providential preservation to the vanishing point in order to make room for the naturalistic theories of Westcott and Hort. As we have seen, some say that the providential preservation of the New Testament means merely that the same “substance of doctrine” is found in all the New Testament documents. Others say that it means that the true reading is always present in at least one of the thousands of extant New Testament manuscripts. And still other scholars say that to them the special, providential preservation of the Scriptures means that the true New Testament text was providentially discovered in the mid-19th century by Tischendorf, Tregelles, and Westcott and Hort after having been lost for 1,500 years.

“If you adopt one of these false views of the providential preservation of Scriptures, then you are logically on your way toward the denial of the infallible inspiration of the Scriptures. For if God has preserved the Scriptures so carelessly, why would he have infallibly inspired them in the first place? It is not sufficient therefore merely to *say* that you believe in the doctrine of the special, providential preservation of Holy Scriptures. You must *really* believe this doctrine and allow it to guide your thinking. You must begin with Christ and the Gospel and proceed according to the logic of faith. This will lead you to the Traditional text, the Textus Receptus, and the King James Version.” Glenny and his colleagues would do well to take heed of Hills’s warning and advice.

**“Translation Theory and Twentieth-Century Versions” by
Robert W Milliman**

“What is the best Bible version or translation?” Milliman gives a Barthianistic, existential answer to this question when he said the most “appropriate answer ... though disappointing to some people, is, ‘That depends’” (134, 137). Such an answer displays a crass lack of spiritual discernment. Such a wishy washy, *ini-mini-myni-mo* approach to choosing a Bible does nobody any good. It is indeed simplistic and naïve of a Bible professor like Milliman to think that all Bibles are good. Milliman’s approach is a man-pleasing, book-selling, rather than a God-honouring and truth-promoting approach.

There are basically two criteria in evaluating a version: (1) On which original language texts are the translations based, and (2) by what method of translation is the version produced?

First, on which original language texts should a translation be based? As far as Milliman is concerned, “the Masoretic Text is, by far, the text of choice in translating the OT” (135). I agree with Milliman, although I would specify that it is the Ben Chayyim edition on which the KJV is based. As far as the New Testament text is concerned, Milliman is open to both the Majority Text/Textus Receptus and the Westcott-Hort Text. It is clear that Milliman is biased against the theological approach in favour of the lower critical approach to the text. In his opinion, the textual-critical method of Westcott and Hort and their cohorts remain “the most reasonable way to reconstruct, with confidence, the original text of the Bible ... the text generally followed is *The Greek New Testament*

published by the United Bible Societies” (136). He admits that “virtually all modern translations have been based on this text” (136).

It is indeed strange that Milliman a professing fundamentalist would prefer a Greek text that has been edited by Roman Catholics and modernists. He seems quite sure that these men who deny the gospel and the fundamentals of the Christian faith are able to decide for him which readings of the text are inspired and which are not. Does he not know that “spiritual things are spiritually discerned” (1 Cor 2:13-14)? Are men who are void of the Spirit capable of making the correct decisions with regard to the text? Who can ascend unto God’s holy hill except those with clean hands and pure hearts (Ps 24:3-4)? We would rather trust the textual decisions of the reformers and the KJV men. These were the men whom we can expect the Holy Spirit to guide as they attempted to reconstruct the original text (John 14:26, 1 John 2:27). The Textus Receptus on which the KJV is based is the Reformation Text which has stood the test of time for nearly 400 years, and its ancestry can be traced right back to the first century when the inspired New Testament was written. This is the providentially preserved text that is worthy of our trust and use. The logic of faith would lead us to this conclusion. It is absurd to think that God would allow His Church to use a corrupted text down through the centuries only to raise up two Anglican liberals—Westcott and Hort—in 1881 to produce their “pure” text. The doctrine of the providential preservation of Scripture, that God has kept His words pure throughout the ages, would have us know that the purity of the text existed from the very beginning when God put His inspired words on paper, and not only after 1881. Milliman thanks Westcott and Hort. To these two and to Milliman, I say, “No thanks!”

Second, there are two Bible translation methods, the traditional formal equivalence (word for word) method and the modern dynamic equivalence (thought for thought, or thought for word) method. Milliman began rather well by saying that “in Bible translation strong arguments can be made that the translator should be most interested in faithfulness to the specific forms of the original text” (138). But the next moment, he compromises. Translations, he says, “that are produced based on any one of these theories may all be able to lay claim to the label ‘accurate’” (138). Milliman compromises by calling for “balance” (147). Does not Milliman know that “balance” is a favourite term of neo-evangelicalism? He then went on to put in a good word for feminist translations: “No

reason exists to insist on male-oriented language when a gender-neutral translation would best reflect the meaning of the original text” (147). Such a “balanced” approach that takes lightly specific forms and genders of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures opens a can of worms. Milliman says, “Meaning ... takes precedence over form” (140). But who determines “meaning?” How do we know it is “meaning” and not “opinion”? Where do we draw the line? If we employ the dynamic approach to translation, we become slaves to subjectivity. The dynamic equivalence method may be well and good for human literature, but not so when it comes to translating the Bible, for in Bible translation we are not dealing with human literature but divine Scripture. If we, as fundamentalists, believe in verbal plenary inspiration, that every word of God in the Holy Scriptures is divinely inspired and God-breathed, then the only acceptable and God-honouring method of translation must be a verbal plenary translation (VPT) method which is the formal equivalence (word for word) method.

Milliman ought to return to Bibliology 101. He ought to be reminded that God inspired “words” not “concepts”. I wonder if Milliman is sympathetic to the liberal view of conceptual inspiration vis-à-vis verbal inspiration. I trust not. But one thing is certain, his view on biblical translation does not square with his view on biblical inspiration.

Which English Bible version does Milliman recommend? Milliman would recommend any version, as long as it suits the user. He goes by what he has said earlier, “it depends”. It depends on one’s tastes and preferences. Insofar as English Bibles are concerned, the Christian is privileged to have a Baskin Robbins’ variety of flavours. It does not matter whether a version is based on the corrupt Westcott-Hort Text or not, or whether a translation is accurately and faithfully translated or not, the reader is simply encouraged to pick one that suits his taste. Despite knowing the weaknesses and unfaithfulness of these modern versions, Milliman has no qualms recommending all these corrupt versions: ASV, NASB, RSV, NRSV, TEV, CEV, NCV, LB, NLT, NIV, NIV etc. Milliman considers the NIV to be the best all-round version and highly recommends it (150). The NIV being the most popular of all modern English Bibles today is indeed the most dangerous. Read my critique of the NIV in Chapter IX of my book—*Kept Pure in All Ages*—published by the FEBC Press, 2001 (obtainable from the FEBC Bookroom, 9A Gilstead Road, Singapore 309063).

It is truly naïve of Milliman to think that all these versions “accurately present the Word of God and, at the same time, fulfill the need for a variety of uses” (150). If all these Bibles were the same, faithfully and accurately translated based on the inspired and preserved text, then there would be no problems, but such is simply not the case. There are truly serious problems in all the above versions, and they could rightly be deemed perversions of the Bible. I stress again that all the above versions are a hodgepodge of modernist, feminist, ecumenist, and evolutionist perversions of the Bible. Every Christian ought to be warned against them.

Many English versions have been published, but none has yet overthrown the KJV. The KJV remains the best, most faithful, reliable, accurate, trustworthy, beautiful English Bible we have today. Can the venerable KJV ever be replaced? Should we ever think of revising it? Here is Dean Burgon’s reply: “Whatever may be urged in favour of Biblical Revision, it is at least undeniable that the undertaking involves a tremendous risk. Our Authorized Version is the one religious link which at present binds together ... millions of English-speaking men scattered over the earth’s surface. Is it reasonable that so unutterably precious, so sacred a bond should be endangered, for the sake of representing certain words more accurately,—here and there translating a tense with greater precision,—getting rid of a few archaisms? It may be confidently assumed that no ‘Revision’ of our Authorized Version, however judiciously executed, will ever occupy the place in public esteem which is actually enjoyed by the work of the Translators of 1611,—the noblest literary work in the Anglo-Saxon language. We shall in fact never have *another* ‘Authorized Version’” (*Revision Revised*, 113).

“An Appeal to Scripture” by Kevin T Bauder

Bauder wrongly entitled his chapter, “An Appeal to Scripture”. It should be retitled, “A Denial of Scripture”. Besides all his verbiage, the 7 passages of Scripture Bauder cited—Rev 10:1-4, John 21:25, Matt 13:1-13, Mark 4:1-13, 2 Kgs 22:8, 2 Chron 34:15, and Tit 3:10—have all been twisted out of context to support his strawman and red herring arguments. In many of his paragraphs, he paints his highly imaginative version of the Pro-KJV position, making it look ridiculous, and then conveniently critiques his very own absurd caricature of his opponents. This is not only unfair, it is also dishonest. In his offensive posturing against Traditional Text preservationists, he clearly shows himself to be a desperate man

who can only find fault with his opponents by creating faults for them. Only ignoramuses, obscurantists and recalcitrants will buy into Bauder's unjust criticisms of the KJV and the Textus Receptus.

Bauder began by saying, "Orthodox Christians affirm that God has preserved His Word. They acknowledge that God has accomplished this preservation through providential means. They recognize in the traditional Greek and Hebrew texts a substantial preservation of the words of the original documents" (155). Bauder's first two sentences are good and true, but he hedges on the third when he said that the Scriptures are only *substantially* preserved. What does he mean by "substantial preservation"? Obviously, based on what has already been propounded by his colleagues, it means that God's preservation of His Word was imperfect, some inspired words have unfortunately been lost, but no worries, the inspired words that have been lost are the insignificant and redundant ones that do not affect our salvation. By "substantial preservation" Bauder means 99% preservation. We have only 99% of God's Word today, not 100%.

Such a 99% view of preservation is certainly not held at all by most Bible-believing and Bible-defending Christians as Bauder would have us believe. Allow me to cite the International Council of Christian Churches (ICCC) 16th World Congress in Jerusalem, 2000, Statement #2, "On the Word of God Forever Inerrant and Infallible": "The first historic doctrine of the Christian Church presented in the doctrinal statement of this Council of churches is its belief in the inerrancy and infallibility of the *entire* Bible ... God's Word has been given to us directly from heaven by the Holy Spirit and Jesus, while He was here, said that the Father had sent Him and had given Him the words which He had delivered to man. Jesus was explicit when He said, 'Heaven and earth shall pass away; but my words shall not pass away.' The penalty pronounced on adding to or taking from the Scriptures was severe judgement from God Himself. ... It is this Bible that has brought into existence the ICCC. It is through this Bible that the Holy Spirit has given the faith to the leaders who have established this Council and has helped them maintain a sure and clear witness to the Bible's *full* truthfulness. It is this Bible and its record of past prophecies that have been seen to be fulfilled in the *smallest* level, and *every* Word of God is true. ... Nothing that the archaeologists have discovered and will discover will contradict this Book. ... This Holy Book is the work of our righteous God in making possible the only

salvation that exists and in bringing men and women through the preaching of the Word in all its ‘foolishness’ into God’s everlasting kingdom. The ICCC reaffirms all the statements carefully and prayerfully worked out ..., all of which are based squarely on this holy and *perfect* record which came from heaven, of which God is the Author and that indeed is why it is called the Word of God.”

Note that the ICCC statement affirms the preservation of “every word” to the “smallest” detail, and that the Bible is “perfect” and thus “fully” truthful. It is clear that the ICCC, which represents Bible-loving and Bible-defending Christians from all over the world, believes in entire (100%) preservation. It is ludicrous for Bauder to think that our God could give His Church an infallible and inerrant Scripture only in biblical times, but not today. If God is powerful enough to inspire His Word to the jot and tittle without error, surely He is powerful enough to preserve all of His inspired words so that today His people can say they have the very same inspired words the Apostles and Prophets had! Surely, we have a 100% Scripture today!

Bauder made some reckless comments on the original language manuscripts when he said, “If the preservation of the Word of God depends upon the exact preservation of the words of the original documents, then the situation is dire. No two manuscripts contain exactly the same words.” Here again, Bauder speculates and pontificates. He makes a statement and assumes it is truth and fact, and expects his readers to take his word for it. He does not say he has conducted any kind of thorough primary research. Neither did he cite any worthy and reliable authority to back his claims. There are over 5000 extant New Testament manuscripts, how does Bauder know for sure that no two manuscripts contain exactly the same words? Has he personally checked, studied and compared every one of the 5000 plus manuscripts? Or is he simply parroting what the liberals and neo-evangelicals have been mouthing all along, casting doubt on God’s inspired Word?

It is a fact that the majority of the New Testament Greek manuscripts bear remarkable uniformity and harmony. The scribal errors have been comparatively few. The actual corruption of manuscripts was kept to a minimum. This however was certainly not true of the minority manuscripts of Westcott and Hort. Using the Textus Receptus as the standard, Burgon compared the Westcott and Hort uncials to see how much these manuscripts agree with the Traditional Text as represented by

the Textus Receptus. This was what he found when he compared the Gospels of the Textus Receptus with those of the five Westcott-Hort codices: “the serious deflections of A from the Textus Receptus amount in all to only 842: whereas in C they amount to 1798: in B, 2370: in \aleph , to 3392: in D, to 4697.” (*Revision Revised*, 14). Of the 5255 extant Greek manuscripts (as of 1967), 5217 agree with the Textus Receptus, and only 45 agree with the corrupt Westcott-Hort Text (D A Waite, *Defending the King James Bible*, 52-53). This shows that these so-called “oldest and most reliable manuscripts” are very different from the Traditional Text used by the churches down through the ages. Burgon went on to compare these five codices (\aleph , A, B, C, D) to see how much they agree among themselves in respect of their textual variations. He discovered that they are *never once* found to be in accord in respect of any single ‘various Reading’” (*Revision Revised*, 17). How can we possibly trust these so-called “oldest and most reliable manuscripts” when they cannot even agree among themselves even once in any of their variant readings? They are a messed-up text for sure.

The majority of the manuscripts, on the other hand, reflect uniform and ancient readings. Most textual variations or copying mistakes are of the minor sort that can be easily corrected when carefully compared. This Burgon acknowledged, “Happily, our *manuscripts* [i.e. the Traditional Text] are numerous: most of them are in the main trustworthy: *all* of them represent far older documents than themselves” (*Revision Revised*, 18). Surely, the majority text must be the favoured text being most used, widely used and faithfully copied throughout the centuries. Burgon was absolutely correct to conclude, “With regret we record our conviction, that these accomplished scholars have succeeded in producing a Text vastly more remote from the inspired autographs of the Evangelists than any which has appeared since the invention of printing [viz., the Textus Receptus]” (*Revision Revised*, 25-26). Indeed the inspired words of the majority manuscripts are all found in the Textus Receptus underlying the KJV.

Bauder claims that KJV/TR-Only advocates are living in a world of “theological illusions” and one of these illusions is the appeal to faith (158). Bauder correctly says that faith must be based on God’s promise, but he denies that God ever promised that He would preserve all of His words for every generation. If one were to quote Ps 12:6-7, Matt 5:18 etc., he would cleverly explain them all away and say that they do not

mean preservation at all. How convenient! Bauder writes off any verse in the Bible that teaches preservation by means of his fallacious hermeneutical method. Bauder should employ the same hermeneutical method on all the verses supporting inspiration like 2 Tim 3:16 and 2 Pet 1:21, and I am quite sure he would find such an exercise very enlightening. Bauder should really try it. He might just discover to his horror that he has no biblical basis whatsoever for his faith in a divinely inspired Scripture, that the doctrine of inspiration is likewise a “theological illusion”!

Bauder faults KJV/TR-Only advocates with another “illusion”, that of the appeal to reason. He argues that KJV/TR-Only advocates are wrong to reason that verbal inspiration must require verbal preservation (158). Then he cites some instances in Scripture to prove that God did not see fit to preserve all of His words. Bauder wrote, “With regard to God’s *spoken* words, He has certainly *not* seen fit to preserve all of His words in a publicly accessible form ... In John’s presence, God spoke through seven thunders, but then He explicitly forbade John to preserve those words in written form (Rev. 10:1-4). When the Scriptures tell us that not all of Jesus’ ‘acts’ were recorded (John 21:25), it logically follows that not all of His ‘words’ were recorded either” (158-9). Now, Bauder has got it all wrong. When KJV/TR-Only advocates talk about the preservation of God’s words, we always mean His *written* words as recorded in the canonical Scriptures. We understand very well that God has not chosen or seen it fit to put on paper all of His revelation. We understand very well that it is not the spoken words but the written or *inscripturated* words that God has preserved (Matt 5:18).

If Bauder needs biblical instances of God’s actual preservation of His written words, there are at least two examples in the Scriptures. In Exod 32:19, we find Moses in righteous indignation smashing to pieces the Ten Commandments that were written by the finger of God. Was that the end of the Ten Commandments? God forbid! Deut 10:4 sees God rewriting the same Ten Commandments on two tables of stone. The Lord also commanded Moses to keep the second set of Ten Commandments safe in the ark for a perpetual testimony (Deut 10:5). Does this not tell us of God’s mindful preservation of His written words? In Jer 36:32, the prophet Jeremiah told his secretary Baruch to write again all the divine words of judgement found in the original scroll that King Jehoiakim had cut up and cast into the fire. Not only were the same words written again,

God commanded that more words of condemnation be added for the punishment of Jehoiakim who had treated God's words with such contempt. Does Bauder still think that God cannot preserve His words perfectly? May he think again, lest he fall into the error of Jehoiakim.

Bauder then says that our appeal to evidence is an illusion. He charges KJV/TR-Only proponents of revising history arguing that there are no manuscripts that support the Textus Receptus before the 4th century (160). I do not wish to go over already thoroughly ploughed grounds, but just to say that the antiquity of Textus Receptus readings is ably proved and demonstrated not only by Burgon, but also Sturz and Van Bruggen.

Bauder then accuses KJV/TR-Only advocates of "irresponsible speculations" for talking about early corruptions of the Scriptures (160). But does Bauder read the Scriptures? Does he not know that Satan hates God's Word? Right from the beginning, in the Garden, Satan had already undermined God's Word by tempting Eve with "Yea, hath God said?" Right in the days of the Apostles when the New Testament was being written, Satan had already attempted to introduce into the Church "another Gospel" (Gal 1:8). Spurious Gospels and Epistles had been written to confuse and detract from the inspired Canon. How can Bauder be so naïve to think that there are no evidences of Satanic attempts to corrupt the Scriptures? Burgon unlike Bauder was astute to observe, "And the Written Word in like manner, in the earliest age of all, was shamefully handled by mankind. Not only was it confused through human infirmity and misapprehension, but it became also the object of restless malice and unsparing assaults. Marcion, Valentinus, Basilides, Heracleon, Menander, Asclepiades, Theodotus, Hermophilus, Apollonides, and other heretics, adapted the Gospels to their own ideas. ... Want of familiarity with the sacred words in the first ages, carelessness of scribes, incompetent teaching, and ignorance of Greek in the West, led to further corruption of the Sacred Text. Then out of the fact that there existed a vast number of corrupt copies arose at once the need of Recension, which was carried on by Origen and his school. This was a fatal necessity to have made itself felt in an age when the first principles of the Science were not understood; for 'to correct' was too often in those days another word for 'to corrupt'. And this is the first thing to be briefly explained and enforced: but more than a counterbalance was provided under the overruling Providence of God" (*The Traditional Text*, 10-11).

Bauder accuses KJV/TR-Only advocates of a fourth illusion in that “they turn the debate into an *ad hominem* expose of personalities associated with the Alexandrian and Western manuscripts” (160). What is wrong with *ad hominem* arguments rightly and justifiably used? Consider the infallible example of our Lord Jesus Christ. How did Jesus deal with heresy and the heretics of His day? When we study the life of Christ, we find our Lord sparing no effort and mincing no words in denouncing the heretics of His time, namely, Israel’s pastors and doctors of theology—the Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees. Matthew 23 is full of *argumentum ad hominem*. Did not the Lord curse Israel’s teachers with woes, and call them hypocrites, blind guides, fools, whited sepulchres, serpents and vipers? They were the pastors and teachers of Israel who instead of guiding God’s people into the straight and narrow way of life, led them into the broad way of death. Instead of shepherding God’s people to green pastures and still waters, they led them to poisoned fields of thistles and thorns. Jesus was very angry with these false pastors and teachers, and said they deserve “the greater damnation” (cf. Jas 3:1).

If we are to be loyal to Christ and His Word, we must cultivate the Davidic spirit—we must be men after God’s own heart. The Davidic spirit is the spirit of holy hatred: “Do not I hate them, O LORD, that hate thee? and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies” (Ps 139:21-22).

Who are the enemies of God’s inspired and preserved words? The leading two must be the progenitors of the corrupt critical text, viz. B F Westcott and F J A Hort. I have no qualms calling Westcott and Hort modernists. They called the Textus Receptus “vile” and “villainous”. They attacked the verbal plenary inspiration of the Holy Scriptures in 2 Tim 3:16 in their perverse ERV. They were rightly taken to task by Robert Dabney who called their rendering of 2 Tim 3:16 “the very doctrine of the Socinian and Rationalist”. We do well to distance ourselves from Westcott and Hort. But not Bauder, he considers these Anglican liberals his friends, speaking highly of their corrupt Greek text (177).

The fifth illusion Bauder accuses the KJV/TR-Only movement of is its appeal to supernaturalism. He argues against the miraculous preservation of Scriptures. Here is another strawman that Bauder has conveniently erected—he falsely charges KJV/TR-Only advocates for believing that no copying mistakes were ever made in the transmission

process (162). KJV/TR-Only advocates do not deny that copying mistakes were made during the transcription process, but that does not negate the fact that God has superintended the transcription of His inspired words to ensure that none of His inspired words would be lost. If 10 scribes were copying the Scriptures, one or two might possibly make a mistake in copying a particular verse, but the rest would have copied it correctly, and the mistake made is easily identified and rectified by the rest. The special providential hand of God has ensured this. God's providential work is always supernatural. God knows all things and is all-powerful. Man makes mistakes, but not God. He who has inspired every jot and tittle of His Word has surely preserved every jot and tittle of His Word (Matt 5:18).

Dr Hills wrote, "If the doctrine of *divine inspiration* of the Old and New Testament Scriptures is a true doctrine, the doctrine of the *providential preservation* of these Scriptures must also be a true doctrine. It must be that down through the centuries God has exercised a special, providential control over the copying of the Scriptures and the preservation and use of the original text have been available to God's people in every age. ... If God has not preserved the Scriptures by His special providence, why would He have infallibly inspired them in the first place? And if the Scriptures are not infallibly inspired, how do we know that the Gospel message is true? And if the Gospel message is not true, how do we know that Jesus is the Son of God? It is a dangerous error therefore to ignore the special, providential preservation of the holy Scriptures and to seek to defend the New Testament text in the same way in which we would defend the texts of other ancient books. For the logic of this unbelieving attitude is likely to lay hold upon us and cast us down into the bottomless pit of uncertainty. ... You must *really* believe this doctrine [of the special, providential preservation of Scriptures] and allow it to guide your thinking. You must begin with Christ and the Gospel and proceed according to the logic of faith. This will lead you to the Traditional text, the Textus Receptus, and the King James Version."

Divine providence has to be supernatural—*God is a Perfectionist*, and He has supernaturally kept His Word pure through the ages so that none of His inspired words is lost. When God works, whether miraculously (i.e. direct intervention) or providentially (i.e. indirect intervention), it is always supernatural and special. We believe in an Almighty God who is able to preserve perfectly His infallible and inerrant Word (Heb 11:3).

In his final section, Bauder identifies the central issue: “The core issue in the King James-Only controversy is whether one must have the very words of God (*all* of the words, and *only* the words of the autographa) to have the Word of God” (164). To me this seems to be an awfully silly question. It is gratuitous that in order to have the all infallible, inerrant, sufficient and authoritative Word of God today, we must have the “very words” and “*all* of the words, and *only* the words of the autographa”. Insofar as historic and reformed fundamentalism is concerned, this has always been the position—that God has “kept pure in all ages” His Holy Scriptures, and so in every age, she has the very Word of God in the original languages.

Hindus and Muslims all believe that their Scriptures, the Bhagavad Gita and the Koran respectively, are perfect. Yet Christians who claim to believe in the one living and true God, the Creator of heaven and earth, and Christ the only Mediator and Saviour of the world, are not so quick to believe they have an existing infallible and inerrant Scripture. What a shame! If we adopt Bauder’s position, then Christianity is no longer true, and Christians shall become the laughing stock of the religious world. Indeed, if the Christian Bible is not perfect, infallible and inerrant, “then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; ... If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable” (1 Cor 15:14-15, 19). If what Bauder and his colleagues teach is true, then Christianity could rightly, in Bauder’s own words, be written off and ridiculed as “a curiosity”, preached by “eccentric but harmless old uncles” (165). Let me conclude by saying that this is Bauder’s Christianity, not mine.

What can we say about *One Bible Only*? I can only say it is a very misleading book; full of misinformation. It is filled with misrepresentations of the KJV/TR-Only position and misinterpretations of the Holy Scriptures. *Yea, Hath God Said?* would have been a more accurate and appropriate title for this untrustworthy and unedifying book. Stay clear!

**BOB JONES UNIVERSITY,
NEO-FUNDAMENTALISM, AND
BIBLICAL PRESERVATION**

***A Critique of God's Word in Our Hands:
The Bible Preserved for Us***

Jeffrey Khoo

Whither Biblical Fundamentalism?

Without a present, existing, tangible, and identifiable, infallible and inerrant Scriptures in the original languages, Biblical Fundamentalism is as good as dead. If there is no such a truth as an infallible and inerrant Scripture that is pure and perfect in every way today, “then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; ... ye are yet in your sins. ... If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable” (1 Cor 15:14, 15, 17, 19).

But Bible-believing and Bible-defending Christians can praise God that Biblical Fundamentalism is not dead. This is because God has indeed given His people such a perfect Bible not only in the past but also today! He has promised the perfect preservation of His Word in the Old Testament (Ps 12:6-7) as well as in the New Testament (Matt 5:18, 24:35). Biblical Fundamentalists have such a perfect Bible in the original languages which is the sure and certain foundation of their faith and practice. This perfect Bible is none other than the 100% inspired, 100% preserved, 100% sufficient, and 100% authoritative Hebrew Old Testament and Greek New Testament underlying the Reformation Bibles which is best represented today by the Authorised or King James Bible. The biblical doctrine of the special providential preservation of the Scriptures assures us of this. There is a perennial need to contend earnestly for the once-for-all-settled faith that is found in the forever infallible and inerrant Word of God (Ps 119:89, Jude 3).

The biblical doctrine of the 100% preservation of Scripture is the truth, “for we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth” (2 Cor 13:8).¹ Nevertheless, Satan, having lost his battle against the Verbal Plenary Inspiration (VPI) of Scripture in the last century, in this new century, seeks to attack the Verbal Plenary Preservation (VPP) of Scripture in every way he can, even making use of those within the fundamentalist camp.

Neo-Fundamentalism and the Imperfect Preservation of Scripture

The latest book to cast doubt on God’s verbally and plenary preserved Word in the God-breathed Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek words underlying the Authorised Version is this misnamed book called *God’s Word in Our Hands: The Bible Preserved for Us* edited by James B Williams and Randolph Shaylor with various contributors who are associated with Bob Jones University (BJU).² Bob Jones III on the back cover wrote, “Like a clean-edged sword, *God’s Word in Our Hands* cuts through the current confused and schismatic clatter on the subject of biblical preservation. These conservative and God-fearing authors do the Church great service by presenting us with soul-thrilling evidence of the reliability and durability of the eternal Word.”

The authors of this book might well be “conservative” and “God-fearing,” but I fear we might be looking at a case of “having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof” (2 Tim 3:5). In this critique, I will show that Bob Jones III’s glowing endorsement of this book is entirely misleading: (1) The book is not a clean-edged sword as claimed because it misinterprets and misapplies the double-edged Sword which is God’s Word itself. (2) It creates more confusion and schism on the subject of biblical preservation because it misrepresents the Pro-KJV and Preserved Text position, and promotes the modernistic and ecumenical modern versions that are based on the corrupt Critical Text. (3) The data are not at all soul-thrilling because they are based on man’s subjective and fallible interpretation of so-called “evidence.” (4) It does not edify the faith of believers in God and His Word because of its deistic view that not every jot and tittle of Scripture is preserved, that some words are already lost and remain lost; and also its agnostic thinking that though God’s inspired Word is preserved somewhere out there, no one can be sure of precisely where.

As Biblical fundamentalists, we reject the postmodernistic mindset of uncertainty, and neo-deistic view of the imperfect preservation of Scripture. Based on God's explicit promise of Biblical preservation (Ps 12:6-7, Matt 5:18, 24:35), and the certainty of faith (Heb 11:6) that believes in God's special providential preservation of His very own words to the jot and tittle, we can tell for sure where the inspired words are exactly preserved. God does not play hide and seek with His people (Prov 22:20-21). He desires His people to know the precise location of His inspired and preserved words. Faith in God and His Word is the key to knowing where His very words are and how He has supernaturally worked in history. But it is unfortunate that neo-fundamentalists have chosen rather to follow the pride of human intellectualism that is based on false rules of textual criticism leading to a dead end of unbelief. As much as they hope to have, they really do not have an infallible and inerrant Bible in their hands as claimed. Even with all their clever human reasoning and textual critical prowess, they are still unable to produce a Bible that they can assuredly say, "This is the very Word of God, infallible and inerrant!" Herein we see the weakness of man, but the greatness of God!

Misinterpretation and Misapplication of God's Word

In BJU's previous book—*From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man*³—its writers undermine the doctrine of the perfect preservation of Scripture,⁴ sharing the same view as their partners-in-crime, namely, the writers of *One Bible Only*?⁵ from Central Baptist Theological Seminary which is again proudly listed in this sequel. In the latter book, Edward Glenny said, (1) "the doctrine of preservation was not a doctrine of the ancient church," (2) "we might have lost a few words through negligence," and (3) "not only is Scripture without a verse to explain how God will preserve His Word, but no statement in Scripture teaches that God did preserve perfectly the original text of Scripture."⁶ What a faith-shattering declamation of God's forever infallible and inerrant Word! Can these words be from the pen of a fundamentalist? These men cannot be acknowledged as true fundamentalists. They give Biblical Fundamentalism a bad name. Until they recant and repent of their error, they deserve to be known as neo-fundamentalists or neo-deists.

Now in this book—*God's Word in Our Hands*—the writers admit that the Scriptures do teach the doctrine of Biblical preservation. One

might think they are at last on the right track, but no, they undermine the doctrine the very next moment when they say that though the doctrine is taught in the Scriptures, it is *not clearly* taught.

Their “bottom line” on Matthew 5:18 is particularly disturbing. One feels like he has come face to face with the old serpent. In the same way the serpent tempted Eve in the Garden (Gen 3:1-4), so do the neo-fundamentalists of this book with their twisted interpretation and application of Matthew 5:18. Satan’s deadly strategy of seduction usually begins with a friendly “Yes!” Then he creates doubt, “Did God really say this?” Finally, he goes for the kill with a deadly “No!”

Such a lethal hissing of the snake is found on page 106. First the Yes! “Is our Lord here guaranteeing the preservation of all the written words of Scripture?” The reply is “an emphatic ‘yes.’” Next, the doubt, “Although ... preservation is not His *main* point, it is nevertheless *the* point ... What He does not do, however, is give even so much as a hint as to how or where preservation will take place.” Finally, the No! “The conclusion one must reach is that this passage does not teach that those words are preserved in one particular manuscript or lineage of manuscripts alone. Neither does this passage guarantee that all the words will be always available at all times.”

Let us analyse the above fallacious interpretation and application of Matthew 5:18. The editorial committee that penned those words began by *agreeing* emphatically that *all* the written words of Scripture are preserved. But know that what was said is not the same as what was meant. This is revealed at the end when they *denied* that “all the words will be always available at all times.” In other words, some of God’s words can be and have been lost. Now, if some of God’s words can be and have been lost, how can the promise of Matthew 5:18 be true, and how can it be so emphatically stated at the outset that God guarantees the preservation of all His written words? Furthermore, the statement that the preservation of Scripture is not the *main* point and yet *the* point is *contradictory* and *confusing*, if not *deceptive*. This “Yes, Yes-No, No” interpretation and application of Matthew 5:18 has the Satanic stamp all over it. What is the real bottom line? It is this: *BJU and the neo-fundamentalists do not believe that God will and is able to preserve perfectly all of His inspired words to the last iota, that all of His inspired words will always remain available and accessible to His people all the time until the end of time.*

The only Christlike response to such an unfaithful treatment of Jesus' words must come from the very words of the Lord Himself who told Peter, "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men" (Matt 16:23).

May these fundamentalist brethren return to the godly path of Christ-honouring and faith-centred exposition and application of God's forever infallible and inerrant Word. "Yea, let God be true, but every man a liar" (Rom 3:4).

Confusion and Schism in Fundamentalism

BJU and the neo-fundamentalists are upset with the confusion and schism that surround the present controversy over the preservation of Scripture and the KJV. They say "it unnecessarily detracts from the main purpose for the church's existence."⁷ How does a clear and bold declaration that the church has a 100% inspired and 100% preserved Scripture detract from the main purpose of the church's existence? On the contrary, it enhances and ensures the witness and testimony of the church, and gives believers the solid and immovable foundation they need to evangelise the lost, and edify the saints. It is those who cannot confess that there is a perfect Bible today, who say that the Bible today is not infallible and inerrant, who say that the Bible today contains mistakes that are destabilising and destroying the church. What is the main purpose of the church's existence? Is it not to glorify God? How does the neo-fundamentalist and neo-deistic position that God has not perfectly preserved His Word and that there is no perfectly preserved Scripture today glorify God? Those who say they do not have God's perfect Word today, or say they cannot tell where the perfect Word is are the ones causing the confusion, not those with a clear and definite position.

The Far Eastern Bible College has a declared position that affirms in no uncertain terms the present perfection of Scripture: "We believe in the divine, Verbal Plenary Inspiration (Autographs) and Verbal Plenary Preservation (Apographs) of the Scriptures in the original languages, their consequent inerrancy and infallibility, and as the perfect Word of God, the supreme and final authority in faith and life (2 Tim 3:16, 2 Pet 1:20-21, Ps 12:6-7, Matt 5:18, 24:35)." As regards the Hebrew OT, Greek NT, and the KJV, "We believe the Hebrew Old Testament and the Greek New Testament underlying the Authorised (King James) Version to be the

very Word of God, infallible and inerrant. We uphold the Authorised (King James) Version to be the Word of God—the best, most faithful, most accurate, most beautiful translation of the Bible in the English language, and do employ it alone as our primary scriptural text in the public reading, preaching, and teaching of the English Bible.”⁸ How does such a position detract from the main mission of the church? We are simply reaffirming good old Reformed and Reformation doctrine and practice over against the modernistic and postmodernistic views and methods as found in neo-evangelical churches, and now in neo-fundamental churches.

No matter what clarification is made by Biblical fundamentalists, neo-fundamentalists are bent on confusing the issue by repeatedly making false and dishonest claims like these: KJV fundamentalists “advocate the inerrancy of a particular translation;” “Problems arise when we make any translation the exclusive revelation from God;” “It is troubling that so many ... attempt to prove God has promised us a perfect English translation;” “They have overlooked the supreme significance of the original languages and have staked their claim on the King James Version of the Bible as the God-inspired Bible for this present age.”⁹ This may be the position of Peter Ruckman (who ironically received his PhD from BJU), but certainly not the better known and sound defenders of the KJV like E F Hills and D A Waite. The above accusations are both confusing and damaging because the *original language text* is the issue, not the KJV *per se* nor any foreign language translation as alleged.¹⁰

Why do those who believe in the perfect preservation of Scripture believe that the KJV is the English Bible for today? Is it because they feel the KJV is as perfect and as inspired as the original language Scriptures? Of course not! Such misrepresentations do not reflect well on these BJU men and neo-fundamentalists. It does look like their position is so weak that they must resort to such low blows to make themselves look good.

Let it be known once and for all that the KJV of 1611 is the logical choice for faithful English Bible users because they do believe and can see that God has indeed kept His promise to preserve His words perfectly in the *original languages* throughout history and especially during the great Protestant Reformation. The KJV is the best English Bible today precisely because it remains the most accurate and faithful translation of the divinely inspired *Hebrew and Greek Scriptures* that God has supernaturally preserved throughout the ages. All foreign language Bibles

including the English must be judged by this perfect rule of God's totally inspired and fully preserved words in the original languages, and not vice versa. Any foreign language Bible if accurately translated and based on the perfectly preserved text can rightly be held up like the KJV as the Word of God, yea, even the *very* Word of God.

It is neo-fundamentalism's tragic compromise with modernistic, rationalistic, and ecumenical textual critics and their modern perversions of the Bible that is causing the confusion and the schism within Biblical Fundamentalism today. Biblical fundamentalists loyal to their Lord and His Word have no choice but to separate from these neo-fundamentalists, and expose them for their hypocrisy.

Man's Subjective and Fallible Opinions

Many names do not the truth make. No man is perfect save the Lord Jesus Christ, and no book is perfect save the Holy Bible.

Biblical fundamentalists believe that the Holy Scriptures, infallible and inerrant, are the final and supreme authority of Christian faith and practice. It is unfortunate that BJU and company, despite their "conservative and God-fearing" profession, do not practise what they preach. In their vain attempt to bolster their untenable position on Biblical preservation, instead of simply believing what Scripture explicitly teaches about its own preservation, and applying that truth in their ministry, they cite a list of fundamentalists who had likewise thought and taught wrongly concerning the preservation of Scripture. They quote James Brookes, B H Carroll, C I Scofield, James Gray, R A Torrey, John Straton, William Erdman, A T Robertson, W B Riley, Richard Clearwaters, Noel Smith, John R Rice, and speak as though they are the only rightful representatives of fundamentalism, and there is consensus among fundamentalists over the text and translation issue.¹¹

Are we supposed to be impressed by big names? Why do they forget many other fundamentalists like Ian Paisley, Carl McIntire, E F Hills, David Otis Fuller, D A Waite, O Talmadge Spence, Jack Moorman, David Cloud, Arlin Horton, Dell Johnson, Thomas Strouse, M H Reynolds Jr, Dennis Costella, David Sorenson, Arthur E Steele, S H Tow, and Timothy Tow, who have written and spoken strongly in favour of the continued use of the KJV *because of* its faithfulness to the 100% inspired and 100% preserved Hebrew and Greek Texts on which it is based as opposed to the corrupted text and versions? I wonder where Bob Jones Sr and Bob Jones

Jr stood on the KJV issue. Did they not strongly uphold the KJV as the fundamentalist's Bible? Why were they not mentioned in this BJU book? This silence is telling! I do not believe that the late Bob Jones Sr and Bob Jones Jr would have allowed this shift from the KJV towards the modern versions that we see happening in BJU today.¹²

BJU's departure from the KJV today is due to her unequal yoke with Westcott and Hort. For decades, BJU has promoted the false theory and text of Westcott and Hort in the classroom, though not at the pulpit. The new generation of BJU graduates are now asking, "If the Westcott and Hort text is superior to the Textus Receptus, why then should we continue to use the KJV? Since the modern English versions are based on the superior Westcott and Hort text, it only makes sense that we replace the KJV with the modern versions." Is it no wonder that James B Williams and company are so upset with Biblical fundamentalists who continue to promote the KJV and decry this falling away from the KJV that they see in BJU? If BJU does not repent of this wayward trend that she has embarked on, her legacy would be similar to the many Bible-loving and God-fearing institutions that once were but are no more. I personally hate to see this happen, but with this sequel it does look like the writing is already on the wall. Why does history have to repeat itself?

It needs to be reiterated that the issue has to do with the original language Scriptures, not the translations *per se*. We must not put the cart before the horse which only confuses the issue and hinders any progress towards knowing the truth. It must also be pointed out that many a fundamentalist today are seriously in error to think that the infallible and inerrant Scriptures lie *only* in the autographs (which no longer exist)¹³ and not in the apographs (which exist today).¹⁴ Another grave error is the view that there is no such thing as an infallible and inerrant Bible today because the apographs have not been perfectly preserved by God. It is taught that since the disappearance of the perfect autographs, God's people only had imperfect apographs as their Scriptures, which are the imperfect Scriptures we possess today with words added, subtracted, changed, missing or even lost.¹⁵

As already said, *God's Word in Our Hands* is a book that does not live up to its name. The reason: a flawed Bibliology! Their constant appeal to human authority instead of biblical authority keeps telling me, "Let man be true, but God a liar!" (contra Rom 3:4).

Agnostic with Deistic View of Biblical Preservation

On a front page of *God's Word in Our Hands* we find this statement of faith: "*We believe that the Bible teaches that God has providentially preserved His written Word. This preservation exists in the totality of the ancient language manuscripts of that revelation. We are therefore certain that we possess the very Word of God.*"¹⁶ Is this not a wonderful statement? Should we not give it a loud Amen? A superficial and simplistic reading of this statement might lead one to think that BJU and company now believe they have a 100% inspired and 100% preserved Scripture they can hold in their hands and say, "This is the very Word of God!" Upon further investigation, we discover that this is far from true. In the confusing world of theology today, what counts is not what is said but what is meant.

Now, let us analyse the above statement to see what is meant. They say, "We believe that the Bible teaches" But if one were to ask them whether the Bible clearly and directly teaches the doctrine of preservation, they would answer in the negative: The Bible does not give explicit but only "implicit teaching" on preservation.¹⁷ An "*implicit teaching*?" How can such a vital doctrine as the preservation of Scripture be "implicit?" Is it God's nature to keep His words uncertain and unclear to us? If the teaching on the preservation of the saints is explicit (Matt 10:22, Mark 13:13, John 10:28, Rom 8:30-39, Phil 2:12-13), how can the teaching on the preservation of the Scriptures be implicit? If we cannot be sure of God's perfect preservation of every single one of His inspired words, how can we be sure of God's perfect preservation of every single one of His saints, that none would be lost? Surely, we cannot! By saying that the Bible does not teach clearly the preservation of Scripture, these neo-fundamentalists have not only undermined the perspicuity of Scripture and the preservation of the saints, but even more so the omnipotence of God.

They say, "God has providentially preserved His written Word." Although they say that God has "providentially preserved His written Word," they do not believe that He did it *supernaturally*. According to them, the Bible "does not support supernatural preservation."¹⁸ In their mind, only the inspiration of Scripture was supernatural, not its preservation; God was careful in inspiration, but somehow careless in preservation. Does this make sense? Is it not contradictory to speak of

God in such a way? Why would God want to inspire His words supernaturally without wanting to preserve them in the same way? They oppose my citing of Psalm 12:6-7 to prove the VPP of God's inspired words, but fail to interact with the faithful exegesis of the divine intent in the infallible and inerrant Hebrew text offered by Biblical preservationists.¹⁹ Instead they cite commentator after commentator, commentary after commentary as though these commentators and commentaries are infallible and inerrant.²⁰

It has to be pointed out that when these neo-fundamentalists say that God has "providentially preserved" His written Word, they mean His general providence and not special providence. There is a significant distinction between the two. General providence refers to God's *indirect* intervention in the maintenance and sustenance of all things through the *laws of nature* (Ps 104:10-30). Special providence, on the other hand, speaks of God's *direct* intervention in the protection and preservation of certain things through *extraordinary acts of miracles* (Ps 91:1-16). The providential preservation of the Scriptures falls under the latter category. The Westminster Confession of Faith speaks of God's preservation of Scripture in terms of "His singular care and providence."²¹ In other words, God Himself, in His very own inscrutable ways without the limitations inherent in secondary causality, guarantees that every iota of His written words would be "kept pure in all ages." E F Hills wrote, "If we believe that the New Testament Scriptures are the infallibly inspired Word of God, then it is logical for us to believe that God has preserved this written Word by His *special* providence."²²

The rejection of the *special* providential preservation of Scripture has led neo-fundamentalists to conclude that preservation "exists in the totality of the ancient language manuscripts of that revelation." Ask them precisely where in the sea of over 3,000 Hebrew manuscripts, and over 5,000 Greek manuscripts is the "very Word of God" that we possess today, and they would shrug their shoulders and say, "I don't know and I can't tell." But they are sure of one thing, that some of the inspired words of God could be lost at any given period of time. They say, "God's promises for the preservation of His words do not apparently necessitate the availability of that written Word at every moment in history. It is therefore possible for a portion of His words to be unavailable [or lost] at a point in time."²³

Since the inspired Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek words could be lost, it is no wonder they think in terms of the “ancient language manuscripts of that revelation.” Who are they trying to fool? Note the words “*ancient language*” instead of “*original language*,” and “*revelation*,” instead of “*words*.” This is not by accident. By “*revelation*” they mean *only doctrines* are preserved, *not words*. And when they say “ancient language” they mean to include the *ancient translations* like the Septuagint (Greek version of the Hebrew OT).²⁴ This surely contradicts what Jesus said in Matthew 5:18. Just as heaven and earth have been continually existing and never at any moment “unavailable,” so also the divinely inspired words (not just “that revelation”) of the original Hebrew and Greek Scriptures even to their jots and tittles, *not the translated words in any version ancient or modern*.

Having such a faulty view of biblical preservation, it is no wonder that neo-fundamentalists are ever ready to correct the Hebrew text on the basis of a translation like the Septuagint²⁵ even when there is absolutely no evidence of a scribal error in the original text.²⁶ For instance, in 1 Samuel 13:1, every single Hebrew manuscript reads “a year” (*shanah*) which the KJV correctly translates as “Saul reigned *one year*.”²⁷ But neo-fundamentalists insist that “one year” is a scribal error even though all the preserved Hebrew apographs since the time of the inspired autographs read precisely so, “one year.” The logic of faith would lead a sincere Bible believer to stick to the inspired and preserved Hebrew text, but not Harding who says, “On account of my theological conviction regarding the inerrancy of the autographa, I believe the original Hebrew text also reads ‘thirty,’ even though we *do not* currently possess a Hebrew manuscript with that reading.”²⁸ This is amazing! Harding is prepared to believe that “thirty” is the “inspired reading” even when there is absolutely no such “inspired reading” to begin with! It is like saying, “I believe in the resurrection of Christ even when no such resurrection ever took place.” Is this not foolish faith?

If the Bible contains such scribal errors as they say when there is absolutely none in the Hebrew Scriptures past and present, then these must be errors committed not by the copyist or scribe, but by the *writer of the inspired words himself*! Unwittingly, these neo-fundamentalists have denied the verbal inspiration of Scripture, and might as well throw out their doctrine of “inerrant autographs.” It goes without saying that the problem with these neo-fundamentalists is in their rejection of the plain

words of Scripture that teach not only its 100% inspiration but also *100% preservation*. It is no wonder that based on their flawed belief of an imperfect Scripture which they hold in their hands, they are prepared to use a corrupt translation to correct the inspired and preserved Hebrew text in places like 1 Samuel 13:1. In so doing, are they not like the Ruckmanites whom they accuse as heretics?

Although these neo-fundamentalists do not believe they truly have a perfect Bible today, they try to reassure themselves and their readers that they actually do: “We are therefore certain that we possess the very Word of God.” Taking into account that what they say is not what they mean, this is but an empty and vain affirmation. It is a delusion. It must be underscored that *they do not believe in the 100% perpetual, permanent, and perfect preservation of the divinely inspired Hebrew/Aramaic Old Testament and Greek New Testament words of the Holy Scriptures*. They do not believe that “soon after the invention of printing this written Word was placed in print and became the Textus Receptus, being immediately received by believers everywhere and made the basis of faithful translations such as the King James Version.” Why this unbelief? It is because “conservative scholars, by and large, have been so brain-washed by naturalistic propaganda that they hesitate to follow this logic of faith. Some of them go to the extreme of denying that the Bible teaches the special, providential preservation of the Scriptures. According to them, apparently, it is theoretically possible that the true New Testament text has been lost.”²⁹

Hills’s words continue to ring true and accurately describe the neo-fundamentalists of the BJU mould, “there is a growing number of conservative Bible teachers who go around saying that all New Testament texts and versions are good enough and that controversy concerning them is much ado about nothing, a tempest in a teapot. They justify this position by maintaining that the object of God’s providential preservation of the Scriptures was not to preserve the precise words of the original Scriptures but merely the substance of their doctrine, their essential teaching. According to these teachers, the substance of doctrine, the essential teaching, is found in all the New Testament manuscripts, even the worst, and in all translations, even the most inaccurate. Hence, they conclude happily, there’s nothing to worry about. Choose any version you please.”³⁰ This is precisely the tragedy we see in BJU and other fundamentalist colleges and churches today.

Achilles' Heel of Neo-Fundamentalism

The neo-fundamentalists say they are sure that the Bible is preserved for us. However, their very own words incriminate them. The Bible to them is only 99.9% preserved, not 100%. They believe that some of the inspired, original language words have been lost and still nowhere to be found.

These neo-fundamentalist writers want their readers to believe that they do believe in Biblical preservation when they in fact do not. Their past denial of Biblical preservation as a fundamental doctrine taught in the Scriptures and their present affirmation of the same without recanting and repenting of their error are deceptive and create confusion all the more. It is important to realise that it was the Textus Receptus KJVists and not the Critical Text modern versionists who first championed the sorely neglected doctrine of the VPP of Scripture of true Fundamental Protestantism as expressed in the Presbyterian Westminster Confession (1645) and Baptist New Hampshire Confession (1833).

What kind of Bible do we have in our hands? *According to BJU and neo-fundamentalists, what we have in our hands is a once-upon-a-time inspired, but not happily-ever-after preserved Bible.* Since the Bible today is not without spot and blemish, it may no longer be deemed infallible and inerrant, or perfect in every way, not in any manuscript, family of manuscripts, text or translation. “If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?” (Ps 11:3).

This is the Achilles' heel of neo-fundamentalism: (1) The Bible though 100% inspired is not 100% preserved. Therefore, there is no such thing as a 100% perfect Bible today, not in any text, not in any translation. (2) The 19th-20th century Westcott-Hort and Critical Text is superior to the 16th-17th century Traditional Text or Textus Receptus. Therefore, the Reformers and the Reformation saints have all used the wrong Bible. (3) The KJV is good, but the modern versions are better. Therefore, replace the KJV with the modern versions.

The above neo-deism spells the death knell for BJU. We can see the neo-evangelicals cheering the neo-fundamentalists on to the finish line. If they do not stop their undermining of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures underlying the KJV, they will sooner or later deny not only the VPP but also the VPI of Scripture. *What a fellowship, what a view so blind, leaning on the ever-lethal arms of liberal scholarship!*

Unless Biblical fundamentalists are fully committed to the twin doctrines of the VPI and VPP of Scripture, and wholeheartedly defend the traditional and preserved text on which the KJV is based, they will gradually melt and blend into the neo-evangelical and liberal crowd. The backsliding and downgrading is already taking place. The warning is hereby sounded. “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear” (Matt 11:15).

Notes

¹ See Jeffrey Khoo, *Kept Pure in All Ages: Recapturing the Authorised Version and the Doctrine of Providential Preservation* (Singapore: Far Eastern Bible College Press, 2001); “A Plea for a Perfect Bible,” *The Burning Bush* 9 (2003):1-15; *KJV Q&A* (Singapore: Bible Witness Literature Ministry, 2003).

² James B Williams and Randolph Shaylor, eds, *God’s Word in Our Hands: The Bible Preserved for Us* (Greenville: Ambassador Emerald International, 2003). Besides Bob Jones University, other schools that contributed to this book include Central Baptist Theological Seminary, Calvary Baptist Theological Seminary, Pillsbury Baptist Bible College, Northland Baptist Bible College, Faith Baptist Bible College, Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary, Maranatha Baptist Bible College, and Temple Baptist Seminary. All the above schools bear a pro-Westcott and Hort or Critical Text, and pro-modern versions disposition that undermines the Textus Receptus and the King James Version. Thankfully, there is an antidote for the above poison, and ironically from the same publisher, which is Ian R K Paisley’s, *My Plea for the Old Sword* (Greenville: Ambassador Emerald International, 1997).

³ James B Williams, ed, *From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man* (Greenville: Ambassador Emerald International, 1999). See my critique, “Bob Jones University and the KJV: A Critique of *From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man*,” *The Burning Bush* 7 (2001): 1-33.

⁴ Randolph Shaylor, who has become the managing editor of *God’s Word in Our Hands*, on page 22 of the prequel, *From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man*, said that the Bible nowhere teaches nor implies that the copies of Scripture are inerrantly and infallibly inspired. On page 25 of the same book, he quoted errant Warfield for support saying that only the autographs are inspired, not the apographs.

⁵ Roy E Beacham and Kevin T Bauder, eds, *One Bible Only?* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2001). See my critique, “The Emergence of Neo-Fundamentalism: *One Bible Only?* or ‘Yea Hath God Said?’,” *The Burning Bush* 10 (2004): 2-47.

⁶ Beacham and Bauder, *One Bible Only?*, 116, 121, 123.

⁷ Williams and Shaylor, *God’s Word in Our Hands*, xiv.

⁸ Hutcheson rightly observed, “The orthodox Christians in the nineteenth century used that greatly revered translation which had been handed down to them. Since its appearance in 1611, the King James Version had gained prominence as the primary English translation and had been blessed of God over the previous two hundred and fifty years.” *God’s Word in Our Hands*, 4. Pro-KJV advocates are saying that we should continue in this good and faithful tradition, and should reject the modern English versions today because they are significantly different from the good old KJV. If the modern English translations are also based on the preserved instead of the corrupted text, and are translated literally rather than loosely, then there would be no problem, but this is simply and truly not the case. See “A Survey of English Bible Translations,” in *Kept Pure in All Ages*, 69-100.

⁹ Williams and Shaylor, *God’s Word in Our Hands*, xv, 27, 111, 195.

¹⁰ See David H Sorenson, *Touch Not the Unclean Thing: The Text Issue and Separation*, 3rd ed (Duluth: Northstar Baptist Ministries, 2001).

¹¹ Although it is regrettable that the VPP of Scripture was not discussed in *The Fundamentals* (1910-1915) edited by Dixon, Meyer and Torrey, it is heartening to note that L W Munhall did allude to it in his chapter on “Inspiration” when he wrote, “The attitude of Jesus toward the Old Testament and his utterances confirm beyond question our contention. He had *the very same Old Testament we have today*” (*The Fundamentals* [Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1990 reprint], 168, emphasis mine).

¹² One proud BJU graduate that I know of had assured me personally that the BJU alumni had pledged to protest in unison the day they see their alma mater abandoning the KJV. If this is true, then I really hope it would come soon for the sake of their school.

¹³ John Hutcheson wrote, “The pioneers of the [fundamentalist] movement argued for the inerrancy of the autographs alone” (Williams and Shaylor, *God’s Word in Our Hands*, 27).

¹⁴ See my paper, “*Sola Autographa* or *Sola Apographa*?: A Case for the Present Perfection and Authority of the Holy Scriptures,” *The Burning Bush* 11 (2005): 3-19.

¹⁵ Williams and Shaylor, *God’s Word in Our Hands*, 94, 106, 110, say that Biblical preservation does not mean “a perpetual activity of sustenance,” “that all the words will be always available at all times,” “that an absolutely perfect copy would be produced.”

¹⁶ Ibid, iii.

¹⁷ Ibid, 83.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Khoo, “The Emergence of Neo-Fundamentalism,” 29-31; Suan-Yew Quek, “Did God Promise to Preserve His Words? Interpreting Psalm 12:6-7,” *The Burning Bush* 10 (2004): 96-99; Thomas Strouse, “The Permanent

Preservation of God's Words, Psalm 12:6,7," in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, ed Kent Brandenburg (El Sobrante: Pillar & Ground, 2003), 29-34.

²⁰ Williams and Shaylor, *God's Word in Our Hands*, 86.

²¹ *Westminster Confession of Faith*, I:VIII.

²² Edward F Hills, *Believing Bible Study* (Des Moines: Christian Research Press, 1977), 36-7. Emphasis mine.

²³ Williams and Shaylor, *God's Word in Our Hands*, 124 (parenthesis mine). For instance, on page 375, Downey says that a Hebrew word has been lost in Deuteronomy 8:3 and recovered in the Greek translation.

²⁴ Williams in his prequel (*From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man*, 4, 7), castigated those who defend the KJV as God's preserved Word in the English language, calling them "unqualified," "immature," and "a cancerous sore." He says the KJV ought not to be exalted, but in this sequel of his, he exalts the ancient translations and puts them on par with the original language Scriptures! What hypocrisy!

²⁵ See Prabhudas Koshy, "Did Jesus and the Apostles Rely on the Corrupt Septuagint?," *The Burning Bush* 10 (2004): 93-5.

²⁶ According to Harding and Shaylor, the Septuagint can be used to correct the Hebrew text "even though we do not currently possess a Hebrew text with that reading" (*God's Word in Our Hands*, 26, 414).

²⁷ The year is calculated not from the time of Saul's birth but his appointment as king. Matthew Poole commented, "[Saul] had now reigned one year, from his first election at Mizpeh, in which time these things were done, which are recorded in chap. xi., xii., to wit, peaceably, or righteously. Compare 2 Sam. ii.10" (*A Commentary on the Holy Bible*, vol 1 [McLean: MacDonald Publishing Company, nd], 542).

²⁸ Williams and Shaylor, *God's Word in Our Hands*, 361, emphasis mine.

²⁹ Hills, *Believing Bible Study*, 37.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

MULTIVERIONS ONLYISM

A Critique of King James Onlyism: A New Sect

Jeffrey Khoo

*King James Onlyism*¹—a new book by James D Price of Temple Baptist Seminary—joins the ranks of fundamentalist books like *From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man* (1999), *One Bible Only?* (2001), and *God's Word in Our Hands* (2003), in attacking the Biblical doctrine of the verbal and plenary preservation (VPP) of the Holy Scriptures, and the faithful, logical identification of the divinely preserved texts to be the Hebrew Masoretic Text and the Greek Textus Receptus on which the King James Version (KJV) is based.²

Price's Multiverions Onlyism book was printed with the help of Rev Yap Beng Shin, a Bible-Presbyterian (BP) minister, who earned his MDiv from Temple Baptist Seminary under Price's tutelage. Rev Yap was one of the 11 signatories of a statement against the VPP of the Holy Scriptures.³ Besides Rev Yap, the other signatories were Rev Philip Heng, Rev Ong Hock Khee, Rev Tan Eng Boo, Rev Charles Seet, Rev Colin Wong, Rev Anthony Tan, Rev Tan Choon Seng, Rev Eric Kwan, Rev Eddy Lim, and Rev Yap Kim Sin. I would assume that Price's book is not only recommended by Rev Yap but also these other BP ministers who stand with him. For those looking for reasons why the KJV ought to be replaced with modern versions, Price's book is better than most.

Price's involvement in the VPP/TR/KJV debate in Singapore went as far back as 2002 when he wrote a critique of my paper, "A Plea for a Perfect Bible."⁴ His critique was circulated among BP churches and members, and grossly misrepresented my position on the VPP of Scriptures by making it purely a translational (English and KJV) issue when it was primarily a textual and doctrinal one (100% inspired and 100% preserved Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek words underlying the faithful and accurate KJV on the basis of the twin doctrines of the VPI and VPP of the Holy Scriptures, Ps 12:6-7, Matt 5:18, 24:35 etc). Price's

critique heightened the confusion among BP members and churches concerning VPP. I wrote a response to Price's review of my paper and clarified what I meant by VPP.⁵ But Price does not seem to care about accurate and truthful reporting for he continues to misrepresent and caricature pro-KJV or KJV-superiority advocates as Ruckmanites and Seventh-Day Adventists (SDA).⁶ He insinuates that Presbyterian and Harvard scholar Edward F Hills, and David Otis Fuller, a founding leader of the International Council of Christian Churches (ICCC), and D A Waite, President of the Dean Burgon Society believe in the inspiration of the English words of the KJV when they are actually talking about the inspiration and preservation of the Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek words on which the KJV is based.⁷ Such slanders did not begin with Price, but with Doug Kutilek who is quoted and praised by Price in his book.⁸ If Hills, Fuller and Waite are Ruckmanites and SDAs for promoting the KJV as the best and only faithful English Bible today, then the Trinitarian Bible Society and the Bible League, which promote and defend the KJV and consider not only the modern versions but also the NKJV to be unreliable, should be implicated too. Price unjustly paints with a broad brush, and by so doing creates confusion and scepticism among the believers.

Anyone reading Price's anti-KJV book would likely lose confidence in the KJV and be filled with doubts over the faithfulness and accuracy of the KJV and its underlying Hebrew and Greek texts. If a Multiversions Only advocate wishes to discourage a KJV user from using the KJV, Price's book might just do the trick. Price spared no effort to show that the KJV is full of mistakes. A young or undiscerning reader might be stumbled and deceived, especially if he does not start with Scripture itself and believe in God's promise of special providence in preserving His inspired Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek words on which the KJV is based, and how the KJV is a faithful and accurate translation of those providentially preserved Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek words.

According to Price, the KJV is only one version among many good and even better versions. To him, the use of the KJV should be a matter of preference and not principle. Price would deem all who affirm the KJV as "the best, most faithful, most accurate, most beautiful translation of the Bible in the English language, and employ it alone as [their] primary scriptural text in the public reading, preaching, and teaching of the English Bible" to be divisive or schismatic (some even say heretical!).⁹

Price ought to be reminded that Truth does divide (eg, John 10:19). For instance, the Biblical doctrine that a man can only be saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, based on Scripture alone, is surely schismatic and divisive. There are no two ways about it. Jesus said, “Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword” (Matt 10:34). This “sword” is a sword of division or separation. Does Price believe this? Does Price who hails from a fundamentalist seminary not teach separation from modernism, ecumenism, charismatism, and neo-evangelicalism? Why is he singing an inclusive, pluralistic, and syncretistic tune by commending and recommending the use of ecumenical, liberal, neo-evangelical, and feminist versions of the Bible which will only compromise and confuse the clear testimony of the Word of God and the Lord Jesus Christ? It must be said that the KJV, being a Reformation Bible, is a separatist Bible. No wonder it is so disliked, even hated, by non- or anti-separatists!

Now, we do not discount the fact that the modern, neo-evangelical and ecumenical versions which are based on the corrupt texts and/or use the dynamic equivalence method may contain enough gospel to convict and convert the sinner (according to God’s election), but this does not make them the “Word of God.” They may contain the Word of God like tracts and commentaries do, but they can hardly be regarded as the very Word of God for they stem from the corrupt text of theological liberals, Westcott and Hort, who denied the historicity of the first three chapters of Genesis, the total inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures, and other fundamental doctrines of the Christian Faith.

Price wants Christians to be uncertain or agnostic about the precise location of God’s Word. He says, “The Bible, like all other things in life, has a measure of uncertainty associated with the identity, the exposition, the interpretation, and the meaning of its text. Sound reason has shown that this uncertainty provides no practical basis for doubting the authenticity or authority of Scripture; instead, reason provides the stepping stone for faith to move beyond uncertainty to full confidence in God’s Word.”¹⁰ In other words, faith must depend on reason (“the stepping stone for faith”) to give it confidence in God’s Word. Such a thinking is unbiblical to say the least. Faith does not rest on human reason at all, but on the Word of God alone (*Sola Scriptura*). Price has placed corrupt and imperfect human reason above the incorruptible and perfect Word of God. He is calling Christians to have faith in human

reason and human methods (eg, textual criticism) for their faith to be sure, for he reasons that reason can give certainty to faith if only we have confidence in it. Price who adopts human reason as a superior, or an equal/additional authority to Scriptures proves the point that reason will only lead to uncertainty, even unbelief. It goes without saying that Price's epistemology is utterly wrongheaded.

Biblical fideism, on the other hand, gives rise to certainty not to be repented of. The Apostle Peter tells us that our faith and knowledge must be based on the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God" (John 6:68-69). The Apostle Paul likewise said, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom 10:17). The Bible is not "like other things in life" as Price would have us believe. The Bible is unique and incomparable; there is nothing like it on earth and God forbid that we should belittle it by making it subservient to human reason and methods, and "other things in life." The Bible is perspicuous and not as "uncertain" as Price thinks. It is unbelief that makes the perspicuous Bible uncertain to man, and may we not be unbelieving (John 8:43-47, Mark 16:14, Luke 24:25, 27).

Price's book rings an uncertain and ungodly sound. It is a mixed bag of truth and error, facts and falsehoods. For example, he states truthfully when he says that Hills, Fuller, Waite and Cloud insist on the Textus Receptus (TR) underlying the KJV as the "providentially preserved authoritative text of Scripture," or what he calls "the autographic text."¹¹ But the next moment he states a falsehood by saying that those men believe "it is the English words that determine the words of the Hebrew and Greek texts, not the Hebrew and Greek words that determine the English."¹² By so twisting the doctrine of VPP, he makes the above men look like they believe in an "inspired KJV," that the English is superior to the Hebrew and the Greek, a position none of them advocate. Having painted TR-only preservationists unfairly with such ugly colours, he then puts his finishing touches to his distorted picture by making them look like Ruckman.¹³ Such a below-the-belt tactic Price had well learned from Kutilek.¹⁴

Price charges the KJV for giving an "uncertain sound" quoting 1 Corinthians 14:8-9, but does not realise that he is guilty of it himself when he insists that there can be no certainty whatsoever as regards the

identification of the Perfect Word of God today. Where are God's infallible and inerrant words today? Well, they are somewhere out there, but nobody can tell for sure precisely where.¹⁵ Without knowing where God's infallible and inerrant words are, how can we live by His every word (Matt 4:4)?

Price is annoyed that preachers should have "to waste time explaining archaic words, phrases, and idioms."¹⁶ Singapore's first chief minister, David Marshall, who had for his English textbook the KJV, would have scorned at Price's puerile criticisms of the KJV. There are only about 200 archaic words in the KJV. These old words comprise only 0.1% of the KJV. The Oxford, Webster, Chambers dictionaries contain entries for most of these archaic words. *The Defined King James Bible* has the meanings of all the archaic words footnoted. They are not that difficult to look up and learn. Moreover, to be educated with the King's English is hardly a waste of time.

Price spurns a One Bible or KJV Only position and advocates a Modern Versions or Multiple Versions Only position. To Price, every version has its positive and negative points, and so "it is wrong to suppose that only one translation is adequate for all purposes."¹⁷ I suppose he would spurn an NIV Only, or NASB Only, or NKJV Only position as well, but he does not say so explicitly, but one thing is obvious, he attacks the KJV more than any other version. According to Price's doctrine of imperfect preservation, every Bible (including the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures) contains mistakes. If there is such a thing as a Perfect Bible, it is only the autographs which no longer exist, or it is in the sea of multiple manuscripts and versions, every one of them different and not the same.¹⁸ As far as Price is concerned, no one should presume to know with absolute certainty where the 100% infallible and inerrant Scripture today is. It may be somewhere out there, but precisely where, no believer can tell; the only one who can even come close to telling would be the textual critic, and even then, he cannot be dogmatic or absolutely sure. There is just no perfect standard to judge anything today. This logic of Price is the same kind of logic that turned once-upon-a-time fundamentalist—Bart Ehrman—into an agnostic.¹⁹ Where is the Bible? The Bible is nowhere, and so is God!

This Anti-KJV book of Price would be excellent for those seeking to (1) oppose the Reformed Faith, the Reformation Text, and the VPP of Scripture; (2) discourage the use of the faithful and accurate, time-tested

and time-honoured KJV; and (3) push for modern versions to replace the KJV in the church. Any anti-VPP church which embraces the anti-KJV views of Price, and sees the use of the KJV as only a matter of preference and not principle, will ultimately give up the KJV to embrace the modern versions which are based on corrupted texts. May true and faithful Protestant, Reformation, and Fundamental believers and churches beware!

Notes

¹ James D Price, *King James Onlyism: A New Sect* (No place: No publisher, 2006), i-xii, 1-658.

² For reviews/critiques, see my papers, “Bob Jones University and the KJV: A Critique of From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man,” *The Burning Bush* 7 (2001): 1-34; “The Emergence of Neo-Fundamentalism: One Bible Only? or ‘Yea Hath God Said?’,” *The Burning Bush* 10 (2004): 2-47; and “A Critique of God’s Word in Our Hands: The Bible Preserved for Us,” *The Burning Bush* 11 (2005): 20-34.

³ See “A Statement on the Theory of Verbal Plenary Preservation (VPP)” Life Bible-Presbyterian Weekly, September 25, 2005.

⁴ Jeffrey Khoo, “A Plea for a Perfect Bible,” *The Burning Bush* 9 (2003): 1-15.

⁵ “My Reply to James D Price’s Review of ‘A Plea for a Perfect Bible’” can be read from the Dean Burgon Society website at <http://www.deanburgonsociety.org/Preservation/price.htm>.

⁶ Price, *King James Onlyism*, 4, 209, 420.

⁷ Ibid, 17-18, 131-132.

⁸ Ibid, 7.

⁹ Ibid, 421

¹⁰ Ibid, 415.

¹¹ Ibid, 16.

¹² Ibid, 17.

¹³ Ibid, 17, 420.

¹⁴ “Doug Kutilek, “The Background and Origin of the Version Debate,” in *One Bible Only?* ed Roy E Beacham and Kevin T Bauder (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2001), 27-56.

¹⁵ Price, *King James Onlyism*, 395-416.

¹⁶ Ibid, 421.

¹⁷ Ibid, 312.

¹⁸ Ibid, 128.

¹⁹ Bart D Ehrman, *Misquoting Jesus: The Story Behind Who Changed the Bible and Why* (New York: HarperCollins, 2005), 11-12.

PRESERVATION OF THE BIBLE: PROVIDENTIAL OR MIRACULOUS?

A Response to Jon Rehurek of The Master's Seminary

Paul Ferguson

Introduction

In Spring 2008, *The Master's Seminary Journal* published by The Master's Seminary in California contained an article titled "Preservation of the Bible: Providential or Miraculous? The Biblical View" by Jon Rehurek.¹ In this article, Rehurek rejects any Biblical doctrine of perfect preservation of the Words of God and concludes that

an examination of exegetical evidence from commonly cited biblical texts supports only a general promise of preserving the truth of God's message to mankind, not a particular version of the Bible. Many verses—including some related to immutability, infallibility, and preservation—have been incorrectly interpreted and applied to preservation. The preservation of God's revelation is the lesson in many of the passages, but no explicit indication applies them directly to written Scripture or to how and when a promise of general preservation would be fulfilled. Since historical evidence demonstrates that scribal errors exist in every extant manuscript, the conclusion to be drawn is that the Bible has been providentially preserved by means of secondary causation through the plethora of available manuscripts and not through miraculous preservation of particular manuscripts and versions. God Himself is faithful and true and His Word reflects His character; His decrees are absolutely immutable and infallible. Although the Scriptures themselves strongly assert that truths contained in it are firmly established and will endure forever, the case for providential preservation must rest upon theological grounds through the historical (i.e., canonicity) and manuscript evidence (i.e., textual criticism) rather than upon exegetical grounds.²

Jon Rehurek's conclusions are wrong on both exegetical and historical grounds. The truth is that every believer, using either Biblical or philosophical presuppositions, is led to some conclusion as to the content of

the original autographs. The Scriptures do not simply promise the preservation of God's "truth" or "message" but the Words. The Church has historically held fast to these promises concerning the Words of God; not only in respect of divine inspiration, but also in regard to perfect providential preservation throughout the ages. However, since the Enlightenment, Protestantism has granted science increasingly independent authority and has surrendered the Bible's authority whenever any supposed conflict arose between the two. The Enlightenment brought the age of the "sovereignty of reason" which attempted to verify everything in Scripture by modern critical methods of historical research. Just as in the case of creationism, until the eighteenth century the Church held to the historic doctrine of the perfect inspiration and preservation of the Words of God in all ages.

The *zeitgeist* of our contemporary apostate age now demands a "new and improved" version of everything including the Scriptures. Our places of worship have dropped the name "Church," reduced worship to entertainment, and promoted effeminate "preacher gurus" in Hawaiian shirts to share the latest psychological fad. We have also now a marked subservience to scientism as the dominant cultural standard. Did the Church make such a gross error in over 500 years of interpretation? What has primarily changed since the Reformation is the way man defines and uses science. Modern scientific opinion has been elevated to the status of general revelation giving it an absolute *a priori* veto over how we interpret Scripture. So much for singing, "Immortal, invisible, God only wise!" Textual criticism is built on the intolerant foundation of prejudice against the promises of Scripture. Modern man always seeks out a way of removing His Creator from the source of truth, as autonomous man aspires to fill the vacancy.

Jon Rehurek's facile position is not the historic position of believers and the Reformation and his objections are mere hand-waving. Critical Text (CT) advocates, such as Rehurek, have no ultimate and certain standard for determining objective truth. Without the Biblical doctrine of perfect providential preservation, we are left with non-answers in these areas. This is not a minor shift but one of seismic proportions. Fortunately, most CT advocates of the past were better believers than theologians and have been able to live with the inherent contradiction of their system by simply declaring the gospel from the *Textus Receptus* (TR). They were incapable of following their own premises out to the end of the road they were on. This has now been challenged by the belligerent approach of the new breed of CT

adherents and proliferation of translations and the latest edition of their evolutionary Greek Text.

Rehurek's error is sadly perpetuated by contemporary fundamentalist teachers and writers, many of whom have obtained their graduate degrees at neo-evangelical seminaries. These men might preach great sermons on preservation but ultimately have no way of ever coming up with a real text! Some prize examples of semantic gymnastics can be found in the statements of modern fundamentalism. Speaking of God and the preservation of Scripture, Central Baptist Theological Seminary President, Kevin Bauder, tries to argue the Lord is indifferent as to His Words as Bauder claims, "He might preserve some words and He might permit some to be lost, depending upon His own purpose."³ Bob Jones University (BJU) professor, Stewart Custer, speaking at Marquette Manor Baptist Church in Chicago in 1984 said that God preserved His Word buried, "in the sands of Egypt."⁴ Larry Oats of Maranatha Baptist College in Wisconsin, an institution that formerly argued for the fact of the preserved Word of God in the King James Version, claims, "God could have preserved His Word but history proves He did not."⁵ William Combs of the fundamentalist Detroit Baptist Seminary boldly asserts, "The Bible does not teach its own perfect preservation, and it is a serious error to claim otherwise."⁶

The CT position is a fallacy as it claims to reach conclusions that conform to the Bible, which are not derived from the Bible. It is true that some CT advocates talk about "preservation" but only by investing in their exegesis of preservation passages such as Matthew 5:18 entirely new meanings. In effect, they act like Humpty-Dumpty who retorted scornfully to Alice's ignorance of his meaning, "When I use a word, it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less."⁷ Their position is not some imaginative or honest attempt to follow the truth where it leads, but radical interpretations of biblical texts based on Enlightenment premises. These fundamentalist and evangelical "scholars" need correcting for when theologically educated men make absurd statements they are no less absurd than when the lay person makes them. We reject their arguments because they are fundamentally illogical, and believers should not utilise unsound arguments nor appeal to unbelievers to place their confidence in them. True fundamentalists, especially those of the Reformed faith, will not surrender our historic faith for the gods of Enlightenment thinking just to be seen as acceptable by "progressive evangelicals." The objections to the doctrine of perfect preservation are rooted in philosophical pre-commitments and not

exegetical concerns. Like Ezra we will prepare our hearts “to seek the law of the LORD, and to do it” (Ezra 7:10) whatever the cost.

The Bible and Preservation

Reformed Theologians have always regarded Reformed doctrines such as the Sovereignty of God as the most consistent expression of Biblical Theology. As such, the starting point is that the Bible is the propositional revelation of God and hence it alone can be the ultimate test for truth and knowledge. As Cornelius Van Til argues, “It is the genius of Protestantism to make the God of the Scriptures the final reference in all predication.”⁸ Believers are mandated to presuppose the Scriptures in all of their thinking and practice as the ultimate criterion of truth, whereas unbelievers resist this obligation in every aspect of thought and life. To stand for perfect preservation is arrogantly dismissed and those who still hold to it are subject to ridicule as adopting the Bible’s faith-view in order to escape from the “fact” that textual criticism has shown that God did not preserve all of His Words and make them available in every generation.

CT advocates will ridicule anyone who exalts the authority of the written Word over the authority of liberal “scholarship.” Many adopt the methodology of the evolutionists who figured that the best way to insulate their doctrines from scrutiny is to prevent a debate from ever beginning in the first place by ridiculing their opponents as “fideistic” and demanding that “religious presuppositional” views must not mix with “science.” These critics are removing the “ancient landmarks” concerning preservation and replacing them with a rationalistic system of logic. Although they cry “fideistic presupposition” at us, we may point out that they are presupposing that God has not done what He promised to do with their unbiblical and revisionist logic. Despite disclaimers, they have not abandoned faith in their approach, just switched supreme norms. However, our faith is not blind or irrational as it is conformed to the highest norms of thought in Scripture. CT advocates have replaced faith in God with that in man through supposedly neutral, scholarly, and scientific means to restore as closely as possible what the original text of the Bible was. It is ironic that one side of the debate is unfairly accused of engaging in fideism, when the reality is that both sides are working from presuppositions in their differing supreme norms. Despite their bombastic approach, CT advocates are like the rhetorician in the story who wrote in the margin of his notes, “Argument weak. Shout here.”

CT advocates inconsistently look presuppositionally to the Church for authority in receiving the Canon, and establishing the Creedal and Confessional basis of our faith but now reject it for the canonised words. This seems to be a curious way of proceeding. CT advocates need to logically explain why the Epistle of Barnabas, a treatise against a Jewish interpretation of the Law, which dates from the late first or early second century is included in the New Testament canon of the fourth century manuscript Codex Sinaiticus. Did God lead His people to recognise the Words here but not the Canon? Ultimately, we could never have even begun to argue from Scripture had not the Church received it and handed it down to us. Indeed, if we had been given a different canon or a tampered translation we would not know the difference. We would simply argue from that which we were given. Douglas Wilson illustrates the inconsistency,

Unbelieving criticism says that words, verses, pericopes, and books are all up for grabs. To grant this legitimacy with the first three, while drawing the line to keep 66 inspired books, is like being a little bit pregnant. 2 John has 301 words while the last twelve verses of Mark have 260. At what word count does the authority of scripture become illegitimate?⁹

Cornelius Van Til rejects such casuistry by making clear, “We cannot choose epistemologies [theories of knowledge] as we choose hats ... [as if] a matter of taste.”¹⁰ David Norris also observes, “To profess verbal inspiration and at the same time to subject the Scripture texts to rationalistic critical methodology is to live in a crazed schizoid world, denying on the one hand what is confessed on the other.”¹¹ By rejecting the Biblical presuppositional approach to the text, CT advocates reinterpret preservation promises in light of textual criticism. This invariably opens the door to all forms of pernicious Biblical Criticism, which can be witnessed in the lives of men like Bart Ehrman who correctly observed that once you adopt naturalistic premises it is wholly consistent not to let it guide you on other doctrines such as inspiration, inerrancy etc. After all, if it is irrational to believe that God preserved all His Words, it is equally irrational to believe He inspired them.

Samuel Schnaiter of BJU critiques Wilbur Pickering’s Majority Text position by making the deeply disturbing critical observation, “Finally, although Pickering has avoided an excessive reliance on theological presuppositions in his presentation, it is nevertheless clear that a theological presupposition essentially undergirds his entire purpose.”¹² According to Schnaiter’s fulminations it is acceptable and even necessary to have theological presuppositions about the resurrection, but it is unacceptable to

hold theological presuppositions about the historical sources that the belief in the resurrection is based upon. Anti-preservationist Daniel Wallace of Dallas Theological Seminary concurs, “A theological *a priori* has no place in textual criticism.”¹³ Interestingly, Bishop Westcott also rejected such an approach to studying the text, as he wrote to Hort,

I hardly feel with you on this question of discussing anything doctrinally or on doctrine. This seems to me to be wholly out of our province. We have only to determine what is written and how it can be rendered. Theologians may deal with the text and version afterwards.¹⁴

Leading contemporary textual critic, Bart Ehrman, concludes,

The fact that Warfield and Burgon both affirmed a doctrine of general preservation, and yet held antithetical views of how the text was preserved suggests that the doctrine is inappropriately used in support of any particular view of the text’s transmission history. Instead such affirmations can only be made subsequent to the assessment of the evidence for the progress of the history of transmission. The evidence must lead to the doctrine, not vice versa—else the doctrine will simply be adduced to support a certain set of historical conclusions.¹⁵

Such a statement shows the depth of rationalistic and unbiblical thought that is now prevalent in modern fundamentalism. For an experienced Seminary Professor like Schnaiter to implicitly reject both the existence and need of a Biblical presupposition concerning a Biblical doctrine is frankly astounding. Like the Deists, this view is premised on the belief that nature is the only light needed by man in his search for God and His truth. The same failure to renounce the intellectual autonomy of man outside the revealed promises of God was at the centre of man’s fall into sin. The Scriptures explicitly warn that man as a finite creature is forbidden to test God’s Word (Deut 6:16; Luke 4:12). Nowhere in Scripture does God separate so-called “spiritual” truths from “secular” ones. By contrast, it is emphasised that “all wisdom and knowledge” is found in the revelation of Christ, who is God in the flesh (Col 2:3). The Psalmist makes it clear, “In thy light shall we see light” (Ps 36:9). Unbiblical presuppositions will therefore “oppose themselves” (2 Tim 2:25) as their fundamental beliefs will fail to properly integrate because of inherent contradictions.

This uncertain “certainty” position of modern evangelicalism and fundamentalism is in marked contrast to what the Lord spoke through Solomon about the inspired Words (Prov 22:20-21). All of our doctrines must be from the Bible (2 Tim 3:16) as it is self-attesting (1 Cor 14:29, 32,

37; Matt 18:19). How we view our world is not how God views it and believers are mandated to think God's thoughts after Him (Isa 55:9), which requires a scriptural presuppositional approach to the textual problems. A believer must study to show himself "approved unto God" (2 Tim 2:15). As Cornelius Van Til puts it, "The Bible is thought of as authoritative on everything of which it speaks. And it speaks of everything."¹⁶ We are to receive these promises by faith (Heb 11:13; Matt 13:23; Rom 1:17).

Biblical Presuppositions to Determine the True Text

(1) God revealed the Scriptures so men could know His will both in the Old and New Testaments and in the future (Deut 31:9-13, 24-29; 1 John 1:1-4, 2:1-17; 2 Tim 3:14-17; 2 Pet 1:12-15). Certainly the Bible makes clear that no Scripture was intended for only the original recipient (Rom 15:4, 16:25-26; 1 Cor 10:11). God intended for those writings to be recognised and received by the Church as a whole (e.g., Col 4:16; Rev 1:4). These Words were to be guarded (1 Tim 6:20-21) as a "form (pattern) of sound words" for the church (2 Tim 1:13-14) and to be used to instruct the future Church (2 Tim 2:2).

(2) The Bible promises that God will preserve every one of His Words forever down to the very jot and tittle of the smallest letter (Pss 12:6-7, 33:11, 119:152, 160; Isa 30:8, 40:8; 1 Pet 1:23-25; Matt 5:18, 24:35).

(3) The Bible assures us that God's Words are perfect and pure (Ps 12:6-7; Prov 30:5).

(4) The Bible promises that God would make His Words generally available to every generation of believers (Deut 30:11-14; Isa 34:16, 59:21; Matt 4:4; 2 Pet 3:2; Jude 1:17). (This is general availability, not necessarily to every person on the planet.) Certainly, we are told that for around two millennia in history only one small nation had the true and pure Words of God, "He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation; and as for his judgments, they have not known them. Praise ye the LORD" (Ps 147:19, 20 cf. Rom 2:14).

(5) The Bible promises there will be certainty as to the Words of God (2 Pet 1:19; Luke 1:4; Prov 1:23, 22:20-21; Dan 12:9-10; 1 John 2:20).

(6) The Bible promises that God would lead His saints into all truth, that the Word, all of His Words, are truth (John 16:13, 17:8, 17).

(7) God states that the Bible will be settled to the extent that someone could not add or take away from His Words (Rev 22:18-19; Deut 12:32).

Preservation of the Bible: Providential or Miraculous?

Indeed, the Apostle Peter in 2 Peter 3:2 warned the saints of his day to be mindful of the “Words” of the Old Testament writings (v2a) and the New Testament writings (v2b), which would be absurd if some of these Words had been corrupted or lost.

(8) The Bible shows that the true Church of Christ would receive these Words (Matt 28:19-20; John 17:8; Acts 8:14, 11:1, 17:11; 1 Thess 2:13; 1 Cor 15:3).

(9) The Bible implies that believers would receive these Words from other believers (Deut 17:18; 1 Kgs 2:3; Prov 25:1; Acts 7:38; Heb 7:11; 1 Thess 1:6; Phil 4:9).

(10) The Bible shows that Bible promises may appear to contradict science and reason. In Genesis 2 we see that a newly created world may look ancient. However, the Scriptures remind us that “It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man” (Ps 118:8).

(11) Christ implied the preservation of His very Words as a Standard of future judgment (John 12:48). He also warned of the vanity of ignoring His actual Words (Matt 7:26). Christ emphatically declared, “the scripture cannot be broken” (John 10:35). In Matthew 22:29 Jesus rebuked, “Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures.” If the Scriptures were only accessible in the Originals then why would He chide them for being ignorant of Words that were not available? Believers are commanded to contend for the faith (Jude 3) and this faith is based upon the Words of God (Rom 10:17). Note that concerning the end-times, the Lord Jesus warned, “Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18:8 cf. Amos 8:11; Lam 2:9).

Here are other Bible evidences that guide us:

(1) God also has established Biblical precedents which show that He keeps and protects His Words. For instance, when Moses broke the original copy of the tables of God, they were replaced very soon afterwards and not hundreds of years later and Scripture makes the point that these second tablets were written “the words that were in the first tables” (Deut 10:2). In the book of Jeremiah, God responded to the burning of His inspired Words by preparing Baruch to record in it “all the former words that were in the first roll” (Jer 36:28).

(2) Jesus preached from the existing scrolls and we are explicitly told they were “scripture” (Luke 4:21). Jesus also explicitly said the “Scripture” that they were reading was “spoken unto you by God” (Matt 22:31 cf. Mark

12:24-26). Indeed, Christ said to His audience that when they read the Scripture they would see that which was written by Daniel the prophet himself (Matt 24:15; Mark 13:14). Other New Testament passages argue from the Old Testament text based on a phrase (as in Acts 15:13-17), a word (Matt 22:32), or even the difference between the singular and plural form of a word (as in Gal 3:16).

(3) The Bible warns that there would be those who would “corrupt the word of God” (2 Cor 2:17; Jer 23:29) and handle it “deceitfully” (2 Cor 4:2). The Apostle Paul warns of those who “changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator” as heading towards apostasy (Rom 1:25). There would arise false gospels with false epistles (2 Thess 2:2). Jesus taught us that if a tree is corrupt, the fruit will be corrupt (Matt 7:17). False prophets and false teachers corrupt the Scriptures (2 Pet 2:1-3). We must understand that there will always be a line of perversion as there will be of preservation. We are mandated to verify this fruit based upon the premise that if a man’s doctrinal belief is in error invariably he will do the same to the Scriptures (2 Cor 2:17). “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge” (Prov 1:7); so all knowledge of the Words of God is rooted in God.

(4) God utilised fallible but Spirit-filled human writers to pen His divinely inspired Words of Scripture (2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:21). A fallible but Spirit-filled John the Baptist could point infallibly to Christ. As much as a fallible but Spirit-filled Church can recognise and receive the infallible Canon, so can she also recognise and receive the infallible Words of this Canon (John 10:27). Canonicity was recognised by the true Church (not Rome) and the corollary of this must be that the Canonised Words must be recognised by the true and faithful Church and not Rome’s texts or apostate textual critics such as Westcott, Hort, Aland, Metzger et al.

(5) The Church at Antioch has a noteworthy position in Scriptures in contrast to Alexandria. Antioch is the first place where the born-again believer is called a Christian (Acts 11:26). It is also interesting to see that where both Antioch and Alexandria are mentioned in the same passage, Antioch is listed as a place of service, while Alexandria is listed as a place of disruption (Acts 6:5-10). Egypt is for the most part associated with ungodliness in the Bible (Isa 19:14, 30:1-3; Acts 7:39; Rev 11:8). Most of the New Testament books were written originally to cities in the Byzantine Text area and none written to Alexandria. However, it was precisely in Alexandria that corrupters of the true text dominated.

Kent Brandenburg summarises from these presuppositions,

We know that God uses mathematical probability to bring certainty in the way of fulfilled prophecies. He makes predictions and they all come to pass like He said. The one hundred percent fulfillment is evidence. This relates to evidence for verbal, plenary preservation of Scripture in two ways. First, every believer is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. What believers agree are God's Words are not just men's opinions but the Spirit bearing witness, testifying to truth. A four to five hundred year agreement on the *textus receptus* and Hebrew Masoretic stands as evidence based on Scriptural presuppositions. Do we really think that we can say that all those believers for all those years were wrong? In this one area, Scripture, they were all deceived? And yet, at the end of that period of time, unbelieving textual critics were actually enlightened?

Second, the promises of preservation are like the prophecies that God fulfilled. Are we going to say that God fulfilled all of the prophecies, including the detailed dozens in Daniel and the amazing many in Isaiah, but He didn't fulfill His promises to protect His Word unto perfection? The fulfillment of prophecy says that God keeps His promises. The power of their fulfillment extends to the trust in God's promises of perfect preservation and availability of all His Words. One hundred textual critics, mostly unbelieving, can't be trusted with a holy book written by a holy God.¹⁷

Westcott and Hort

The Bible's whole existence is due to the unique event that it is entirely inspired by God (2 Tim 3:16). From the first inscripturation we are confronted immediately with the reality and involvement of the supernatural, as well as its absolute authority. Therefore, those who reject the Bible on its own premised overview will invariably treat it as any other ancient book. Its uniqueness resides in the fact that while humans have been the vehicle of its production, it never ceases to be the Word of God, communicated by Him, developed, transmitted and preserved by Him. The question then is who or what is the vehicle of agency that God providentially leads to receive these Canonised Words. As Douglas Wilson argued in his debate with CT advocate James White,

Given human agency, either the Church authoritatively recognizes the text, or some other entity does, or there is no text. We both accept the Bible as the self-authenticating Word of God—therefore we agree there are canonical books (along with canonical contents). That leaves us with the first two options in our recognition of this canon. I am maintaining that the Church has the responsibility to recognize that canon through her discipline (e.g., defrocking a minister who claims that Romans is spurious). Now if you deny that the

Church has this authority, it means that you must grant it to some other entity. What is that entity?...the science of autonomous textual criticism, far from establishing verity, has only managed to establish thousands of variations and increase a generally destructive confusion about the text of Scripture.¹⁸

God does not preserve Scripture using men and methods rooted in a denial of what He has said. A textual position that is predicated on the theories and conjectural emendations of men of the character of Westcott and Hort must be rejected. Apostate textual critics should be accorded no higher authority than evolutionary biologists discussing Genesis or existential French philosophers on ethics—with a barrel of salt! To take a position that an unregenerate man can reason correctly and cogently independent of Scriptures as determination of God's Words invariably sets man up as the ultimate epistemological authority over what is true. However, having ethically separated himself from the only source of knowledge, a text-critical unbeliever seeks to suppress truth in order to interpret everything without reference to God (Rom 1). Indeed, many false and pagan worldviews have emerged from false conclusions about God from general revelation. We cannot turn to unbelievers for truth about Scripture as each has differing and contradictory ideas. This is why the Divines in the Westminster Confession did not put the doctrine of God in their first chapter as they had to first establish the source of knowledge.

It is also clear that a Christian cannot divorce the spiritual nature of the battle from the battle itself. An unbeliever is not neutral as to textual facts and interpreting them (Matt 12:30; John 3:19). We are warned to avoid “walking in the counsel of the ungodly, standing in the way of sinners, sitting in the seat of the scornful” (Ps 1:1). Robert L Thomas argues,

Sin has distorted man's ability to receive truth. If the vessel for receiving truth has a depraved mind, whatever it does by way of processing and reproducing that truth will be lacking. It may lack more in some instances than in others, but a blinding by sin will always exist.¹⁹

All truth does not possess the same authority, as the only absolutely certain truth is that of inspired revelation. General revelation must always be subordinate to special revelation. God's Word must be the final arbiter in all truth claims. Milton Terry warns of the attempt to undermine this doctrine,

Others have attempted various methods of “reconciling” science and the Bible, and these have generally acted on the supposition that the results of scientific discovery necessitate a new interpretation of the Scripture records, or call for new principles of interpretation. The new discoveries, they say, do not conflict

with the ancient revelation; they only conflict with the old interpretation of the revelation. We must change our hermeneutical methods, and adapt them to the revelations of science. How for the thousandth time have we heard the story of Galileo and the Inquisition.²⁰

He continues,

Hasty natures, however, indulging in pride of intellect, or given to following the dictum of honoured masters, may fall into grievous error in either of two ways: They may shut their eyes to facts, and hold to a delusion in spite of evidence; or they may become the obsequious victims of “science falsely so called.” That certainly is a false science which is built upon inferences, assumptions, and theories, and yet presumes to dogmatize as if its hypotheses were facts. And that is a system of hermeneutics equally false and misleading which is so flexible, under the pressure of new discoveries as to yield to the putting of any number of new meanings upon an old and common word.²¹

Cornelius Van Til provides an insightful illustration that delineates how foolish it is to turn to unbelievers to determine the Words of God by rationalistic methods,

The intellect of fallen man may, as such, be keen enough. It may be compared to a buzz-saw that is sharp and shining, ready to cut the boards that come to it. Let us say that a carpenter wishes to cut fifty boards for the purpose of laying the floor of a house. He has marked his boards. He has set his saw. He begins at one end of the mark on the boards. But he does not know that his seven year old son has tampered with the saw and changed its set. The result is that every board he saws is cut slantwise and thus unusable because it is too short except at the point where the saw first made its contact with the wood. So also whenever the teachings of Christianity are presented to the natural man they will be cut according to the set of sinful human personality. The result is they may have formal understanding of the truth, mere cognition but no true knowledge of God.²²

Sad to say many fundamentalists do not agree. Mark Minnick of BJU argues in the book *From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man*,

a textual critic may be an unbeliever when it comes to the Bible’s doctrinal truths. But when it comes to the Bible’s text—to this question of the Bible’s words—a textual critic is initially little more than a reporter.... Following this initial reporting, a textual critic becomes an interpreter of this data.²³

This is not the historic position of Bible-believing saints. Autonomous theories of knowledge are riddled with problems. Apart from the revelation of God in nature and in His Word, man is unable to rightly interpret reality. We must always start with God in all our thinking or we will become fools in

attempting to rationally justify any knowledge claims, especially on spiritual issues. As Paul warned Timothy, the approach must be presuppositional in respect of the Word of God, “keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane *and* vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called” (1 Tim 6:20). Minnick’s theory is simply a Kantian “wall of antinomy” between the phenomenal and noumenal world of epistemology, which ultimately led Kant to a logically fallacious and self-refuting scepticism. Van Til points out, “even to say that there are some facts that can be known without reference to God, is already the very opposite of the Christian position.”²⁴ He goes on to make a pertinent observation to those advocating “neutral textual criticism,”

Hence the difference between the prevalent method of science and the method of Christianity is not that the former is interested in finding the facts and is ready to follow the facts wherever they may lead, while the latter is not ready to follow the facts. The difference is rather that the former wants to study the facts *without God*, while the latter wants to study the facts in the light of the revelation God gives of himself in Christ. Thus the antithesis is once more that between those for whom the final center of reference in knowledge lies in man, and those for whom the final center of reference for knowledge lies in God, as this God speaks in Scripture.²⁵

A typical historic view is that of Joseph Philpot, Fellow of Worcester College, Oxford, and editor of *The Gospel Standard* who in 1857 argued against a revision of KJV because the Biblical scholars of that day were “notoriously either tainted with popery or infidelity.”²⁶

Reformers and Preservation

Martin Luther sparked the Reformation on three pillars: faith, grace and Scripture. The final pillar of *Sola Scriptura* predicated the Bible as the only objective Protestant source of all authority available and was to be regarded as God’s last Words to mankind. It effectively dethroned the pope and enthroned the Bible. The Reformers were cognisant that the reason for the darkness of the Medieval Period was a result of the Roman Church losing sight of the true text in the original languages. They were also equally clear that the dissemination of the Received Text through the printed editions had sparked the Reformation and not the rise of nationalism, corruption in the Roman Church, or even the Renaissance. Since the autographs were not available, the Reformers knew that we must have a reliable tradition or bridge of some sort which connects us to the original autographs. This bridge must be undergirded with faith in a God who controls the flow of all

historical events through the true Church and not apostate autonomous textual critics. The Reformers looked to ecclesiastical consensus in textual issues in the same manner they had in Canonical, Trinitarian and Christological issues.

The leading Reformers rejected Rome's tradition and its corrupted texts, and held fast to the Received Text readings, which they knew evoked the wrath of Satan and had triggered the great Protestant Reformation during which tens of thousands of true believers perished by flame, famine and torture. Rome had used a handful of copies in which numerous variants existed in an attempt to refute the principle of *Sola Scriptura*. The Reformers were well aware of the corruptions of the texts of Alexandria and regarded the variant readings in the minority texts as either intentional or inadvertent corruptions. The seventeenth century Confessions focused in on the doctrine of special providential preservation, such as the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Helvetica Consensus Formula, as a direct response to the attack of the Council of Trent on the Received Text. The Council of Trent solemnly affirmed in the following words,

Moreover the same Sacred and holy Synod, considering that no small utility may accrue to the Church of God, if it be made known which out of all the Latin editions now in circulation of the Sacred Books is to be held as authentic, ordains and declares that the said old and Vulgate edition, which by the lengthened usage of so many ages has been approved of in the Church.²⁷

The Reformers asserted the counterpoint to the Vulgate that the Received Text was the "authentic" text; as the locus of Biblical authority was the apographs not the Church. Their view was not derived from the supposedly neutral science of textual criticism but in their presuppositional faith in the promises that God had preserved His Words for them. They knew that an inspired Bible that no one could see was no use to them, for as Calvin said on his commentary of 2 Peter 1:19 that, "without the Word, there is nothing left but darkness." Textual critics, Woodbridge and Balmer admit, "It is true that in the seventeenth century a good number of Christians esteemed the Bibles they had in their hands as infallible."²⁸ The liberal historian, McCabe, accepted that the Reformers had no time for rationalistic textual principles,

The reformers, indeed, extended little patronage to the exercise of reason in religious matters; they denounced it and its fruit, philosophical speculation, as an evil not to be tolerated; and Luther went so far as to assert (even to the

disgust of the Church of Rome) that a proposition may be true in theology and false in philosophy.²⁹

As we search the Reformation writings this fact becomes quickly apparent. Samuel Tregelles notes,

Beza's text was during his life in very general use among Protestants; they seemed to feel that enough had been done to establish it, and they relied on it as giving them a firm basis.... After the appearance of the texts of Stephanus and Beza, many Protestants ceased from all inquiry into the authorities on which the text of the New Testament in their hands was based.³⁰

Even the Anabaptist leader, Balthasar Hubmaier, took this position and wrote in 1526,

Thou knowest, Zwingli, that the Holy Scripture is such a complete, compacted, true, infallible, eternally immortal speech, that the least letter or tittle cannot pass away in this book.³¹

So strongly did the Reformers and their heirs fall back on the TR that textual critics such as Richard Bentley in 1716 derided it as "the Protestant Pope Stephens," but admitted that "Stephens' edition, set out and regulated by himself alone, is now become the standard. The text stands, as if an Apostle was his compositor."³²

Although the Reformers were accused of "bibliolatry" it was not the Bible they worshipped but the Author of it who has chosen to reveal Himself empirically in His written Word. Despite the revisionist argument that Calvin and Beza had no other option but to use the Received Text, the facts are that they did have alternative options but deliberately rejected them. They may not have had the quantity of evidence, but they were aware of the diversity of the variant readings thrown up by the textual critics today. Instead, they chose the path of Sacred Criticism which simply studied the texts to see what was received by the Church through history rather than the rationalistic "restoration" of the text by Enlightenment Criticism. They recognised that copies and editions differed because of variants, but trusted the Holy Spirit and the common faith of God's people. Beza made it clear, "that he was very unwilling to amend the basic text and was interested largely in readings which confirmed it."³³ One Reformed critic of the TR, Greg Bahnsen admits,

Some Protestants have argued for the inspired infallibility of the vowel points in the Hebrew Old Testament (e.g., the Buxtorfs and John Owen; the Formula Consensus Helvetica more cautiously spoke of the inspiration of "at least the power of the points"). The errorless transmission and preservation of the

original text of Scripture has been taught by men such as Hollaz, Quenstedt, and Turretin.³⁴

Challenge of the Vulgate

Cognisant of the role the Received Text had in damaging the Romanist cause and giving authority to the Protestant cause, the Council of Trent (1545-1563) declared Erasmus a Pelagian heretic, rejected his New Testament, and edicted that only Jerome's Latin Vulgate was the authentic Bible.³⁵ Trent's argument was that the Scriptures are corrupted at the fount and we need an infallible Church to determine the Word of God, as one can never be sure of the true text of Scripture. The Reformers posited a rejoinder by maintaining that the Scriptures guide the Church, as we have, by God's providence, the uncorrupted fount, "by His singular care and providence kept pure in all ages." Ironically, now many fundamental Protestants are positing that Rome was right when it sought to undermine our doctrine of *Sola Scriptura* on the basis of the variants they showed in their manuscripts. They argue that notwithstanding Rome's other errors in theology, they were right about the Scriptures, and the post-Reformation dogmatists were wrong.

To try and influence the English people back to Rome, the Jesuits prepared an English New Testament translation in 1582 based upon the Vulgate which was immediately sent to England, and secretly distributed through the country. As one historian observed, "The English Papists in the seminary at Rheims perceiving that they could no longer blindfold the laity from the scriptures, resolved to fit them with false spectacles; and set forth the Rhemish translation in opposition to the Protestant versions."³⁶ The preface to this Rheims translation expressly states its purpose,

It is almost three hundred years since James Archbishop of Genoa, is said to have translated the Bible into Italian. More than two hundred years ago, in the days of Charles V the French king, was it put forth faithfully in French, the sooner to shake out of the deceived people's hands, the false heretical translations of a sect called Waldenses.³⁷

Catholic priest, Paolo Sarpi (1552-1623), in his *History of the Council of Trent* recalls,

On the contrary, the major part of the Divines said, that it had been necessary to account that translation, which formerly hath been read in all the churches [Latin Vulgate], and used in the schools, to be divine and authentical, otherwise they should yield the cause to the Lutherans, and open a gate to innumerable heresies ... The Inquisitors will not be able to proceed against the

Lutherans, in case they know not Hebrew and Greek, because they will suddenly answer, “the text is not so,” and “that translation is false.”³⁸

Queen Elizabeth (1533-1603) was so concerned of the threat to English unity by the Jesuit Rhemist Bible that she sent to Beza for assistance to refute this perversion of the Received Text. It is recorded that he told her, “that one of her Majesty’s own subjects was far better qualified to defend the Protestant cause against the Rhemists; and this person, he said, was Thomas Cartwright.”³⁹ It was said of Thomas Cartwright (c. 1535-1603), that he regarded the Vulgate as, “the Version adapted by the Rhemists . . . that all the soap and nitre they could collect would be insufficient to cleanse the Vulgate from the filth of blood in which it was originally conceived and had since collected in passing so long through the hands of unlearned monks, from which the Greek copies had altogether escaped.”⁴⁰ Brook records that,

Mr. Cartwright defended the holy Scriptures against the accusation of corruption, and maintained that the Old and New Testaments written in the original languages were preserved uncorrupted. They constituted the word of God, whose works are all perfect, then must his word continue unimpaired; and, since it was written for our instruction, admonition, and consolation, he concluded that, unless God was deceived and disappointed in his purpose, it must perform these friendly offices for the church of God to the end of the world. If the authority of the authentic copies in Hebrew, Chaldee, and Greek were lost, or given up, or corrupted, or the sense changed, there would be no high court of appeal to put an end to disputes; so that the exhortation to have recourse to the law, the prophets, and the New Testament would be of very little effect. In this case our state would be worse than theirs under the law, and in the time of Christ; yea than those who lived some hundred years after Christ, when the ancient fathers exhorted the people to try all controversies by the Scriptures. Their own Gratian directs us, in deciding differences, not to the old translation, but to the originals of the Hebrew in the Old Testament, and of the Greek in the New.⁴¹

Thomas Cartwright observed this about preservation,

Woe unto the churches, if the Scriptures, the charters and records of heaven be destroyed, falsified, or corrupted. These divine charters were safely kept in one nation of the Jews; and though they were sometimes unfaithful, yet they kept the keys of the Lord’s library: but now, when many nations have the keys, it is altogether incredible that any such corruptions should enter in, as the adversaries unwisely suppose. If the Lord preserved the book of Leviticus, with the account of the ancient ceremonies, which were afterward abolished, how much more may we conclude that his providence has watched over other books of Scripture which properly belong to our times and to our salvation?

Will not the Scriptures bear witness to the perpetuity of their own authority? "Secret things belong to God;" but things revealed belong to us, and to our children forever. Jesus Christ said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." Notwithstanding the sacred writings were disregarded, and even hated by most persons, they had been preserved entire as they were the first day they were given to the church of God. More than fifteen hundred years had elapsed, during which not any one book, nor part of any book, of canonical Scripture had been lost: and it was evident not only that the matter of the Scripture, but also the words; not only the sense and meaning, but also the manner and form of speech in them remained unaltered.⁴²

Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, William Whitaker (1548-1595), wrote the one extensive work on the subject of the Bible written by an English Reformer. In a classic riposte to the Romanist translation posited perfect preservation as an absolute necessity,

Now we, not doubtfully or only with some probable shew, but most certainly, know that this Greek edition of the New Testament is no other than the inspired and archetypal scripture of the new Testament, commended by the apostles and evangelists to the Christian church.... If God had permitted the scripture to perish in the Hebrew and Greek originals, in which it was first published by men divinely inspired, he would not have provided sufficiently for his church and for our faith. From the prophetic and apostolic scripture the church takes its origin, and the faith derives its source. But whence can it be ascertained that these are in all respects prophetic and apostolic scriptures, if the very writings of the prophets and apostles are not those which we consult?⁴³

Whitaker went on to say he accepted the Received Text handed down by faith,

Now the Hebrew edition of the old, and the Greek of the New Testament, was always held the authentic scripture of God in the Christian churches for six hundred years after Christ. This, therefore, ought to be received by us also as authentic scripture. If they doubt the major, we must ask them, whether the church hath changed its authentic scripture, or hath not rather preserved, and commended to all succeeding generations, that which was in truth authentic from the very first? If it lost that which was published by the prophets and apostles, who can defend that negligence, who excuse so enormous a sacrilege?⁴⁴

Whitaker also cleverly rejected the argument that the Masoretes had corrupted the Hebrew Text,

Besides, if the Jews had wished to corrupt the original scriptures, they would have laid their sacrilegious hands specially upon those places which concern

Christ and confirm the faith. But in those places these fountains run so clear that one feels no lack: nay, they sometimes run far clearer than the Latin streams.⁴⁵

He also showed how God protected the Scriptures in the ages, God protects the scriptures against Satan, as being their constant enemy. Satan hath frequently endeavoured to destroy the scriptures, knowing that they stand in his way: but he hath never spent any trouble or thought upon these unwritten traditions; for he supposed that his whole object would be gained if he could destroy the scriptures. In pursuance of this plan he hath raised up such impious tyrants as Antiochus, Maximin, Diocletian, and others, who have endeavoured utterly to quench the light of scripture. Now, if religion could remain entire even when these books were lost, it would be in vain for Satan to labour with such furious efforts to remove these books.⁴⁶

Bishop of Salisbury and eminent Divine, John Jewel (1522-1571), who was a strong apologist against the Church of Rome, also makes clear the need of perfect preservation,

By the space of so many thousand years, the word of God passed by so many dangers of tyrants, of Pharisees, of heretics, of fire, and of sword, and yet continueth and standeth until this day, without altering or changing one letter. This was a wonderful work of God, that having so many, so great enemies, and passing through so many, so great dangers, it yet continueth still without adding or altering of any one sentence, or word, or letter. No creature was able to do this, it was God's work. He preserved it, that no tyrant should consume it, no tradition choke it, no heretic maliciously should corrupt it. For His name's sake, and for the elect's sake, He would not suffer it to perish. For in it God hath ordained a blessing for His people, and by it He maketh covenant with them for life everlasting. Tyrants, and Pharisees, and heretics, and the enemies of the cross of Christ have an end, but the word of God hath no end. No force shall be able to decay it. The gates of hell shall not prevail against it.⁴⁷

Cambridge-educated Puritan preacher, Nicholas Gibbens, also retorted in 1602,

For by these authorities it may seem apparent, that the Hebrew Text has been corrupted by the Jews: which if it be; where is the truth the Scriptures to be found, but either perished, or only remaining in that translation which the Papists so greatly magnify. For answer whereunto, we affirm and testify by the authority of the Scriptures themselves, (which is the voice of God) of the Fathers, and of the adversaries themselves; that the Scriptures in the Hebrew tongue are pure, and unspotted of all corruption.⁴⁸

Johannes Andreas Quenstedt (1617-1688), the German Lutheran dogmatician, argued,

We believe, as is our duty, that the providential care of God has always watched over the original and primitive texts of the canonical Scriptures in such a way that we can be certain that the sacred codices which we now have in our hands are those which existed at the time of Jerome and Augustine, nay at the time of Christ Himself and His apostles.⁴⁹

English Puritan and theologian, Edward Leigh (1602-1671), explained why we needed confidence in a pure text for our Bibles,

If the authority of the authentical copies in Hebrew, Chaldee and Greek fall, then there is no pure Scripture in the Church of God, there is no high court of appeal where controversies (rising upon the diversity of translations, or otherwise) may be ended. The exhortations of having recourse unto the Law and to the Prophets, and of our Saviour Christ asking "How it is written," and "How readest thou," is now either of none effect, or not sufficient."⁵⁰

The great Puritan, Thomas Watson (c. 1620-1686), makes clear, The devil and his agents have been blowing at Scripture light, but could never blow it out; a clear sign that it was lighted from heaven.... The letter of Scripture has been preserved, without any corruption, in the original tongue.⁵¹

The prodigious Puritan scholar, John Owen, who entered Oxford at 12 years old, adopted the same stance,

It can, then, with no colour of probability be asserted (which yet I find some learned men too free in granting), namely, that there hath the same fate attended the Scripture in its transcription as hath done other books. Let me say without offence, this imagination, asserted on deliberation, seems to me to border on atheism. Surely the promise of God for the preservation of his word, with his love and care of his church, of whose faith and obedience that word of his is the only rule, requires other thoughts at our hands.⁵²

Swiss Hebraist, Johannes Buxtorf (1599-1664), defended the preservation of even the Hebrew vowel points against the attack of Louis Cappel with studies published in 1624 and 1650. Buxtorf also affirmed the purity of the Received Text in 1620,

From the extremity of the East to the extremity of the West the word of God is read with one mouth and in one manner; and in all the books that there are in Asia, Africa, and Europe, there is discernible a full agreement, without any difference whatever.⁵³

John Woodbridge notes of Rome's influence in this attack and states, "Cappel was able to publish one of these works only with the help of the

Roman Catholic apologist, Jean Morin.”⁵⁴ Martin Klauber also notes the staunch defence of the Masoretic Text by the Reformers by noting, “Reformed scholars of the mid-seventeenth century, following the lead of Buxdorf, considered all other versions of the OT as subordinate to the Masoretic text. ... Cappel’s theories were generally rejected in Reformed circles.”⁵⁵

A typical presuppositional approach based on special providential preservation was that of the Principal of the University of Edinburgh, Robert Rollock (1555-1599). He argued for “the preservation of the divine oracles of God unto our times” and the retention of many disputed passages such as 1 John 5:7, Mark 16, John 8 based on the fact that these are, “our Greek books, which we hold for authentical, have this verse and our Church receives it.”⁵⁶ He rejected all the textual-critical assaults of Rome on the Received Text by summarising,

Thus we see then the adversaries cannot prove by these places that the Greek edition of the New Testament is corrupted, and so act authentical. Wherefore it resteth that the Hebrew edition of the Old Testament and the Greek of the New Testament is only authentical.⁵⁷

Henry Walker in 1642 also discerned the wiles of the Jesuit plot and argued that the supposed textual problems were “vanity” and “inventions” as, “the Pope is glad of these distractions amongst us, and would now take the opportunity to snatch away the Bible from us; he would fain take our religion away; but we hope to send him back to Rome again with a powder.”⁵⁸ Narcissus Marsh (1638-1713), provost of the College of Dublin and later Archbishop of Armagh, writes against one sceptic who attacked the Hebrew Masoretic Text,

It may be suspected, that the intention is to bring it into doubt, whether we have any such thing, as a true Bible at all, which we may confide in, as God’s Word.... However, I doubt not, but that, by God’s Providence, as the Hebrew Text hath hitherto stood firm, so it will stand on its own bottom to wear out all assaults against it, and be, what it always was, received as the undoubted Word of God, when all the arguments and objections against it are vanish’d into smoke.⁵⁹

The Rhemist version was later revised by Richard Challoner in the mid-eighteenth century. He was an English convert from Protestantism who knew well the nuances of the King James Version and deliberately sought to revise the *Douay-Rheims* into closer conformity with the diction of the King James Version.⁶⁰ Notwithstanding, so successful was the King James Version

and Cartwright's rebuttal of the Rhemist version that the devil was forced to change his strategy and attack not by the Latin but by the Greek.

It was about another century before Rome refined a weapon to combat *Sola Scriptura* at the hands of Romanist priest, Richard Simon (1638-1712), through "Textual Criticism." Baird tells us, "Simon sharpened historical criticism into a weapon that could be used in the attack on Protestantism's most fundamental error: the doctrine of *Sola Scriptura*."⁶¹ Indeed, Simon himself explains plainly his purpose, "the great changes that have taken place in the manuscripts of the Bible—as we have shown in the first book of this work—since the first originals were lost, completely destroy the principle of the Protestants ... if tradition is not joined to scripture, there is hardly anything in religion that one can confidently affirm."⁶² They assembled many of the variant readings into Polyglots to aid this attack. The *Cambridge History of the Bible* accepts the universal standard of the TR amidst the Reformed Churches,

In creating the phrase *textus receptus* they had confirmed acceptance of the third edition of Estienne and Beza's recension of it as the standard version. Effective awareness of the significance of textual criticism for the ancient versions of the biblical text may be said to begin only with the *Biblia Polyglotta* of Bishop Walton in 1657.⁶³

Even the ecumenical textual critic, Dan Wallace, accepts that, "New Testament textual criticism was born as a polemic against Protestants, intended to show that they couldn't really trust the Bible!"⁶⁴ Thus under the influence of Romanism, textual criticism emerged from enlightenment and humanistic grounds and would culminate in the 1881 Revised Version.

The Reformers did not take their creedal stand against Rome upon a utopian inerrant original autograph. To them, there was an identifiable and existing text in use by the Greek-speaking Church which had been transmitted from a handwritten manuscript form to a printed form. Likewise, they did not advocate a radical individualism where every man decides for himself which words are genuine and would have rejected the current state of textual criticism, where every man is a textual critic with horror. It is true, that unlike Luther, John Calvin did not initially *uniformly* base his readings on the text of Erasmus and "had an affinity for a renegade edition published by Simon de Colines (1534)."⁶⁵ This text included a number of variant readings from critical text manuscripts and from Rome's Complutensian.⁶⁶ However, in later life Calvin rejected this view to return to the TR preferring the common readings by faith.⁶⁷ The facts of history are that Rome accused

Protestants of having a “paper pope” by judging all matters religious with the Scripture. Ironically, five hundred years ago a man positing this kind of accusation would be called a Romanist heretic but today he is called an enlightened fundamentalist! Indeed, TR critics even attack preservationists today by equating heresy with faith in an inerrant Bible.

Westminster Confession of Faith

A good example of the Reformation view on preservation is the Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF) written in response to Tridentine Romanism and early rationalism. The Confessional understanding of the doctrine of Holy Scripture was a dyke to keep out the deadly waters of disbelief in God’s word. Like the early Reformers, the Divines looked first at the history of manuscript transmission to see what God had done, rather than the manuscripts to see what man had to do. The Westminster Divines never argued for the preservation of a copy, but the preservation of the Words, because that is what the Bible teaches. That took a presuppositional approach to this issue. They knew that if there is another authority (whether it be our individual determination of trustworthiness or the authority of an ecclesiastical leader) by which we are to determine and believe that the Bible is the Word of God, that authority itself would be the ultimate authority. Is it up to the reader to discern which portions of the Scriptures are inspired and which are not? Hence, the WCF (1:4) states,

The authority of Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed, and obeyed, depends not upon the testimony of any man, or Church; but wholly upon God (who is truth itself) the author thereof: and therefore it is to be received, because it is the Word of God.

A crystallisation of the opposition to textual and historical criticism is stated in positive terms in the WCF. It should be noted that the Confession first deals with the canon of Scripture before it turns to discuss the doctrine of inspiration and authority and preservation. There is then a refutation of the canonicity of the Apocrypha before the Confession deals with the declaration of special providential preservation. This understanding of cause and effect in respect of canonisation will be an important principle to remember when we consider the preservation of the Scriptures. This seems to have been a reasoned and logical presuppositional unfolding as they are implicitly stating that the same methodology for determining canonicity must be extended to the individual words of the canon.

The Confession is a constitutional document and must be interpreted in the light of its historical context. Chapter 1.8 should not be read in a vacuum of this history, which is presuppositionally set forth in the prior statements which identify the canonical text, and disclaim the Apocrypha as being non-canonical. Unmistakably, the Westminster Divines claimed to possess the authentic text, and all critics should candidly acknowledge this rather than attempting to re-interpret it to conform to the fluid tradition of modern textual criticism. The divines were men of prodigious learning and were aware of many minor textual disagreements going back to the days of the Early Fathers. Yet this awareness did not diminish their unshakable conviction that they continued to hold in hand an indestructible authentic revelation. They knew it was the Church's treasure and rock of defence against Rome and not one to ever casually or carelessly surrender. Given this approach, we are left with one of two choices: either the text they used is the "authentic text" or their claim was false. The Confession requires an acceptance of the Reformation Text as the authoritative court of appeal or else it is meaningless. Indeed, so seriously did the Westminster Divines view even spelling errors in various printings of the Authorised Version as "dangerous to religion," that they moved Parliament to outlaw the importation of bootleg reprints from Europe.⁶⁸

William Orr in his commentary on the WCF makes clear, "Now this affirms that the Hebrew text of the Old Testament and the Greek of the New which was known to the Westminster divines was immediately inspired by God because it was identical with the first text that God has kept pure in all the ages. The idea that there are mistakes in the Hebrew Masoretic texts or in the TR of the New Testament was unknown to the authors of the Confession of Faith."⁶⁹ Indeed, the Westminster Confession divines clearly cognisant of textual critics positing naturalistic and man-centred doctrines of preservation explicitly states that the doctrine of preservation must be hedged by Holy Scripture alone:

IV. The authority of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed, and obeyed, depends not upon the testimony of any man, or Church; but wholly upon God (who is truth itself) the author thereof: and therefore it is to be received, because it is the Word of God

X. The supreme judge by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture.

The WCF notably does not argue that Scripture is established by the prior and superior authority of modern textual criticism, but that the perfectly preserved TR (as cited in the WCF), sits in judgment upon textual criticism. The liberal writer, McCabe, writing in 1897 agrees that the Westminster divines had assumed the special providential preservation of all the words by sneering,

Until the seventeenth century divines had assumed that Providence had miraculously guarded its inspired books. From this torpid belief they were at length roused by the controversies on the date and origin of the vowel points of the Hebrew text between the Buxtorfs and Morinus and Cappell, and by the discovery of a vast number of variations in the manuscripts and printed books of Scripture. Kennicott's Hebrew Bible, published from 1776 to 1790, gave 200,000 variations. Thus a door was opened to a certain reverent kind of criticism.⁷⁰

Leading contemporary textual critic, Dan Wallace, admits that the Divines based their doctrine of perfect preservation on the TR,

The response by Protestants was swift, though perhaps not particularly well thought out. In 1646, the first doctrinal statement about God preserving his text was formulated as part of the Westminster Confession. The problem is that what the Westminster divines were thinking of when they penned that confession was the TR. By virtually ignoring the variants, they set themselves up for more abuse.⁷¹

Swiss-Italian Protestant theologian, Francis Turretin (1623-1687), expounded on the early confessional doctrine of Biblical preservation and clearly understood it to mean "entire preservation," "Nor can we readily believe that God, who dictated and inspired each and every word to these inspired men, would not *take care of their entire preservation*."⁷²

Richard Capel, one of the Westminster Divines, warned concerning those who undermined the preservation of Scripture when he wrote in 1658,

And to the like purpose is that observation, that the two Tables written immediately by Moses and the Prophets, and the Greek Copies immediately penned by the Apostles, and Apostolical men are all lost, or not to be made use of, except by a very few. And that we have none in Hebrew or Greek, but what are transcribed. Now transcribers are ordinary men, subject to mistake, may fail having no unerring spirit to hold their hands in writing.

Referring to these types of statements, Capel immediately writes,

These be terrible blasts, and do little else when they meet with a weak head and heart, but open the door to Atheism and quite to fling off the bridle, which only can hold them and us in the ways of truth and piety: this is to fill the

conceits of men with evil thoughts against the Purity of the Originals: And if the Fountains run not clear, the Translation cannot be clean.⁷³

Another of the original members of the Westminster assembly, John Lightfoot, writes, “The same power and care of God that preserves the church would preserve the Scriptures pure to it: and He that did, and could, preserve the whole could preserve every part, so that not so much as a tittle should perish.”⁷⁴

J S Candlish rightly observed in 1877 that, “the word *authentic* is used, not in the modern sense in which it has been employed by many...as meaning historically true, but in its more literal sense, attested as a correct copy of the author’s work.”⁷⁵ Indeed, the Reformers would have no grounds to oppose the Vulgate as deviating from the fountain of the originals if their text was also corrupted and uncertain. It is also notable that the Westminster Confessional documents, including the Bible version used in conjunction with the Annotations, all quote the Authorised Version including so-called problematic passages such as 1 John 5:7. Reformed church historian, Richard Muller, summarised the post-Reformation Reformed view of the providential preservation of the Holy Scriptures,

By “original” and “authentic” text, the Protestant orthodox do not mean the *autographa* which no one can possess but the *apographa* in the original tongue which are the source of all versions. The Jews throughout history and the church in the time of Christ regarded the Hebrew of the Old Testament as authentic and for nearly six centuries after Christ, the Greek of the New Testament was viewed as authentic without dispute. It is important to note that the Reformed orthodox insistence on the identification of the Hebrew and Greek texts as alone authentic does not demand direct reference to *autographa* in those languages: the “original and authentic text” of Scripture means, beyond the autograph copies, the legitimate tradition of Hebrew and Greek *apographa*.

The case for Scripture as an infallible rule of faith and practice and the separate arguments for a received text free from major (non-scribal) error rests on an examination of the *apographa* and does not seek the infinite regress of the lost *autographa* as a prop for textual infallibility.⁷⁶

Other Confessions

The Formula Consensus Helvetica (1675), which was drafted amidst the rising tide of text-critical challenges is even more explicit that we have all the Words of God perfectly preserved for us today to the jot and tittle. It extended the doctrine of inspiration and perfect preservation to the very

Hebrew vowel points and argued that those who accept variant readings, “bring the foundation of our faith and its inviolable authority into perilous hazard,”

CANONS

I. God, the Supreme Judge, not only took care to have His word, which is the “power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth” (Rom. 1:16), committed to writing by Moses, the Prophets, and the Apostles, but has also watched and cherished it with paternal care ever since it was written up to the present time, so that it could not be corrupted by craft of Satan or fraud of man. Therefore the Church justly ascribes it to His singular grace and goodness that she has, and will have to the end of the world, a “sure word of prophecy” and “Holy Scriptures” (2 Tim. 3:15), from which, though heaven and earth perish, “one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass” (Matt. 5:18).

II. But, in particular, the Hebrew Original of the Old Testament, which we have received and to this day do retain as handed down by the Jewish Church, unto whom formerly “were committed the oracles of God” (Rom. 3:2), is, not only in its consonants, but in its vowels—either the vowel points themselves, or at least the power of the points—not only in its matter, but in its words, inspired of God, thus forming, together with the Original of the New Testament, the sole and complete rule of our faith and life; and to its standard, as to a Lydian stone, all extant versions, oriental and occidental, ought to be applied, and where ever they differ, be conformed.

III. Therefore we can by no means approve the opinion of those who declare that the text which the Hebrew Original exhibits was determined by man’s will alone, and do not scruple at all to remodel a Hebrew reading which they consider unsuitable, and amend it from the Greek Versions of the LXX and others, the Samaritan Pentateuch, the Chaldee Targums, or even from other sources, yea, sometimes from their own reason alone; and furthermore, they do not acknowledge any other reading to be genuine except that which can be educed by the critical power of the human judgment from the collation of editions with each other and with the various readings of the Hebrew Original itself—which, they maintain, has been corrupted in various ways; and finally, they affirm that besides the Hebrew edition of the present time, there are in the Versions of the ancient interpreters which differ from our Hebrew context other Hebrew Originals, since these Versions are also indicative of ancient Hebrew Originals differing from each other. Thus they bring the foundation of our faith and its inviolable authority into perilous hazard.

There are many other Confessional writings exhibiting TR only readings. For instance, the influential Particular Baptist *Confession of Faith* of 1644 cites Acts 8:37 and the disputed long ending of Mark. The Particular

Baptist *Second London Confession of Faith*, originally printed in 1677 references 1 John 5:7 to prove Trinitarianism and references the long ending of Mark three times.⁷⁷ The General Baptist *Orthodox Creed* of 1679 writes out 1 John 5:7 in the text and references it five times. The Baptist New Hampshire Confession (1833) also concurs:

We believe that the Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired, and is an infallible and inerrant treasure of heavenly instruction; that it has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter ... and therefore is, and *shall remain to the end of the world*, the true centre of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions should be tried.⁷⁸

Conclusion

It is axiomatic to even the most ardent critic of the KJV that the recovery of the “autographic text” is outside the possibility of recovery simply by a neutral textual scientific methodology. Even the leading exponents of textual criticism candidly concede this. By eliminating God’s work of preservation, they have left the Church disarmed, vulnerable and in total confusion. They are like those of old of whom God says in the last verse of the book of Judges, “In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes” (Judg 21:25). These multi-versionists have no final authority, save for their own reasoning or outsourcing to a scholar to tell them what God probably said.

When CT advocates appeal to an authoritative Bible from their evolutionary text they are functioning as an illusionist. Their infallible Bible is lost in a vaporous philosophical cul-de-sac and they are desperate for others not to possess one either. They believe that the Bible emerged from a “big bang” and then it was lost. Thanks to an evolutionary path which will culminate one day through liberal scholarship it may theoretically reappear in the future, although they do not think so. However, God has promised preservation in the minutiae, and not simply in the main. Although the Bible is not exhaustive in setting forth every detail of the preservation of God’s Words, when and where it speaks, it speaks with God’s authority. This authority does not extend to all competing and contradictory theories of the mode and methodologies of preservation. We should never be tempted to surrender the clear promises of God’s Word (1 Cor 4:6) amidst the capricious waves of textual critical theories.

The Scriptures explicitly teach that preservation is a work of God and offers no encouragement to those who seek a compromise with rationalistic textual criticism. There can be no question as to what God did, as He never acts contrary to what He promised. Even the contemporary agnostic textual critic, Bart Ehrman, accepts the TR advocates are the only consistent group on preservation,

One cannot read the literature produced by the various advocates of the Majority text without being impressed by a remarkable theological concurrence. To one degree or another, they all (to my knowledge, without exception) affirm that God's inspiration of an inerrant Bible required His preservation of its text.⁷⁹

Ehrman also accepts as fallacious the logic of those who argue that God was involved in preservation but this was just "general," as he argues, "If one affirms God's involvement in the transmission process in any way at all, is it anything but high handed to claim that He was generally, but not fully involved?"⁸⁰

The disciples of Westcott and Hort have now for a century disturbed the Protestant world by making merchandise of the Church implicitly arguing that all along Rome has always been right. This deadly poison once confined to the corners of dusty German university philosophy classrooms has now routed a whole generation of churches and seminaries. Theological rationalism and textual criticism spread like ivy, the growth stages of which have been described as sleeping, creeping, and finally leaping. Textual criticism has proven to be liberalism and Romanism's destructive child. It emerged from the same graveyard of unbelief as liberalism, Deism, and Darwinism. It is interesting to note that the latest United Bible Societies Text descended from the Westcott and Hort family boasts, "the new text is a reality, and as the text distributed by the United Bible Societies and by the corresponding office of the Roman Catholic Church (an inconceivable situation until quite recently) it has rapidly become the commonly accepted text for research and study in universities and church."⁸¹ The United Bible Societies Vice-President is Roman Catholic Cardinal Onitsha of Nigeria. On the executive committee is Roman Catholic Bishop Alilona of Italy and among the editors is Roman Catholic Cardinal Martini of Milan. Patrick Henry happily claims, "Catholics should work together with Protestants in the fundamental task of Biblical translation ... [They can] work very well together and have the same approach and interpretation ... [This] signals a new age in the church."⁸²

In 1943, the Papal encyclical *Divino Afflante Spiritu* encouraged a new ecumenically translated Bible as it said, “These translations [should] be produced in cooperation with separated brothers.”⁸³ Indeed, the Introduction in that Catholic Bible says,

In general, Nestle’s-Aland’s *Novum Testamentum Graece* (25th edition, 1963) was followed. Additional help was derived from *The Greek New Testament* (editors Aland, Black, Metzger, Wikgren) produced for the use of translators by the United Bible Societies in 1966.⁸⁴

In 1924, the liberal paper *The Christian Century* said clearly that “the Bible of the fundamentalist is one Bible: the Bible of Modernism is another.”⁸⁵ Today, we have the same Ecumenical Greek Text for the modernist, liberal and Romanist Bibles. Just as Christ was hated by the world and despised by the conservative religious leaders in His day (Matt 12:14, 24, 15:12, 27:18), so the perfect Written Word is similarly attacked today. Indeed, a telling evidence for the truth of the TR can be seen by simply observing the text that the modern scribes envy, fear and mock the most. When once Protestants looked to the Received Text as the final court of appeal in faith and practice, they now look to Rome and apostates to adjudicate over what the Words actually are of the evolving text. We are being led by Rome and apostate textual critics (Semler, Griesbach, Lachmann, Metzger et al.) in this “enlightened” approach to text criticism, which simply continued Rome’s agenda but under a different banner. Through these fifth columnist “allies,” Rome’s assault against the despised “Protestant Pope” has swept the field. Yet sadly so many fundamentalists have embraced such a corrupted source as their “infallible rule of faith.”

In our supposed postmodern age which opposes certitude of truth and morality, the “buffet style” approach to the true text will lead the churches back to Rome in a “Deformation” and finally to the certainty of the authority of the Antichrist. By relegating God’s Providence outside of His Words they have robbed Him of His glory and urged us to be thankful for the elevation of man’s autonomous reason. However, our Reformation history and consequent revivals testify that God is not indifferent to His Words. Protestants rejected the authority of the Popes, because of their clear contradictions with one another; so we reject Rome’s critical textual position which results in the same nebulous position. Despite their worship of the contemporary gods of modern textual criticism, we will not embrace the idols of Enlightenment modernity. Conservative CT advocates, such as Jon Reherek, would rather believe the textual history cobbled together by mainly

unbelieving textual critics than the promises of Scripture or the historical doctrinal statements of our forefathers.

It is amazing that Reformed believers who believe in the depravity of unregenerate man and the degeneration of man and the world system in general, have accepted that scientific rationalism and classical education have somehow “evolved” to the point where apostates and liberals are more qualified to “discover” and “translate” God’s Word today than in 1611. Michael Maynard makes a pertinent observation in his work *A History of the Debate Over I John 5:7-8*, “Received Text advocates are still waiting for the fundamentalists minority text advocates to explain why they trust four liberals and a Jesuit, who is in line to become the next pope, with the identity of the New Testament.”⁸⁶ What a tragedy!

Notes

¹ Jon Rehurek, “Preservation of the Bible: Providential or Miraculous? The Biblical View,” *The Master’s Seminary Journal* 19 (2008): 71-90.

² Ibid, 71.

³ Kevin Bauder, *One Bible Only? Examining Exclusive Claims for the King James Bible* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2001), 159-160.

⁴ Jack Moorman, *Forever Settled* (Collingswood: Bible For Today, 1985), 90-95.

⁵ M H Reynolds Jr, “Dangerous Misconceptions Concerning Satan,” *Foundation Magazine* (May-June 1996), Editorial.

⁶ William Combs, “The Preservation of Scripture,” *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 5 (2000): 38.

⁷ Lewis Carroll, *Through the looking-glass, and what Alice found there (with fifty illustrations by John Tenniel)* (London: Spark Educational Publishing, 2003), 219.

⁸ Cornelius Van Til, *The Intellectual Challenge of the Gospel* (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1980), 10.

⁹ Douglas Wilson, “Discerning the Manuscript Traditions,” *Credenda* 10/1 online at <http://www.credenda.org/issues/10-1/disputatio.php> accessed 20 April 2009.

¹⁰ Cornelius Van Til, *A Survey of Christian Epistemology*, Vol 2 (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1932), Introduction.

¹¹ David W Norris, *The Big Picture: The Authority and Integrity of the Authentic Word of God* (Cannock: Authentic Word, 2004), 294.

¹² Cited in “Textual Criticism and the Modern English Version Controversy,” *Biblical Viewpoint* 16 (April 1982): 72.

¹³ “The Majority Text” by Daniel Wallace in Bart D Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament in Contemporary Research* (Grand Rapids: Wm B Eerdmans, 1995), 309.

¹⁴ Arthur Westcott, *Life and Letters of Brooke Foss Westcott* (London: Macmillan, 1903), 393.

¹⁵ Cited in Wilbur Pickering in *The Identity of the New Testament Text* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1977), Appendix A from a copy sent to him personally by Bart D Ehrman,

Preservation of the Bible: Providential or Miraculous?

“New Testament Textual Criticism: Search for Method,” MDiv thesis, Princeton Theological Seminary, 1981, 44.

¹⁶ Cornelius Van Til, *Christian Apologetics* (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1976), 2.

¹⁷ Kent Brandenburg, “The Erroneous Epistemology of Multiple Version Onlyism,” online at <http://kentbrandenburg.blogspot.com/2009/03/erroneous-epistemology-of-multiple.html>, accessed 31 March 2009.

¹⁸ Douglas Wilson, “Discerning the Manuscript Traditions,” *Credenda* 10/1 online at <http://www.credenda.org/issues/10-1/disputatio.php> accessed 20 April 2009.

¹⁹ Robert L Thomas, “General Revelation and Biblical Hermeneutics,” *The Master’s Seminary Journal* 9 (1998): 5-23.

²⁰ Milton S Terry, *Biblical Hermeneutics: A Treatise on the Interpretation of the Old and New Testaments*, 2d ed (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, nd), 533.

²¹ Ibid, 534.

²² Van Til, *Defense of the Faith*, 71.

²³ Mark Minnick, “Let’s Meet the Manuscripts,” in *From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man*, ed James B Williams (Greenville: Ambassador-Emerald, 1999), 71.

²⁴ Cornelius Van Til, *A Survey of Christian Epistemology* (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1969), 5.

²⁵ Ibid, 6.

²⁶ Joseph Charles Philpot, “The Authorized Version of 1611,” *The Gospel Standard* (April 1857).

²⁷ J Waterworth, *Canons and Decrees of the Sacred and Ecumenical Council of Trent*, (Whitefish: Kessinger Publishing, 2003), 19.

²⁸ John D Woodbridge and Kenneth S Kantzer, *Biblical Authority: A Critique of the Rogers/McKim Proposal* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982), 219.

²⁹ Joseph McCabe, *Modern Rationalism: Being a Sketch of the Progress of the Rationalistic Spirit in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Watts, 1897), 9.

³⁰ Samuel Tregelles, *An Account of the Printed Text of the Greek New Testament with Remarks on Its Revision upon Critical Principles* (London: Samuel Bagster & Sons, 1854), 33-35.

³¹ Henry Clay Vedder, *Balthasar Hübmaier; the Leader of the Anabaptists* (New York: G P Putnam’s Sons, 1905), 190.

³² James Henry Monk, *The Life of Richard Bentley* (London: J G & F Rivington, 1833), 399.

³³ Irena Doruta Backus, *The Reformed Roots of the English New Testament* (Pittsburgh: The Pickwick Papers, 1980), 6-7.

³⁴ Greg Bahnsen, “The Inerrancy of the Autographa,” in *Inerrancy*, ed Norman Geisler (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1979), 155.

³⁵ Will Durant, *The Reformation* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1957), 285.

³⁶ Cited in William Fulke, *Confutation of the Rhemish Testament* (New York: Leavitt, Lord & Co, 1834), preface essay by editor.

³⁷ Gerald Lewis Bray, *Documents of the English Reformation 1526-1707* (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co, 2004), 366.

³⁸ Paolo Sarpi, *History of the Council of Trent*, trans by Nathaniel Brent, (London: 1629), 156.

³⁹ Benjamin Brook, *Memoir of the Life and Writings of Thomas Cartwright* (London: John Snow, 1845), 258.

⁴⁰ Ibid, 276.

⁴¹ Ibid, 274-5.

⁴² Ibid, 275-6.

⁴³ William Whitaker, *A Disputation on Holy Scripture: against the Papists, especially Bellarmine and Stapleton* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1588), 142, 148.

⁴⁴ Ibid, 155.

⁴⁵ Ibid, 162.

⁴⁶ Ibid, 653.

⁴⁷ John Jewel, *The Works of John Jewel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1848), 7:291.

⁴⁸ Nicholas Gibbens, *Questions and Disputations Concerning the Holy Scripture* (London: 1602), 316. Cited in David S Katz, *God's Last Words: Reading the English Bible from the Reformation to Fundamentalism* (Cambridge: Yale University, 2004), 75.

⁴⁹ Cited in Robert Preus, *The Inspiration of Scripture: A Study in the Theology of the Seventeenth-Century Lutheran Dogmaticians* (London: Oliver & Boyd, 1955), 139.

⁵⁰ Edward Leigh, *Treatise*, Vol 1 (London: 1656), vi, 102-3.

⁵¹ Thomas Watson, *A Body of Divinity* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1965), 27.

⁵² John Owen, *The Works of John Owen* (Edinburgh: Johnstone and Hunter, 1853), 357.

⁵³ Cited critically in Henry Charles Fox, *On the Revision of the Authorised Version of the Scriptures: With an Account of the Revision Now* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1875), 10.

⁵⁴ John Woodbridge, "Biblical Authority: Towards an Evaluation of the Rogers and McKim Proposal," *Trinity Journal* 1 (1980): 202.

⁵⁵ Martin I Klauber, "The Helvetic Formula Consensus (1675): An Introduction and Translation," *Trinity Journal* 11 (1990): 105-106.

⁵⁶ Robert Rollock, *A Treatise of Effectual Calling (1603)* (Edinburgh: Woodrow Society, 1844), 71.

⁵⁷ Ibid, 127.

⁵⁸ Henry Walker, *Five Lookes Over the Professors of the English Bible* (London: 1642) cited in Katz, *God's Last Words*, 76.

⁵⁹ Edward Pocock, *The Theological Works*, ed Leonard Twells (London: 1740), i, 74. Cited in Katz, *God's Last Words*, 75.

⁶⁰ William Baird, *History of New Testament Research: From Deism to Tubingen* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 19.

⁶¹ F F Bruce, "Transmission and Translation of the Bible," *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979), 1:52-53.

⁶² Cited in Werner Georg Kümmel, *The New Testament: The History of the Investigation of Its Problems*, trans S McLean Gilmour and Howard C Kee (Nashville: Abingdon, 1972), 41.

⁶³ J Greenslade, ed, *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, Vol 3 (Cambridge: University Press, 1963), 64.

⁶⁴ Dan Wallace, "Is the Bible a 'Paper Pope' for Protestants?," online at <http://www.reclaimingthemind.org/blog/2007/08/is-the-bible-a-paper-pope-for-protestants/> accessed 4 February 2009.

Preservation of the Bible: Providential or Miraculous?

⁶⁵ Theodore P Letis, *The Majority Text: Essays and Reviews in the Continuing Debate*, (Edinburgh: Institute for Renaissance and Reformation Biblical Studies, 1987), 119.

⁶⁶ Greenslade, ed, *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, 61.

⁶⁷ Theodore P Letis, *Edward Freer Hills's Contribution to the Revival of the Ecclesiastical Text* (Philadelphia: The Institute for Renaissance and Reformation Biblical Studies, 1987), 26.

⁶⁸ Frederick Scrivener, *Authorized Edition of the English Bible (1611)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1884), 25.

⁶⁹ William F Orr, "The Authority of the Bible as Reflected in the Proposed Confession of 1967," as quoted by Letis, *The Majority Text*, 174.

⁷⁰ McCabe, *Modern Rationalism*, 46.

⁷¹ Wallace, "Is the Bible a 'Paper Pope' for Protestants?" online at <http://www.reclaimingthemind.org/blog/2007/08/is-the-bible-a-paper-pope-for-protestants/> accessed 4 February 2009.

⁷² Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, trans George Musgrave Giger, ed James T Dennison Jr (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1992), 1:71.

⁷³ Richard Capel, *Capel's Remains* (London, 1658), 19-43.

⁷⁴ John Lightfoot, *The Whole Works of Rev John Lightfoot* (London: J F Dove, 1822-25), 408.

⁷⁵ J S Candlish, "The Doctrine of the Westminster Confession on Scripture," *The British and Foreign Evangelical Review* 26 (January 1877) as cited in Letis, *The Majority Text*, 174.

⁷⁶ Richard Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1993), 433.

⁷⁷ For a complete list of Baptist Confessions citing the TR see Thomas Ross, "The Canonicity of the Received Bible Established from Reformation and Post-Reformation Baptist Confessions," online at <http://thross7.googlepages.com/CanonicityoftheTRseeninBaptistConfes.pdf> accessed on 5 February 2009.

⁷⁸ Philip Schaff, ed, *The Creeds of Christendom with a History and Critical Notes. Vol III: The Evangelical Protestant Creed* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1931), 742.

⁷⁹ Cited in Wilbur Pickering, from a copy sent to him personally by Bart D Ehrman: "New Testament Textual Criticism: Search for Method," MDiv thesis, Princeton Theological Seminary, 1981, 40.

⁸⁰ Ibid, 47.

⁸¹ Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, *The Text of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Wm B Eerdmans, 1995), 35.

⁸² Patrick Henry, *New Directions in New Testament Study* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1979), 232-234.

⁸³ *The New American Bible: Basic Youth Edition* (Winona: Saint Mary's Press, 2005), Preface, 9.

⁸⁴ Ibid, 1054-1055.

⁸⁵ Charles Clayton Morrison, "Fundamentalism and Modernism, Two Religions," *The Christian Century* (January 3, 1924): 6.

⁸⁶ Michael Maynard, *A History of the Debate Over I John 5:7, 8* (Tempe AZ: Comma Publications, 1995), 329.

ERRORS IN THE KING JAMES VERSION?

A Response to William W Combs of Detroit Baptist Seminary

Jeffrey Khoo

Introduction

The Westminster Larger Catechism says, “The Holy Scriptures are to be read with an high and reverent esteem of them; with a firm persuasion that they are the very Word of God.”¹ The question is raised: Is it a sin and a heresy for a Christian to esteem the Holy Scriptures so highly as to regard the Hebrew Masoretic Text (MT) and Greek Textus Receptus (TR) underlying the King James Version (KJV) to be the very Word of God without any mistake, without any doubt? William Combs, Professor of New Testament of Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary (DBTS), in his article “Errors in the King James Version?” thinks so; he maliciously calls it a “new heresy..., a heresy that has now invaded fundamental circles.”²

VPI and VPP

Besides the false and malicious accusations by anti-KJVists like Combs, there appears to be considerable ignorance and misunderstanding as regards the nature of the Holy Scriptures in the original languages, the verbally and plenarily inspired Scriptures which God has verbally and plenarily preserved, namely the Hebrew MT and the Greek TR and the translations that come from them, especially the KJV. The biblical doctrine of Verbal Plenary Inspiration (VPI) is clearly taught in many an evangelical Systematic Theology textbook,³ and the term VPI explicitly describes what biblical inspiration means in the context of the liberal/neo-evangelical versus fundamentalist battle for the Bible in the last century.⁴ However, there is hardly any teaching on Verbal Plenary Preservation (VPP) in the Systematic Theology textbooks of the last century—post-Warfield. Many evangelicals today do not believe that God has promised to preserve His inspired words.

VPP to them is not taught in the Bible. The Bible to them was only inerrant in the past but is no longer inerrant today.⁵

VPI demands VPP. For what good is it to the Church to have only a Bible that was infallible and inerrant in the past but no longer infallible and inerrant today? That is why the Statement of Faith of Far Eastern Bible College (FEBC) does not stop at VPI but goes on to affirm VPP, “We believe in the divine, Verbal Plenary Inspiration (Autographs) and Verbal Plenary Preservation (Apographs) of the Scriptures in the original languages, their consequent inerrancy and infallibility, and as the perfect Word of God, the supreme and final authority in faith and life (2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:20-21; Ps 12:6-7; Matt 5:18, 24:35).”⁶

Definitions

What is VPI? Here is my definition:

VPI means the whole of Scripture with all its words to the last jot and tittle is perfectly inspired by God without any error in the original languages and in all its prophecies, promises, commandments, doctrines, and truths. These inspired and inerrant words are not only the words of salvation, but also the words of history, geography and science. Every book, every chapter, every verse, every word, every syllable, every letter is infallibly inspired by the Lord Himself to the last iota.

Now, what is VPP? I define VPP as follows:

VPP means the whole of Scripture with all its words even to the jot and tittle is perfectly preserved by God without any loss of the original words, prophecies, promises, commandments, doctrines, and truths, not only in the words of salvation, but also the words of history, geography and science. Every book, every chapter, every verse, every word, every syllable, every letter is infallibly preserved by the Lord Himself to the last iota.⁷

If the Scriptures are verbally and plenary inspired and we have them today, every last word of the Scriptures to the jot and tittle, then where are they? Combs and DBTS come short here when they identify the infallible and inerrant text to be only the Autographs which scholarly consensus admits are no longer existent.⁸ And if the original text is non-existent, there is really no way whereby Combs and his colleagues can assuredly ascertain to what extent the copies or the translations reproduce exactly or accurately the original text. It is just not possible based on their naturalistic text-critical presuppositions and hypothesis of a lost or non-existent original text. This is acknowledged by the leading textual critics themselves.⁹

Identification

In the light of Reformed theology and Reformation history, the FEBC by the logic of faith identifies where and what is the original text that God has initially inspired and providentially preserved, infallible and inerrant: “We believe the Hebrew Old Testament and the Greek New Testament underlying the Authorised (King James) Version to be the very Word of God, infallible and inerrant.”¹⁰

As far as English translations of the Bible go, we consider the old to be better than the new. “We uphold the Authorised (King James) Version to be the Word of God—the best, most faithful, most accurate, most beautiful translation of the Bible in the English language, and do employ it alone as our primary scriptural text in the public reading, preaching, and teaching of the English Bible.”¹¹

Does the KJV of the Holy Scriptures contain errors then? Combs in his paper titled, “Errors in the King James Version?,” argues for errors in the KJV.¹² He also went on to say that all copies and translations, being not the original manuscripts or autographs, must “have mistranslations, miscopying, or misprinting, however minor, and are not therefore inerrant.”¹³ He considers a believer who regards the KJV as the very Word of God without any textual and translational error to be a heretic, and even names D A Waite, President of the Dean Burgon Society, as one.¹⁴ To Combs, the only believers who are sound and sane, godly and orthodox are those who believe that all texts and translations today contain errors! It would do well for Combs to read more Reformed theology and Reformation history before he plays the pope to denounce as heretics all who believe in the present infallibility and inerrancy of the inspired Scriptures and identify those inspired Scriptures to be the providentially preserved Hebrew MT and Greek TR underlying the Reformation Bibles best represented by the KJV.

Qualifications

Before we discuss further, we need to qualify and explain our terms especially as regards the KJV as “the Word of God,” lest we be misunderstood or misrepresented.

Firstly, when we speak of “the Word of God,” we are referring to either one of two things: (1) the Holy Scriptures in the original languages in both the autographs (originals) and apographs (copies), and/or (2) the Holy Scriptures in the versions or translations which come in different languages

whether ancient or modern. Having said this, we agree with the DBTS doctrinal statement that translations partake of inspiration in an indirect fashion only “to the extent that they reproduce the text of the original manuscripts.”¹⁵

Secondly, it goes without saying that the 100% perfect Word of God must be the divinely inspired or God-breathed (*theopneustos*) Hebrew and Aramaic words of the Old Testament and Greek words of the New Testament as penned by the specially appointed prophets and apostles without any mistake or error (2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:21). These same inspired words in the original languages have been preserved by the special providence of God through the ages so that in every generation God’s people might have all of God’s words available and accessible to them for their spiritual life and growth (Ps 12:6-7; Matt 4:4, 5:18; 2 Tim 3:17). By the logic of faith, based on the twin doctrines of VPI and VPP, we identify the Hebrew and Aramaic words of the MT and the Greek words of the TR to be the infallibly and inerrantly inspired words that God has single-handedly preserved by *providentia extraordinaria* (extraordinary or special providence).¹⁶ By the logic of faith, we further consider the divinely inspired and preserved Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek words underlying the time-tested and time-honoured KJV to be completely authentic, authoritative and definitive.

Thirdly, it must be emphasised that God’s infallible and inerrant nature demands that His inspired and preserved words be infallible and inerrant as well. God is perfect and makes no mistakes. The inspired and preserved words of God likewise must also be perfect and without any mistake. These infallible and inerrant words are thus *strictly* the originally inspired and providentially preserved Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek words and not translated words in other languages. We however agree with Combs when he says that “translations can be said to be inspired in a limited, derivative sense.”¹⁷ We also agree that as a whole “they cannot be said to be inerrant in any full sense.”¹⁸ We also reject the notion that a translation can be superior to the original language Scriptures. Only the original language Scriptures can be deemed absolutely and totally infallible and inerrant. This is articulated by the Dean Burgon Society in their “Articles of Faith” II.A, which states,

the King James Version (or Authorised Version) of the English Bible is a true, faithful, and accurate translation of these two providentially preserved Texts [Traditional Masoretic Hebrew Text and Traditional Greek Text underlying the KJV], which in our time has no equal among all of the other English

Translations. The translators did such a fine job in their translation task that we can without apology hold up the Authorised Version of 1611 and say ‘This is the Word of God!’ while at the same time realising that, in some verses, *we must go back to the underlying original language Texts for complete clarity*, and also compare Scripture with Scripture.”¹⁹

Therefore, although the infallible and inerrant words are strictly the original language words God has inspired and preserved, the translated words in other languages may be deemed “inspired,” “preserved,” “infallible,” and “inerrant” but only in a derivative and qualified sense, insofar as they agree with the words in the original languages. So, the translations do not stand independently but are dependent on the original language Scriptures, and faithful and accurate translations of them are to be highly esteemed. As such we do not think it pastorally wise to cast doubt on the trustworthiness and reliability of faithful and accurate translations like the KJV as many an agnostic and deistic scholar today are wont to do. The late Lynn Gray Gordon, a faithful Bible Presbyterian minister and former General Secretary of the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions (IBPFM), had rightly disclaimed the KJV as an “inspired version,” but nonetheless upheld the KJV to be “free from error in thought, fact and doctrine.”²⁰

Furthermore, we believe the Reformation versions of the Bible like Tyndale’s, Coverdale’s, the Geneva, and the KJV due to their underlying texts (Hebrew MT and Greek TR) and word-for-word (formal or verbal equivalence method) translation are to be regarded as the “Word of God,” the best of which is the time-tested and time-honoured KJV. The faithfulness and accuracy of the Reformation versions notwithstanding, it is important that the original language Scriptures be the Scriptures that determine the precise and fulness of meaning of the words of God. As such, we disclaim the pejorative label “KJV Onlyism” hurled indiscriminately by anti-VPP/TR/KJVists at Reformed and Reformation saints who defend the KJV based on the Traditional and Reformation Texts that God has providentially and supernaturally preserved as promised in the Sacred Scriptures and affirmed in our Reformed and Reformation creeds. Let it be known that we see ourselves rather as “KJV Superiority” than as “KJV Only” defenders. Waite, who holds a ThD degree from Dallas Theological Seminary and a PhD from Purdue University, has written a most timely book that defends the “KJV Superiority” position calling for Christians to retain or return to the good old KJV by arguing for its superiority in four areas—superiority in its (1) texts,

(2) translators, (3) technique, and (4) theology.²¹ We reject the extreme “super superiority” of the KJV-Only position propounded by radicals such as Peter Ruckman.²²

Fifthly, the inspired Scriptures that God has preserved must mean that the sole and supreme authority of Christian faith and practice must rest only on these very infallible and inerrant Scriptures or Source Texts (i.e. the autographic text as found in the preserved and uncorrupted apographs) which we aver are in our hands today. This is apparent in the Chicago Statement of Biblical Inerrancy:

The authority of Scripture is a key issue for the Christian Church in this and every age. Those who profess faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior are called to show the reality of their discipleship by humbly and faithfully obeying God’s written Word. To stray from Scripture in faith or conduct is disloyalty to our Master. Recognition of the total truth and trustworthiness of Holy Scripture is essential to a full grasp and adequate confession of its authority.

...

1. God, who is Himself Truth and speaks truth only, has inspired Holy Scripture in order thereby to reveal Himself to lost mankind through Jesus Christ as Creator and Lord, Redeemer and Judge. Holy Scripture is God’s witness to Himself.
2. Holy Scripture, being God’s own Word, written by men prepared and superintended by His Spirit, is of infallible divine authority in all matters upon which it touches: it is to be believed, as God’s instruction, in all that it affirms; obeyed, as God’s command, in all that it requires; embraced, as God’s pledge, in all that it promises.
3. The Holy Spirit, Scripture’s divine Author, both authenticates it to us by His inward witness and opens our minds to understand its meaning.
4. Being wholly and verbally God-given, Scripture is without error or fault in all its teaching, no less in what it states about God’s acts in creation, about the events of world history, and about its own literary origins under God, than in its witness to God’s saving grace in individual lives.
5. The authority of Scripture is inescapably impaired if this total divine inerrancy is in any way limited or disregarded, or made relative to a view of truth contrary to the Bible’s own; and such lapses bring serious loss to both the individual and the Church.²³

In light of the Chicago Statement of Biblical Inerrancy, it can be readily seen that the authority of the Bible is inextricably tied to its inerrancy. Contemporary evangelical scholars claim the Bible to be inerrant only in the

past but no longer inerrant today. They believe that since the inerrant autographs no longer exist and no two copies of surviving manuscripts are identical, all extant manuscripts, texts and translations today contain mistakes and are corrupted to some degree or other, there is simply no such thing as a Perfect Bible today. It goes without saying that such a view or teaching undermines the total inerrancy and absolute authority of the Holy Scriptures, and consequently destroys the very foundations of the Christian Faith.

FEBC believes that the autographs are not lost; they exist today in the faithful and trustworthy apographs or copies (and copies of the copies, and copies of the copies of the copies ...) of the autographs that God has providentially preserved throughout the ages. These autographs are today found in the uncorrupted apographs which may be deemed “the autographic text” (or the “authentic” text in the WCF) which is the totally infallible and inerrant text, verbally and plenary inspired and preserved, and consequently the Church’s sole and supreme authority of faith and life.

Now, article 10 of the Chicago Statement says,

We affirm that inspiration, strictly speaking, applies to the autographic text of Scripture, which in the providence of God can be ascertained from available manuscripts with great accuracy. We further affirm that copies and translations of Scripture are the Word of God to the extent that they faithfully represent the original.²⁴

However, the question remains: how do we identify or ascertain the autographic text? Is it through the supposedly “scientific” method called “textual criticism,” or the theological method which is “textual reception” (Acts 2:41, 8:14, 11:1, 17:11; 1 Thess 1:6, 2:13)? The Chicago Statement is rather ambiguous here. If the Chicago Statement allows for the so-called scientific method of textual criticism in ascertaining the autographic text, then it would contradict its very first article which states, “We deny that the Scriptures receive their authority from the Church, tradition, or any other human source.” The dependence on the textual critics today and their rationalistic textual-critical method is one such “human source.” Textual critics and textual criticism undermine the very authority of the Holy Scripture the Chicago Statement seeks to protect. The framers of the Chicago Statement in their exposition of the Statement unfortunately speak of the need for textual criticism and by so doing contradict their very own statement on the inextricable link between biblical inerrancy and biblical

authority.²⁵ It appears they have not thought through enough the doctrine of divine providence and biblical preservation.

As far as Combs is concerned, he does not believe that God has infallibly or inerrantly preserved His inspired words to the jot and tittle by special providence as promised in Matthew 5:18 and many other like passages.²⁶ He said without equivocation, “the words of the autographs have not been inerrantly preserved.”²⁷

This paper thus seeks to refute Combs’s allegation of errors in the Bible we have in our hands today. It is a defence of the total inerrancy and absolute authority of the Holy Scriptures in the original languages as faithfully recognised and received as the inspired words of God by the Reformers and Reformation saints, namely, the Hebrew MT and the Greek TR which are so readily available and easily accessible today because of God’s infallible preservation of His inspired words. This paper is also a defence of the KJV and any faithful and accurate version/translation in whatever language that is based on and accurately translated from those original language texts which we deem by the logic of faith to be the autographic Old Testament and New Testament texts.²⁸

Now, let us deal with the three types of “errors” Combs has found in the KJV: (1) textual errors, (2) translation errors, and (3) transmission errors.

Textual Errors?

Combs begins by defining what he means by “textual errors.” He says, “By textual errors I mean those where the reading found in the translation is not in agreement with that of the autographs.”²⁹ Now this definition by itself is quite inane because it begs the question, “Where are the autographs?” Combs believes that “the autographs are not available, ... the original scrolls and codices have long since perished.”³⁰ Now without the autographs, the original scrolls, how is Combs going to identify textual errors in the KJV, or for that matter any other version? How does he know whether a textual error is truly a textual error if he does not know what the original text is in the first place? But Combs has what he thinks passes for an answer; he assumes that “most reasonable people would be willing to concede that where all extant manuscripts are in agreement, we can safely conclude that we *do* have the text of the autographs.”³¹ Combs went on to say, “Based on this criterion, the KJV does contain indisputable [textual] errors, since ... it contains readings that have no basis in any manuscript.”³² But the question remains: How does he know that all extant manuscripts are in agreement when he himself says

that in the over 5,000 manuscripts no two are alike?³³ Furthermore, not all manuscripts have been studied and there are manuscripts still uncovered or yet to be discovered. Combs's criterion, based on his own reasoning without any biblical premise, is thus disputable.

Isaiah 13:15

Nonetheless, Combs tries to prove his point by citing Isaiah 13:15 as an example of a textual error. In light of what he is trying to prove, Isaiah 13:15 is a strange example indeed. This is because there are no textual errors in Isaiah 13:15 to begin with. All manuscripts agree including those who affirm the inerrancy of Hebrew text underlying the KJV. The critical *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* and the traditional MT of Ben Chayyim read the same as regards the Hebrew word in contention which is *saphah*. The KJV translates the word *saphah* as "joined" which Combs says is a "textual error." According to Combs, "There is no support for this reading in any Hebrew manuscript, text, ancient version, or rabbinic tradition."³⁴ Now Combs is not making sense here, for the question here has nothing to do with the text but the translation. Combs assumes that the KJV translators mistook the word *saphah* for *saphah* which is not found in any manuscript since they translated the word as "join" (*saphah*) instead of "capture" (*saphah*), and so to Combs "an indisputable error" in the KJV.

Based on Combs's definition of "an indisputable error," it is clear that there is no textual error here, and there is no translation error here either. The autographic text indeed reads *saphah*, and *saphah* means to "sweep," "snatch away," "catch up."³⁵ *Saphah* also has the sense of joining together. R D Patterson in the *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* commented, "The basic image of the root seems to be that of sweeping—both the process of *heaping things together* and of sweeping them away." He went on to add that "The root is usually used in a hostile sense, particularly in contexts of judgment."³⁶ *Saphah* is found in precisely such a context of judgement in Isaiah 13:15b, "every one that is *joined unto them shall fall by the sword*." As such, the rendering "joined unto them" certainly fits the meaning of the word *saphah*, for it has the connotation of putting things together for the purpose of judgement. Nineteenth century Presbyterian theologian Albert Barnes for example certainly understood it this way for he commented,

Every one that is joined unto them. Their allies and friends. There shall be a vast, indiscriminate slaughter of all that are found in the city, and of those that attempt to flee from it. Lowth renders this, 'And all that are collected in a

body;’ but the true sense is given in our translation. The Chaldee renders it, ‘And every one who *enters into* fortified cities shall be slain with the sword.’³⁷

John Calvin likewise commented,

... the verb *saphah* signifies likewise to *add*, ... that it denotes companies of soldiers, as in taking a city the soldiers are *collected together* in the form of a wedge, to ward off the attacks of the enemy. But it will perhaps be thought better to understand by it the confederates or allies who were *joined* to Babylon, and might be said to be *united* in the same body, in order to show more fully the shocking nature of this calamity.³⁸

Harvard scholar Edward F Hills wisely advised,

We must be very cautious therefore about finding errors in the text of the King James Version, and the same holds true also in the realm of translation. Whenever the renderings of the King James Version are called in question, it is usually the accuser that finds himself in the wrong.³⁹

Revelation 17:8

Combs then went on to deal with “textual errors” in the TR. He brought up two examples from the Book of Revelation, namely, 17:8 and 16:5 in that order. For Revelation 17:8, he says, “No manuscript reads, ‘and yet is’; all have ‘and shall come.’”⁴⁰ Combs overstates for it is not true that “no manuscript” reads “and yet is.” Paradoxically, Combs himself contradicts this by admitting there is at least one manuscript (Codex 1r)—the actual manuscript Erasmus used—though the actual text was embedded in the commentary of Andreas of Caesarea, somewhat like the Study Bibles we have today. It is significant to note that Erasmus used that manuscript because he saw it as a very old manuscript possibly from the time of the Apostles for the manuscript bore the name of Hippolytus of Rome (AD 200-250)⁴¹ who was a disciple of Irenaeus. Irenaeus was a disciple of Polycarp and Polycarp was a disciple of the Apostle John. In light of God’s special providence, there could be an apostolic tradition here that has preserved the autographic text of Revelation, the Spirit guiding Erasmus to the correct text.⁴²

Combs says that it is “an indisputable error” in the KJV if all extant manuscripts are in agreement. Well, all extant manuscripts are not in agreement here. There are at least four variant readings: (1) *kai parestai*, (2) *kai parestin*, (3) *kai palin pareste*, and (4) *kaiper estin*.⁴³ Combs who favours the Critical Text prefers *kai parestai*, while those who favour the TR will go with *kaiper estin* which is the reading found consistently not only in the

Greek text of Erasmus, but also Stephenus, Beza, Elzevir, and Scrivener. Interestingly, the two other variants namely *parestin* and *pareste*—both the present tense of *pareimi*—are closer to the reading of the TR than the Critical Text. There is thus more than meets the eye, and Combs assumes too much to conclude that Revelation 17:8 contains “an indisputable error.” Even Hills whom Combs cites was not very sure himself that it is a mistake.⁴⁴ If it was indeed “an indisputable error” as Combs thinks, that *kai parestai* was mistaken for *kaiper estin* in the first edition of Erasmus’s Greek Text, then surely it would have been corrected in the second, but it is interesting to note that all subsequent editions of Erasmus read the same as either *kai per estin* (with the space between *kai* and *per*) or *kaiper estin* (without the space), both meaning the same. It looks like Combs is faulting the TR for a textual error which was not there in the first place, for the reading of Codex 1r was not *kai parestai*, but *kai per estin* or *kaiper estin*.⁴⁵ Neither should the reading of *kaiper* as one word (without the space) be seen as an error for in classical Greek literature it often appears as one word, especially in Greek Tragedy.⁴⁶

Hoskier after his collection and collation of over 200 manuscripts for the Book of Revelation had this to say about Erasmus’s Text, “I may state that if Erasmus had striven to found a text on the largest number of existing MSS [manuscripts] in the world of one type, he could not have succeeded better.”⁴⁷ I agree with this observation of Dean Burgon Society scholar Jack Moorman, “Here then is a powerful example of God’s guiding providence in preserving the text of Revelation.”⁴⁸ In light of God’s special providential preservation of His inspired words, we reject Comb’s claim that Revelation 17:8 as found in the TR is a textual error.

Revelation 16:5

Combs says there is “an indisputable error” in Revelation 16:5 where the KJV reads, “And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus.” He says the words “shalt be,” should read “holy one.” He says there is no evidence whatsoever for the reading “shalt be” which translates accurately the Greek *esomenos*. According to Combs the right word should be *hosios* (“holy one”) and not *esomenos*.⁴⁹

It ought to be noted that Beza said he was certain about the reading *esomenos* in Revelation 16:5 in light of the internal evidences and the ancient manuscript he had in his possession. To be sure, Beza was not a

Bible corrector but a Bible believer and defender of the Faith. As such, he would have known only too well the warning of Revelation 22:18-19 against adding to or subtracting from the Holy Scriptures. There must have been compelling reasons for him, with a high view of Scripture, to restore to the Holy Scriptures the true reading which his predecessors had apparently overlooked. He gave his reasons as follows,

“And shall be”: The usual publication is “holy one,” which shows a division, contrary to the whole phrase which is foolish, distorting what is put forth in scripture. The Vulgate, however, whether it is articulately correct or not, is not proper in making the change to “holy,” since a section (of the text) has worn away the part after “and,” which would be absolutely necessary in connecting “righteous” and “holy one.” But with John there remains a completeness where the name of Jehovah (the Lord) is used, just as we have said before, 1:4; he always uses the three closely together, therefore it is certainly “and shall be,” for why would he pass over it in this place? And so *without doubting the genuine writing in this ancient manuscript, I faithfully restored in the good book what was certainly there, “shall be.”*⁵⁰

Besides the ancient Greek manuscript that Beza had, it ought to be noted that Beatus of Liebana in the eighth century, in his compilation of commentaries on the Book of Revelation has the Latin phrase, *qui fuisti et futures es*, for Revelation 16:5 which was found in the commentary of Tyconius which goes back to the fourth century.⁵¹ It is entirely possible that there were either early Greek manuscripts or Old Latin versions as early as the fourth century which contained the reading *esomenos*.

It is also significant to note that the reading *hosios* preferred by Combs is a harder reading. Robert L Thomas, Professor of New Testament at The Master’s Seminary, citing Swete commented, “Taking *hosios* as parallel with *dikaios* creates an intolerable harshness, however, and taking the adjective as a predicate adjective with *ho on* and *ho en* breaks the pattern of the Apocalypse in not assigning the expression a predicate nominative or adjective.”⁵² We note that the reading *ho esomenos*, the future participle of *eimi* in its masculine, singular, nominative form with the definite article fits well the pattern of the Apocalypse and functions well as an adjectival participle to describe *dikaios*—the Righteous One who shall soon come to judge a most wicked world.

Although it is admitted that *ho esomenos* is not the reading found in the Majority Text, we are wont to agree with Hills that such minority readings “seem to have been placed in the Greek TR by the direction of God’s special

providence and therefore are to be retained.”⁵³ It is also admitted that the reading of *ho hosios* in Stephen’s edition of the TR differs from Beza’s *ho esomenos*. So what do we do with the rare occasions when the several editions of the TR differ from one another? Hills replied,

The answer to this question is easy. We are guided by the common faith. Hence we favor that form of the Textus Receptus upon which more than any other God, working providentially, has placed the stamp of His approval, namely, the King James Version, or, more precisely the Greek text underlying the King James Version.⁵⁴

The reading of Revelation 16:5 in the Greek Text underlying the KJV is thus not proven as “an indisputable error” as Combs would have us think. There are enough reasons for us to receive it as an authentic reading in the light of God’s special providence as seen in both the internal and external evidences.⁵⁵

Romans 7:6

Combs says another “indisputable error” is found in Romans 7:6. This has to do with the reading *apothanontos* (genitive singular) vis-à-vis *apothonontes* (nominative plural). Stephen’s TR reads *apothanonthes* modifying *katergethemen* (“we are delivered”), whereas Beza’s and Scrivener’s read *apothanontos* modifying *apo tou nomou* (“from the law”), which is the reading underlying the KJV. It must be said that the King James translators in their translating work checked with other editions of the TR, and knew of other readings in that tradition. It is clear that they did not always follow Beza because as Scrivener noted they did depart from Beza on some occasions because they were intent on making the best choice.⁵⁶ In this case, they chose to follow Beza for reasons not made known to us. We unfortunately do not know nor have many of the manuscripts used by them. It is quite possible they had Greek manuscripts and/or ancient versions which supported Beza’s reading. They probably took into account the context of Romans 7 which says that law as our husband has died so that we might be married to another (Rom 7:1-4).⁵⁷ The law and its curse have died so that we might be married to Christ for life. Calvin understood verse 6 thusly, “The law, as far as we are concerned is abrogated, so that we are not oppressed with its intolerable burden, and do not find its inexorable rigour overwhelming us with its curse.”⁵⁸

Theologically speaking, the reading *apothanontos* is hardly “an indisputable error.” It is “an indisputable error” only to Combs because of his

text-critical presuppositions, but if one adopts a theological *sola fide* approach to the text based upon the biblical doctrine of VPP and special providence, there is no reason why we cannot receive the reading underlying the KJV as authentic.

Acts 9:6

The final example of “an indisputable error” in the Greek text underlying the KJV that Combs brought up is found in Acts 9:6. He says that the words, “And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him,” “are not found in any Greek manuscript,” and therefore should not be in the Bible.⁵⁹ Combs claims that Erasmus himself said he inserted that reading on the basis of Acts 26:14. But Acts 26:14 hardly reads the same as Acts 9:6. It is unlikely that there was any conjectural harmonisation on the part of Erasmus here considering the internal evidence. As for external evidences, Erasmus’s reading finds support in Greek Codex 221c which dates back to the 10th century and the Greek/Latin Codex Ottobonianus 629 which is 14th century. The reading is also found in the Old Latin manuscripts (ar, c, h, l, p, ph, t) which date back to the second century, and in the Latin Vulgate manuscripts which date back to the fourth and fifth centuries. It is also found in the Old Syriac, Coptic, Georgian, Slavonic and Ethiopic versions, and in the fourth century writings of Church Fathers like Lucifer of Cagliari (370), Ephraem (373) and Ambrose (397).⁶⁰ It is possible that these ancient versions were translated from Greek manuscripts which had those words. Many Greek manuscripts have yet to be studied and their contents revealed, and whether those will be studied and revealed without bias by the pro-Alexandrian critical scholars remains to be seen. We do not hold our breath.

As far as we are concerned, guided by a biblically-based worldview, we agree with Harvard theologian and textual scholar E F Hills who was astute to observe that the relatively few Latin Vulgate readings

which though not part of the Traditional Greek text, seem to have been placed in the Textus Receptus by the direction of God’s special providence and therefore are to be retained. The reader will note that these Latin Vulgate readings are also found in other ancient witnesses, namely, old Greek manuscripts, versions, and Fathers.⁶¹

Therefore, our confidence in the TR lies not in the work of the textual critics but in the special providence of God who had throughout the ages kept His inspired words pure in the Byzantine or Majority manuscripts, and

then in the Printed Texts of the 16th Century Protestant Reformation which have been received by the faithful church to be the infallible and inerrant, authentic and authoritative words of God to this day.

Translation Errors?

Combs proceeded next to criticise the KJV for its translation errors. He pointed out three examples which to him are “clear errors, which no amount of finessing can mitigate.”⁶² Let us now examine these “errors” so called.

Hebrews 10:23

Combs says the “most indisputable translation error” in the KJV is found in Hebrews 10:23 where the word “faith” should actually be “hope.”⁶³ He points out the actual Greek word is *elpis* (i.e. “hope”) and not *pistis* (i.e. “faith”). This is not denied by KJV defenders. The inspired and preserved, infallible and inerrant word is the Greek *elpis* which occurs a total of 54 times in the New Testament and is translated as “hope” in the KJV on 53 occasions (not 52 as Combs says), and once as “faith” in Hebrews 10:23. The old translations like Wycliffe, Bishop, Geneva, and Tyndale render it as “hope.” In view of this, Combs concludes that the KJV translators made a mistake here but says he does not know why the KJV translators failed to notice the error.

In response, let me raise a couple of questions: (1) Is it possible that Combs himself due to his prejudice against the KJV is mistaken (as he is with regard to the number of times *elpis* is found in the New Testament), and (2) can “faith” be an acceptable translation of *elpis*? Both questions can be answered in the affirmative.

Instead of looking at it as a translation error, it is possible that the KJV translators purposely departed from the usual word “hope” and translated it as “faith” because they saw in “faith” a better term than “hope” in the context of Hebrews 10:23. All grammarians know that the meaning of a word is determined by how it is used in its context. Now, in Hebrews 10:23, the genitive *elpidos* modifies *homologian* (“confession” or “profession”). I submit that it is precisely because of the noun *homologian* that the KJV translators chose to render *elpidos* as “faith” rather than “hope” for we do not normally confess or profess hope, but faith (Rom 10:9-10; 1 Tim 6:12). Furthermore, hope itself might not include faith, but faith certainly encompasses hope for Hebrews 11:1 says, “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” Contextually, faith in the

Lord Jesus Christ (Heb 10:12-21) and His promises (Heb 10:23) is what gives us the sure and steadfast hope of salvation. The Puritan writer, Matthew Poole, expressed this thought well when he commented,

*The profession of our faith; an outward exhibition to the world both in word and deed, as we have it sincerely in our hearts, solemnly owning it in the ordinances of God in his church, of the hope we have in Christ our High Priest, and of all that he hath purchased for us, and promised to perform in us and to us, chap. iii. 1, 6; iv. 14; vi. 11; Rom. x. 9, 10; 1 Pet. i. 3, 21.*⁶⁴

Although it may be legitimate to render *elpis* as “faith” in Hebrews 10:23, does the word itself etymologically allow for it? I believe it does. Consider the verb form of *elpis* which is *elpizo* which has been rendered by the KJV translators as “trust” 18 times (Matt 12:21; Luke 24:21; John 5:45; Rom 15:12, 24; 1 Cor 16:7; 2 Cor 1:10, 13, 5:11, 13:6; Phil 2:19; 1 Tim 4:10, 5:5, 6:17; Phlm 22; 1 Pet 3:5; 2 John 12; 3 John 14), and “hope” 13 times (Luke 6:34, 23:8; Acts 24:26, 26:7; Rom 8:24, 25; 1 Cor 13:7, 15:19; 2 Cor 8:5; Phil 2:23; 1 Tim 3:14; Heb 11:1; 1 Pet 1:13). As can be seen, *elpizo* is not only rendered “I hope,” but also “I trust” which certainly has the sense of faith. According to Spiros Zodhiates, a Greek scholar who is Greek himself, “*Elpis* may be defined as desire for future good, accompanied by faith in its realization.”⁶⁵ It is thus entirely legitimate for *elpis* in Hebrews 10:23 by virtue of the verbal noun *homologian* to which it is connected to be understood precisely as trust or faith—a trust or faith which is full of hope since it is based solely on the Lord Jesus Christ and His promises.⁶⁶ As such, it is hardly a “most indisputable translation error” as Combs would like us to think.

Acts 19:37

Combs cites Acts 19:37 as another problem. He says that the word translated “robbers of churches” in the KJV “is simply an erroneous translation,”⁶⁷ it should be “robbers of temples.” There is no dispute that the inspired and preserved word is *hierosulos* and found not only in the Greek TR but also all other manuscripts. It is also without dispute that *hierosulos* literally means “a temple robber.” It is certainly not erroneous to translate *hierosulous* in Acts 19:37 as “robbers of temples,” but is it indisputably erroneous to translate it as “robbers of churches” taking into consideration that “temples” and “churches” may be understood synonymously as referring to sacred places of worship?

Let us first of all look at how the word *hierosulos* is used in ancient Greek literature. The *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* says that the word has been used of (1) “the removal of gold vessels from the Jerusalem temple by Lysimachus, 2 Macc. 4:42,” (2) “anyone who steals sacred books or funds from the Jews,” (3) “those who destroyed the golden eagle above the temple gate,” and together with (4) those who are thieves, kidnappers, adulterers and murderers.⁶⁸ This tells us that the word has a wider sense than just a robber of pagan temples.

Let us now look at how the Reformation translations rendered this verse. The Wycliffe Bible has it as “for ye han brouyt these men, nethir sacrilegeris, nethir blasfemyng your goddesse;” the Geneva has, “For yee haue brought hither these men, which haue neither committed sacrilege, neither doe blaspheme your goddesse;” and Tyndale’s Bible reads, “For ye have brought hyther these me whiche are nether robbers of churches nor yet despisers of youre goddes.” The KJV agrees with Tyndale’s. It is significant to note that whereas the KJV translators followed Tyndale as regards “robbers of churches,” they did not follow likewise for “despisers of youre goddes” but instead rendered *blasphemountas ten thean humon* more literally as “blasphemers of your goddess” following the Wycliffe and Geneva Bibles. I believe this shows that the KJV translators (1) were mindful of the Greek text, (2) consulted previous translations, and (3) did not follow Tyndale slavishly.

Why then did the KJV translators render *hierosulous* as “robbers of churches” and not “robbers of temples”? It is possible that the KJV translators in their considered opinion or for some exegetical reason saw *hierosulous* not just in the narrow sense of pagan temples but also other religious places of worship which include churches. The word can also refer to any sacrilegious act or person (so Wycliffe and Geneva). Insofar as Acts 19:37 is concerned,

the town clerk takes the apostles under his protection. They are neither *hierosuloi* nor do they blaspheme Artemis. Here the term is general. They are not offenders against religion, and have not committed sacrilege.⁶⁹

Therefore, *hierosulos* is not as narrow a term as Combs thinks, and can thus be translated in a number of ways, “a sacrilegious person,” “a robber of temples,” or “a robber of churches.” The meaning that Acts 19:37 is trying to convey is that Paul was not a sacrilegious person for he had neither desecrated nor robbed from sacred places be they temples or churches.⁷⁰

Some might consider “robbers of temples” to be a better translation than “robbers of churches,” but the latter is hardly “erroneous.”⁷¹

The KJV translators would only be in error if they had translated *hierosulous* in Acts 19:37 as “robbers of banks” or “bank robbers.” Did they even come close? God forbid!

Acts 12:4

Combs went on to cite what he considers “another clear example” of a translation error in the KJV, this time in Acts 12:4. He criticises the KJV for translating *pascha* as “Easter.” According to Combs, what happened in Acts 12 “has nothing to do with Easter, the Christian celebration of Christ’s resurrection,” but a pagan festival in honour of “Esotre,” the goddess of spring.⁷²

However, there are others who think otherwise. Nick Sayers, for instance, explains,

In most languages the word for Easter is exactly the same as the word for Passover, so the relationship between the feast of Passover, and the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, is directly linked. A few examples are; Latin *Pascha*, French *Pâques*, Italian *Pasqua*, and Dutch *Pasen*. All these words mean both Easter and Passover, only the context formulates the difference. With the exception of English and German, all other European languages do not have separate words for Easter and Passover, but simply use a single term derived from *Pesach*, the Hebrew word for Passover.

In one way, this is an advantage to the believer, who immediately associates Jesus Christ as the Passover Lamb. Whether reading the New or Old Testaments, the association between Christ and the Passover is clearly seen. This was also the case in the original Greek language which uses the Greek word *Pascha* for both Passover and the resurrection of Christ. This has been the same for 2000 years in the Greek. Even if you look up a modern Greek dictionary it will tell you that *Pascha* means both Easter and Passover.

...

Tyndale was responsible for the insertion of both Easter and Passover in the English Bible. In his 1525 New Testament, Tyndale used the English word Easter to translate the Greek word *Pascha*. *Pascha*, being formerly transliterated in Wycliffe’s version, was for the first time in a Bible translation, translated into a unique English word.

...

Until 1611, English-speaking people had always associated the word *Easter* with the celebration of Passover and the prophetic implications which

occurred at Christ's death and resurrection. They saw that the Old Testament shadow was the Passover and that the New Testament fulfilment was Christ's death, burial, and resurrection called *Easter*. The King James Bible finalised 86 years of change in the use of *Easter* and *Passover*. After seeing what Tyndale had begun and the refining of the word *Easter* within almost a century of various translation attempts, the KJV translators caused the semantic range of *Easter* to be translated only once as *Easter* in Acts 12:4. This was because in every instance in the New Testament except Acts 12:4, the Greek word *Pascha* represented the pre-resurrection Passover, i.e. the Jewish celebration. In other words Christ had not yet died as the Passover lamb for the whole world. But in Acts 12:4 it is a post-resurrection Passover, where Christ had died and was risen. Since the time of the King James Version until the early twentieth century, the term *Easter* was commonly identified by believers solely as the celebration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Before Tyndale, *Easter* was the chief word used for the Jewish Passover by Christians. This is because Easter and Passover are the same season, Jews celebrating the shadow, and Christians celebrating the fulfilment. The word *Easter* has illustrated to the Englishman much more than simply the Passover celebration, but through Tyndale's addition of *Easter*, construction of the word *Passover*, and later with the King James' translators correctly re-applying *Easter* only once in Acts 12:4, it gives significant insight into revealing the fulfilment of the Passover in Christ. It exalts Jesus Christ's death and resurrection above all.

...

Luther's translation was a strong influence on Tyndale's New Testament. Because of persecution in Catholic England, Tyndale left England for Germany. It is strongly believed that he met with Luther in Germany in 1525, as many of Tyndale's beliefs were, in essence, Lutheran. By the end of the year, Tyndale had printed the New Testament in English. It is likely that Tyndale's use of *Easter* in his New Testament is also indebted to his knowledge of Luther's German translation, which uses *Oster* (pronounced *Ouster*) in the same way as Tyndale uses *Easter*. Because the English Anglo Saxon language originally derived from the Germanic when the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes came to England in the 5th and 6th centuries, there are many similarities between German and English. Many English writers have referred to the German language as the Mother Tongue! The English word *Easter* is of German/Saxon origin and not Babylonian as Alexander Hislop falsely claimed, The German equivalent is *Oster*. *Oster* (*Ostern* being the modern day correspondent) is related to *Ost* which means the rising of the sun, or simply in English, east. *Oster* comes from the old Teutonic form of *auferstehen/auferstehung*, which means resurrection, which in the older Teutonic form comes from two words, *ester* meaning *first*, and *stehen* meaning *to stand*. These two words combine to form *erstehen* which is an old German

form of *auferstehen*, the modern day German word for resurrection. The English *Easter* and German *Oster* go hand in hand.

Tyndale with his expertise in the German language knew of the *Easter-Oster* association. Luther obviously defined *Oster* both as a synonym for the Jewish Passover and a phrase used for the resurrection of Christ.

...

The etymology of *Easter* is easily traced to the German word for resurrection, not to some fabricated pagan goddess, for which there is not a crumb of evidence.⁷³

Since there is no true English equivalent for the term *pascha*,⁷⁴ I consider both “Passover” and “Easter” to be equally acceptable translations, taking into consideration how both terms have developed through time. Whichever term is used, it is for the exegete to explain the anachronism and the meaning of the term within the etymological, historical, and theological contexts of the divinely inspired and preserved word in the original language.

I echo the sentiments of Sayers against those who spare no effort to undermine the faithfulness and accuracy of the KJV,

What a shame that believers devote so much time arguing against Easter, something that Christ himself instituted, or waste so much time attacking the KJV Bible.

It also seems strange if not blasphemous that we as Bible-believing Christians could think that the King James Version translators would insert the name of a pagan deity in place of the word *Pascha*. ...

To think that the world’s most famous translation could get it so wrong here is sheer ignorance on our behalf. To believe that Tyndale, Cranmer, Martin Luther, Coverdale, Matthews, the translators of the Great Bible, and the Bishops’ Bible, the King James Bible, were referring to a pagan god of the spring called Ishtar is so absurd that it becomes humorous when examined.⁷⁵

Transmission Errors?

In this section, Combs took pains to highlight “a number of well-known printing errors in various editions of the KJV over the years.”⁷⁶ KJV-Superiority defenders do not deny that there were/are printing errors in the KJV. These printing errors do not impinge upon the infallibility and inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures since the infallibility and inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures are strictly tied to their inspiration (VPI) and preservation (VPP) by God in the original languages, and we identify these original

language Scriptures to be the Hebrew MT and the Greek TR of the Great Protestant Reformation.

KJV critics often ridicule the KJV by calling it the “Adulterer’s Bible” and “Murderer’s Bible” because of printing mistakes in the 1631 edition which omitted the word “not” from the commandment, “Thou shalt not commit adultery” (Exod 20:14), and the 1795 edition which read “Let the children first be killed” instead of “Let the children first be filled” (Mark 7:27). I am glad Combs brought this up because it illustrates how the Bible is still infallible and inerrant despite the printing or copying mistakes. Man makes mistakes but not God, and He has infallibly preserved His inspired words to the jot and tittle “by His singular care and providence” (Matt 5:18, WCF 1:8). It is only when we have a Perfect Standard—a presently infallible and inerrant Bible in the original languages—that such human mistakes are easily and quickly detected and corrected so that today the KJV is no longer an “adulterous” or “murderous” Bible. Since 1611, other necessary corrections have been made to the KJV, and most were done by 1769. It goes without saying that with new editions, new mistakes could appear, and corrections would have to be made again. For instance, in the first printing of *The Defined King James Bible* in 1998, the word “bondwoman” was erroneously printed as “bondman” (Gal 4:23, 30, 31).⁷⁷ This of course has been corrected in subsequent printings.

Now, although Combs is quick to see printing errors in the KJV and is able to correct them to make them right, he is clueless about identifying the words God has originally inspired since he avers that God did nothing miraculous in preserving His inspired words.⁷⁸ Combs went on to say that “we presently possess over 5,000 copies, or partial copies, of the Greek NT, and no two of these manuscripts agree exactly.”⁷⁹ Historically, the saints prior to the text-critical era never thought of the Scriptures in such a way. They never thought of the original language Scriptures that they had in their hands, namely the apographs, as imperfect, fallible or errant.⁸⁰ That would be fatal to their cause, for it would have destroyed the very foundational doctrine of *Sola Scriptura*, not to mention *Sola Gratia*, *Sola Fide*, *Solus Christus*, and *Soli Deo Gloria*. The view that only the autographs are infallible and inerrant and nothing else is a new doctrine conceived by 19th century Protestant scholastics of whom B B Warfield was chief.⁸¹

The Reformed pastors and scholars in Reformation and Post-Reformation days had always believed and affirmed the infallibility and inerrancy of the autographs as well as the apographs, the very Scriptures they

had in their possession which be the sole and supreme authority of their faith and practice as opposed to the Roman Catholic view of papal infallibility and supremacy.⁸² Francis Turretin, 17th century Professor of Theology in Geneva, made it very clear what the Reformation saints believed to be the inspired Scriptures,

By the original texts, we do not mean the autographs written by the hand of Moses, of the prophets and of the apostles, which certainly do not now exist. We mean their apographs which are so called because they set forth to us the word of God in the very words of those who wrote under the immediate inspiration of the Holy Spirit.⁸³

Historical theologian Richard A Muller of Calvin Theological Seminary wrote in no uncertain terms,

The Protestant scholastics do not press the point by their nineteenth-century followers that the infallibility of Scripture and the freedom of Scripture from error reside absolutely in the *autographa* and only in a derivative sense in the *apographa*; rather, the scholastics argue positively that the *apographa* preserve intact the true words of the prophets and the apostles and that the God-breathed (*theopneustos*, q.v.) character of Scripture is manifest in the *apographa* as well as in the *autographa*.⁸⁴

By the same doctrine and spirit, we oppose the modern assault on the present infallibility and inerrancy of Scriptures by the text-critics and their rationalistic rules of textual criticism. Warfield's appeal to textual criticism and textual critical scholarship is a return to the Romish days and ways that only the "ecclesiastics" and "scholars" are qualified to determine what is and what is not God's word. The denial of the present infallibility and inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures effectively destroys the doctrine of *Sola Scriptura* and Biblical authority, and makes the text-critical college the authority over the inspired Scriptures God has single-handedly and supernaturally preserved to the jot and tittle (*providentia extraordinaria*). We deny that the textual critics and their man-made rules of criticism have any authority over the Holy Scriptures God has verbally inspired and verbally preserved.

An Errant Scripture Cannot Be Authoritative

Combs not only maliciously labels as heretics all who believe in the present infallibility and inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures and identify the inspired and preserved Scriptures to be precisely the Hebrew MT and Greek TR on which the Reformation Bible—the KJV—is based, he went on to advocate that there is nothing wrong with believing that the Bible is no

longer totally infallible and inerrant. He says, “There is nothing deceptive or hypocritical about referring to our Bibles as authoritative Scripture, even though they are not absolutely perfect.”⁸⁵ Combs’s thesis is utterly deadly. Let me say that it is the height of deception and hypocrisy to claim that the Bible is absolutely authoritative without it being totally infallible and inerrant.

The battle for the Bible today is the battle for its present infallibility and inerrancy and absolute authority. Without the Lord infallibly preserving His inspired Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek words by special providence to the last jot and tittle, the Reformation, Evangelical and Fundamentalist claim of Biblical infallibility, inerrancy and authority is empty and in vain. “If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?” (Ps 11:3). But glory be to God who “has magnified His Word above all His name” (Ps 138:2); “The law of the LORD *is* perfect, converting the soul” (Ps 19:7); “The Word of our God shall stand forever” (Isa 40:8); “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).

We cannot and dare not deny nor be uncertain about the Bible nor the Christian Faith by being agnostic about the present perfection of the Holy Scriptures which be our sole, supreme and final authority of faith and practice. If we do, how then can we preach with authority, “Thus saith the Lord,” “It is written”?

There is a vital need today to re-live and recapture the faith of the Reformers and the spirit of the Reformation in this postmodern, emergent and neo-deistic church age. Unless and until we are sure and certain about the very Foundations of our Faith—the Living Word and the Written Words of God, we have no *apologia* against the constant attacks on the Historic Christian Faith by the likes of Dan Brown, Bart Ehrman, Brian McLaren, and a host of neo-orthodox, neo-evangelical, neo-fundamental scholars today. Worst of all, we will have no gospel to preach. The bright side is, the victory is already won, as Calvin was wont to say, “What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?” (Rom 8:31); “For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth” (2 Cor 13:8).

Notes

¹ *Westminster Larger Catechism*, Q 157.

² William W Combs, “Errors in the King James Version?,” *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* (1999): 162.

Errors in the King James Version?

³ E.g. J O Buswell, *A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1962), 1:185-8; Paul Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology* (Chicago: Moody, 1989), 162-6; Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 73-76. Charles Ryrie explains well the process by which the term VPI came to be in *Basic Theology* (Wheaton: Victor, 1986), 67.

⁴ See Harold Lindsell, *The Battle for the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), and George M Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism* (Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans, 1987).

⁵ According to Daniel B Wallace, in his article on "Inspiration, Preservation, and New Testament Textual Criticism," *Grace Theological Journal* 12 (1991): 43, "the doctrine of the preservation has neither ancient historical roots, nor any direct biblical basis."

⁶ Constitution of the Far Eastern Bible College, Article 4.2.1.

⁷ Timothy Tow and Jeffrey Khoo, *Theology for Every Christian* (Singapore: Far Eastern Bible College, 2007), 77-8. This is a restatement and reaffirmation of the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, chapter 1 and paragraph 8 which states, "The Old Testament in Hebrew ... and the New Testament in Greek ..., being immediately inspired by God, and, by His singular care and providence, kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentic.".

⁸ Combs agrees that the autographs are not available, "Errors in the King James Version?," 154.

⁹ See E Jay Epp, "The Multivalence of the Term 'Original Text' in New Testament Textual Criticism," *Harvard Theological Review* 92 (1999): 245-81.

¹⁰ Constitution of the Far Eastern Bible College, Article 4.2.1.1. For articles on how we arrive at this conclusion, see Jeffrey Khoo, "A Plea for a Perfect Bible," *The Burning Bush* (January 2003): 1-15; "Sola Autographa or Sola Apographa?" *The Burning Bush* (January 2005): 3-19; and "Inspiration, Preservation, and Translations," *The Burning Bush* (January 2007): 4-24.

¹¹ Ibid., Article 4.2.1.2.

¹² William W Combs, "Errors in the King James Version?," *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 4 (1999): 151-64.

¹³ Ibid., 151.

¹⁴ Combs, "Errors in the King James Version?," 151, 162. He wrote these condemnatory words, "My only reason for pointing out these particular errors in the KJV is ... to disprove this new heresy on a perfect, inerrant translation." He maliciously accuses D A Waite and the Dean Burgon Society for this new heresy. It is clear that D A Waite, the President of the Dean Burgon Society and those connected to that Society do not espouse the heretical views of certain fundamentalists who believe the KJV to be doubly inspired, advanced revelation, and superior to the original language texts.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ "A ... distinction can be made between (1) *providentia ordinaria*, ordinary or general providence, by means of which God conserves, supports, and governs all things through the instrumentality of secondary causes in accord with the laws of nature; and (2) *providentia extraordinaria*, extraordinary or special providence, according to which God performs in his wisdom special acts or miracles (*miracula*, q.v.) that lie beyond the normal possibilities inherent in secondary causality and that can, therefore, be termed either *supra causas*, beyond or above causes, or *contra causas*, against or over against causes. *Providentia ordinaria* corresponds with God's ordained power (*potentia ordinata*, q.v.) and

providentia extraordinaria with God's absolute power (*potentia absoluta*, q.v.).” *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms*, s.v. “*providentia*,” by Richard A Muller.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 152-3.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 153.

¹⁹ Dean Burgon Society, “Articles of Faith, Operation, and Organization,” http://www.deanburgonsociety.org/DBS_Society/articles.htm, accessed on February 11, 2009. Emphasis mine.

²⁰ Lynn Gray Gordon, *The World's Greatest Truths* (Singapore: Far Eastern Bible College, 1999), 26.

²¹ D A Waite, *Defending the King James Bible*, 3rd rev ed (Collingswood: Bible For Today, 2006), xi.

²² Ruckman says, “the King James Authorized Version of the Bible is superior to any set of Greek or Hebrew manuscripts, including the so-called ‘originals.’” Peter Ruckman, “The Super Superiority of the King James Bible,” *Bible Believers' Bulletin* 32 (January 2008): 2.

²³ “The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy (1978),” http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Chicago_Statement_on_Biblical_Inerrancy, accessed on February 27, 2009.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ According to them, “Since God has nowhere promised an inerrant transmission of Scripture, it is necessary to affirm that only the autographic text of the original documents was inspired and to maintain the need of textual criticism as a means of detecting any slips that may have crept into the text in the course of its transmission.” See “Chicago Statement of Biblical Inerrancy with Exposition,” in <http://www.bible-researcher.com/chicago1.html>, accessed on April 11, 2009.

²⁶ See George Skariah, “The Biblical Doctrine of the Perfect Preservation of the Holy Scriptures,” ThD dissertation, Far Eastern Bible College, 2005.

²⁷ William W Combs, “The Preservation of Scripture,” *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 5 (2000): 37.

²⁸ For an exposition of the Biblical doctrine of the verbal and plenary preservation of the Holy Scriptures, see Tow and Khoo, *Theology for Every Christian*, 77-118 and Jeffrey Khoo, *Kept Pure in All Ages: Recapturing the Authorised Version and the Doctrine of Providential Preservation* (Singapore: FEBC Press, 2001). See also Dennis Kwok and the Faculty of the Far Eastern Bible College, *VPP of the Bible: A Course on the Doctrine of Verbal Plenary Preservation*, ed H D Williams (Cleveland: Old Paths Publications, 2008) which is freely downloadable from http://www.biblefortoday.org/PDF/dbs_course_on_vpp.pdf.

²⁹ Combs, “Errors in the King James Version?,” 154.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*

³³ Combs, “Errors in the King James Version?,” 160.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 155.

³⁵ BDB, s.v. “*sapah*,” 705.

³⁶ *TWOT*, s.v. “*sapa*,” by R D Patterson.

³⁷ Albert Barnes, *Notes on the Old Testament, Isaiah* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1950 reprint), 1:255. John D W Watts commented, “*Each [joined] to his own people* presumes a population that has migrated to the great cities in search of jobs or buyers for goods or as

Errors in the King James Version?

mercenaries. They return to their villages in times of trouble.” *Isaiah 1-33*, Word Biblical Commentary (Waco: Word Books, 1985), 24:198.

³⁸ John Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Isaiah* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981 reprint), 1:424.

³⁹ Edward F Hills, *Believing Bible Study* (Des Moines: Christian Research Press, 1977), 83.

⁴⁰ Combs, “Errors in the King James Version?,” 155.

⁴¹ Henk Jan De Jonge, “*Novum Testamentum A Nobis Versum*: The Essence of Erasmus’ Edition of the New Testament,” *Journal of Theological Studies* NS 35 (1984): 409.

⁴² Combs called Erasmus a “Roman Catholic” in an attempt to cast doubt on his credibility. Well, Luther was a “Catholic” too, but opposed to the false teachings of Rome. Erasmus was opposed to Rome too, and it is said of both of them in their Reformation work, “Erasmus laid the egg, but Luther hatched it.” See S M Houghton, *Sketches from Church History* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1980), 78.

⁴³ See the critical apparatus of Constantin Tischendorf, *Novum Testamentum Graece* (Lipsiae: Sumptibus Adolphi Winter, 1859), 656.

⁴⁴ Hills was uncertain and simply suggested that it “seems to be a misprint” (emphasis mine). Edward F Hills, *The King James Version Defended* (Des Moines: Christian Research Press, 1984), 202.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ LSJ, s.v. “*kaiper*,” 859.

⁴⁷ Cited in J A Moorman, *When the KJV Departs from the “Majority” Text*, 2nd ed (Collingswood: Bible For Today, 1988), 16.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 26.

⁴⁹ Combs, “Errors in the King James Version?,” 156.

⁵⁰ As cited in Thomas Holland, “Manuscript Evidence,” http://www.purewords.org/kjb1611/html/rev16_5.htm, accessed on 9 March 2009, emphasis mine.

⁵¹ Ibid. See also Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, *The Text of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 211, for information on Beatus of Lieban.

⁵² Robert L Thomas, *Revelation 8-22: An Exegetical Commentary* (Chicago: Moody, 1995), 255-6.

⁵³ Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, 200.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 223.

⁵⁵ See also Moorman, *When the KJV Departs from the “Majority” Text*, 102.

⁵⁶ F H A Scrivener, *The New Testament in Greek* (Cambridge: University Press, 1881), 648-55.

⁵⁷ “The evidence we do have tells a lot about the work but not enough to clear up all mysteries about how the work was done; speculation and guesswork will be unavoidable as we try to establish just how the text [i.e. KJV] was created.” David Norton, *A Textual History of the King James Bible*, 4.

⁵⁸ John Calvin, *The Epistles of Paul to the Romans and Thessalonians*, in *Calvin’s Commentaries* trans R Mackenzie (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973 reprint), 141.

⁵⁹ Combs, “Errors in the King James Version?,” 157.

⁶⁰ Kevin James, *The Corruption of the Word* (Williamsburg: Micro-Load Press, 1990), 210; and Moorman, *When the KJV Departs from the “Majority” Text*, 61.

⁶¹ Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, 200.

⁶² Combs, “Errors in the King James Version?,” 157.

⁶³ Ibid., 158.

⁶⁴ Matthew Poole, *A Commentary on the Holy Bible* (Peabody: Hendricksen, nd), 3:856.

⁶⁵ *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*, s.v. “*elpis*,” by Spiros Zodhiates.

⁶⁶ According to Liddell, Scott and Jones (LSJ), *elpizo* can mean the “reason to expect or believe,” *Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v. “*elpizo*,” 537. Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich, and Danker (BAGD) say that *elpizo* can come with the indication “of the person or thing on whom (which) the hope is based,” in *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, s.v. “*elpizo*,” 252; also Louw and Nida (LN), “*elpis* ...: derivative of *elpizo* ... that which constitutes the cause or reason for hoping—‘the basis for hope, the reason for hope.’,” in *Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v. “Hope, Look Forward To,” 1:296.

⁶⁷ Combs, “Errors in the King James Version?,” 158.

⁶⁸ *TDNT*, s.v. “*hierosoulos*,” by Gottlob Schrenk.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ See John Calvin, *The Acts of the Apostles 14-28*, in *Calvin's Commentaries* trans John Fraser (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991 reprint), 166.

⁷¹ This writer rejects Peter Ruckman's view that the KJV presents “advanced revelation” in Acts 19:37. See Combs, “Errors in the King James Version?” 158, footnote 21.

⁷² Ibid., 159.

⁷³ Nick Sayers, “Why We Should Not Pass-over Easter,” *Contending Earnestly for the Faith* (March 2008): 2-7, available at <http://www.christian-witness.org/pdf/cecf/cecf43.pdf>, accessed on 15 April 2009. Noteworthy is Sayers expose of the false link between “Easter” and paganism as popularised by Alexander Hislop. See also Thomas Holland, *Crowned with Glory: The Bible from Ancient Text to Authorized Version*, Swordsearcher Version 5, Brandon Staggs, Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, 2005; also available at http://av1611.com/kjbp/faq/holland_ac12_4.html, accessed on 15 April 2009; Jack Moorman, “Easter, or Passover,” in <http://www.feasite.org/Tracts/fbconies.htm#Easter>, accessed on 15 April 2009; Will Kinney, “Is ‘Easter’ an Error in the King James Bible,” in <http://www.geocities.com/brandplucked/Easter.html>, accessed on 15 April 2009. Terence H Brown of the Trinitarian Bible Society however is of the opinion that “Passover” is to be preferred to “Easter,” see his article “The Use of ‘Easter’ in Acts 12:4,” in <http://www.trinitarianbiblesociety.org/site/articles/easter.asp>, accessed on 15 April 2009.

⁷⁴ *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, s.v. “Pasch, Paschal Controversy,” by Thomas M Finn.

⁷⁵ Nick Sayers, “Why We Should Not Pass-over Easter,” 7.

⁷⁶ Combs, “Errors in the King James Version?,” 159.

⁷⁷ *The Defined King James Bible* (Collingswood: Bible for Today, 1998), 1542.

⁷⁸ Combs, “Errors in the King James Version?,” 160.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ See my article, “*Sola Autographa* or *Sola Apographa*?: A Case for the Present Perfection and Authority of the Holy Scriptures,” *The Burning Bush* 11 (2005): 3-19.

⁸¹ See my article, “Can Verbal Plenary Inspiration Do Without Verbal Plenary Preservation?: The Achilles’ Heel of Princeton Bibliology,” *The Burning Bush* 13 (2007): 25-43.

⁸² Geoffrey Chapman, *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (London: Cassell Imprint, 1994), 205.

Errors in the King James Version?

⁸³ Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, trans George Musgrave Giger (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1992), 106.

⁸⁴ *Dictionary of Greek and Latin Theological Terms*, s.v. “*autographa*,” by Richard A Muller.

⁸⁵ Combs, “Errors in the King James Version?,” 163.

**A PUBLIC RESPONSE TO MR LIM SENG HOO'S
OPEN LETTER AND PAPER
AGAINST THE VERBAL PLENARY
PRESERVATION OF SCRIPTURE**

Jeffrey Khoo

I refer to Mr Lim Seng Hoo's open letter of July 13, 2005, and his so-called "evidential review" against the Biblical doctrine of the 100% perfect preservation of the Holy Scriptures.

It is my sincere desire that in all things, including the writing of this response, that our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ be glorified always (Isa 42:8, Jer 9:23-24, 1 Cor 1:17-31), and that I should be loyal and faithful to Him no matter what the cost (Mark 8:34, Rev 2:10). For the last 13 years of my teaching ministry at the Far Eastern Bible College (FEBC), I have been taking the Dean Burgon oath that the Word of God is perfect without any mistake. This oath was instituted by FEBC's founding principal—the Rev Dr Timothy Tow—and required of all faculty members at the college's annual convocation since the 1970s. I gladly take this oath and dare not break it by denying that the Sacred Scriptures I swore by and have in my hands today are infallible and inerrant, without any mistake.

The perfect Bible is not only for me, but for every one who bears the name of Christ. The truth that Christians today possess an infallible and inerrant Scripture based on the Biblical doctrines of the Verbal Plenary Inspiration (VPI) and Verbal Plenary Preservation (VPP) of Scripture is clearly taught and explained in the following books and papers written by the FEBC faculty:

1. Timothy Tow and Jeffrey Khoo, *A Theology for Every Christian: Knowing God and His Word* (Singapore: FEBC Press, 1998).
2. Timothy Tow, "Holy Hatred," *The Burning Bush* 4 (1998): 106-113.

3. Jeffrey Khoo, *Kept Pure in All Ages: Recapturing the Authorised Version and the Doctrine of Providential Preservation* (Singapore: FEBC Press, 2001).

4. Jeffrey Khoo, "Bob Jones University and the KJV: A Critique of *From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man*," *The Burning Bush* 7 (2001): 1-24. Republished together with another review by Thomas Strouse, in "Reviews of the Book *From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man*" by Pensacola Theological Seminary for distribution in USA.

5. Timothy Tow, "Death in the Pot!," *The Burning Bush* 7 (2001): 35-37.

6. Prabhudas Koshy, "Why We Should Regard the Bible as Authoritative," *Bible Witness*, July-September 2001, 8-10.

7. Timothy Tow, "God's Special Providential Care of the Text of Scripture," *Bible Witness*, October-December 2002, 3-4.

8. Jeffrey Khoo, "A Perfect Bible Today!," *Bible Witness*, October-December 2002, 5-6.

9. Prabhudas Koshy, "Jesus' View of the Holy Scripture: An Exposition of Matthew 5:17-19," *Bible Witness*, October-December 2002, 12-15.

10. Prabhudas Koshy, "If We Reject the Doctrine of the Perfect Preservation of the Bible," *Bible Witness*, October-December 2002, 16-17.

11. Prabhudas Koshy, "Faith Guides, Intellectualism Beguiles," *Bible Witness*, October-December 2002, 18-20.

12. Jeffrey Khoo, "A Plea for a Perfect Bible," *The Burning Bush* 9 (2003): 1-15.

13. Jeffrey Khoo, *KJV Questions and Answers* (Singapore: Bible Witness Literature Ministry, 2003).

14. Jeffrey Khoo, "The Emergence of Neo-Fundamentalism: *One Bible Only?* or "Yea Hath God Said?," *The Burning Bush* 10 (2004): 2-47.

15. Quek Suan Yew, "Judges 18:30: Moses or Manasseh?," *The Burning Bush* 10 (2004): 48-53.

16. Jeffrey Khoo, "John Owen on the Perfect Bible," *The Burning Bush* 10 (2004): 74-85.

17. Prabhudas Koshy, “Did Jesus and the Apostles Rely on the Corrupt Septuagint,” *The Burning Bush* 10 (2004): 93-95.

18. Quek Suan Yew, “Did God Promise to Preserve His Words?: Interpreting Psalm 12:6-7,” *The Burning Bush* 10 (2004): 96-98.

19. Jeffrey Khoo, “*Sola Autographa* or *Sola Apographa*?: A Case for the Present Perfection and Authority of the Holy Scriptures,” *The Burning Bush* 11 (2005): 3-19.

20. Quek Suan Yew, “Jesus on Perfect Preservation of the Bible,” *Bible Witness*, March-April 2005, 3-6.

21. Jeffrey Khoo, “The Canonisation and Preservation of Scripture,” *Bible Witness*, March-April 2005, 7-8.

22. Timothy Tow, “My Glory Will I Not Give to Another (Isaiah 42:8),” *The Burning Bush* 11 (2005): 67-68.

23. Carol Lee, “A Child of God Looks at the Doctrine of Verbal Plenary Preservation,” *The Burning Bush* 11 (2005): 69-81.

24. Jeffrey Khoo, “Bob Jones University, Neo-Fundamentalism, and Biblical Preservation,” *The Burning Bush* 11 (2005): 82-97.

Despite my efforts to uphold the reliability of the KJV and the infallibility and inerrancy of its underlying Hebrew and Greek Scriptures, Mr Lim appears to do whatever is in his power to oppose and criticise my defence of the KJV and the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures on which it is based. Many who are knowledgeable of the VPP of Scripture and what it truly means are not troubled by Mr Lim’s paper, but there are some who are disturbed and confused, and are asking the question: “Mr Lim uses the KJV, and so do you, so why is he then so dead against your defence of the KJV? What is the difference between Mr Lim’s position and yours?” It is a good question which must be answered.

I think it will clarify if I (1) list the differences between Mr Lim’s position and my position on the preservation of Scriptures; (2) respond to Mr Lim’s allegations made against the doctrine of the VPP of Scripture, and (3) rebut, point-by-point, his arguments against the present perfection of Scripture.

The following letters from Mr Lim and other documents that I have (and will be prepared to release if required or necessary) have been used to collate or summarise Mr Lim’s non-VPP position:

1. Letter dated January 2, 2003 to Rev Dr Timothy Tow (copied to Dr SH Tow and to me).
2. Letter dated February 12, 2003 to me (copied to Rev Dr Timothy Tow, and Dr SH Tow).
3. Letter dated March 14, 2003 to me.
4. Letter dated March 27, 2003 to me (copied to Rev Dr Timothy Tow, and Dr SH Tow).
5. Letter dated September 24, 2003 to me with his paper, "An Evidential Review of the VPP Theory."
6. Open Letter dated July 13, 2005 to me, "10 Jul 05 Morning Sermon at Calvary Pandan: Jn 7:24 'Judge Righteous Judgement'-No Basis for Perfect KJB."

Below is the table showing Mr Lim's position and the 20 points of differences between Mr Lim's position and mine:

	Non-VPP: Imperfect Preservation of Holy Scriptures	VPP: Perfect Preservation of Holy Scriptures
1	VPP of Scripture is <i>"theory."</i>	VPP of Scripture is <i>doctrine</i> (Ps 12:6-7, Matt 5:18).
2	Only VPI autographs are infallible and inerrant. <i>Bible perfect only in the past.</i> Dean Burgon Oath refers not at all to the apographs, but <i>only autographs.</i>	Both VPI autographs and VPP apographs are infallible and inerrant. <i>Bible perfect in the past as well as in the present.</i> Autographs are fully/entirely preserved in the faithful and infallible apographs. The infallibility of the apographs is a reformed doctrine.
3	Based on logic of <i>facts per se</i> . No support from Bible whatsoever. "Without doubt, Almighty God could easily have given us a VPP apographs [sic] as well as made the autographs indestructible, but <i>the evidence is that He did not!</i> "	Based on logic of <i>faith</i> that rests on the Bible itself (Heb 11:6). This leads to the <i>correct interpretation of facts or evidences.</i> The Holy Scriptures (autographs and apographs) by God's divine inspiration and special preservation are incorruptible and indestructible.

	Non-VPP: Imperfect Preservation of Holy Scriptures	VPP: Perfect Preservation of Holy Scriptures
4	Facts say that Bible contains <i>actual</i> discrepancies. Discrepancies are found in 2 Kings 8:26/2 Chron 22:2, and 2 Sam 8:4/1 Chron 18:4. These are <i>scribal errors</i> .	Faith that is based <i>on the Bible alone</i> (<i>Sola Scriptura</i>) says that the Bible is "perfect" and "very pure" (Pss 19:7, 119:40). Discrepancies are only <i>apparent</i> . There are <i>no errors at all</i> in 2 Kings 8:26/2 Chron 22:2, and 2 Sam 8:4/1 Chron 18:4 <i>scribal or otherwise</i> . "Let God be true, but every man a liar" (Rom 3:4).
5	God's Word has "built-in redundancy."	The Bible has no redundant words at all. Every word in the Bible is important (Matt 4:4).
6	God's Word has "built-in checks" (citing out of context, 2 Cor 13:1, Matt 18:16, Deut 29:15), ie, Scripture <i>corrects</i> Scripture; <i>rejects</i> <i>harmonisation</i> of Scripture.	Scripture does not correct itself by virtue of its inerrancy and infallibility. Scripture <i>interprets</i> Scripture, and <i>harmonises</i> with Scripture (1 Cor 2:13).
7	"No single purified text." Therefore <i>no perfect Bible today</i> .	<i>Every God-breathed Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek word is preserved to the jot and tittle</i> (Matt 5:18, 24:35). Therefore <i>perfect Bible exists today</i> in all the inspired Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek <i>words</i> (not text <i>per se</i>) underlying the Reformation Bibles best represented by the KJV, not the modern Bible versions which are based on the corrupt and critical texts of Westcott-Hort.
8	"Of the thousands of extant apographa both OT and NT, no two are alike, which would mean ... not even a single one is jot and tittle perfect."	Jesus in AD 27 held the OT apograph in His hands, and declared that it is jot and tittle perfect (Matt 5:18). Jesus Christ is true, not any "textual critic."
9	Cites for authority, many human authors and commentaries.	Cites for authority the 100% perfect Word of God—our only supreme and final rule of faith and life.

	Non-VPP: Imperfect Preservation of Holy Scriptures	VPP: Perfect Preservation of Holy Scriptures
10	<p>Contentends for the "inerrancy of the <i>meaning</i>." "Whether we have all the original jots and tittles or not, every key meanings [sic] and salvation doctrines [sic] are [sic] entirely preserved!"</p>	<p>Contentends for the inerrancy of the <i>words</i>. Meaning comes from words (how can there be meaning without words?). Every word to the jot and tittle is therefore preserved (Matt 5:18), not just "salvation doctrines." Every spiritual, historical, geographical, and scientific word is preserved.</p>
11	<p>Misrepresents by stating that "VPPism requires an inspired KJV textual criticism;" "VPPism requires ... English as the singly blessed language of the Gospel;" the KJV is "absolutely perfect;" "it is KJV fundamentalism gone extreme." Creates a false dichotomy, "May we be Christians first, theologians second."</p>	<p><i>Absolute perfection lies only in the Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek Scriptures on which the KJV is based</i> (2 Tim 3:16). The KJV is the best, most faithful, most accurate, most trustworthy, most beautiful Bible in the English language. Its "perfection," "infallibility," or "inerrancy" is only in the <i>derived</i> sense (as far as it accurately and faithfully reflects the original). The KJV is <i>not directly, doubly or separately inspired</i> (<i>rejects</i> Ruckmanism which is "KJV fundamentalism gone extreme").</p>
12	<p>Understands providential preservation in terms of <i>general</i> providence—non-miraculous.</p>	<p>Understands providential preservation in terms of <i>special</i> providence—supernatural and miraculous (involving God's personal supervision and direct intervention). "By His <i>singular</i> care and providence, kept pure in all ages" (WCF, I:8). Biblical preservation is God's work, not man's.</p>
13	<p>Perfect preservation is a "new doctrine."</p>	<p>Perfect preservation is as old as the Bible (Ps 12:6-7). "It stands perfectly written" (Greek perfect tense of <i>gegraptai</i>).</p>
14	<p>Psalm 12:6-7 means preservation of the <i>people</i> of God, not the words of God.</p>	<p>Psalm 12:6-7 means preservation of the <i>words</i> of God according to Hebrew grammar and exegesis (GKC, 440).</p>

	Non-VPP: Imperfect Preservation of Holy Scriptures	VPP: Perfect Preservation of Holy Scriptures
15	Falsely accuses VPP holders of saying, "the Bible was not kept pure in all ages, but only restored pure from 1611 onwards."	"The purity of God's words has been <i>faithfully maintained</i> in the Traditional/Byzantine/Majority/Received Text, and <i>fully represented</i> in the Textus Receptus that underlies the KJV."
16	The perfect Bible is found only in heaven, kept in the Ark of His testament (Rev 11:19), not on earth!	The perfect Bible is not only found in heaven <i>but also on earth</i> (Ps 119:89, Matt 4:4). "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Matt 6:10).
17	The words of God will <i>not</i> be forever preserved. God's words <i>will pass away</i> when the earth passes away.	God's words are permanently, perpetually and perfectly preserved, and will never pass away. God will keep and fulfil every jot and tittle of His words both in heaven and on earth (Matt 5:18), and His words shall never pass away (Matt 24:35), "forever settled," (Ps 119:89), and "endureth for ever" (1 Pet 1:25).
18	Accuses VPP proponents of teaching an "insidious heresy."	Believing that God's inspired Canon and words are 100% preserved in the original language Scriptures, the Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek words underlying the KJV is <i>not heresy</i> , but the truth (cf 2 Cor 13:8).
19	It is godly and scholarly to believe that the Bible is no longer perfect today. VPP defenders are divisive and unscholarly men.	It glorifies God and edifies the saints to believe that the Bible today is totally infallible and inerrant, pure and perfect in every way (Isa 42:8). Believes in Biblical <i>separation</i> from unbelief and compromise.
20	Unable to say, "I have a 100% perfect Bible today."	Can confidently say, "I have a 100% perfect Bible today that is absolutely infallible and inerrant."

I am not alone in defending the VPP of Scripture. Hear from no less a stalwart of the fundamentalist faith than the Rev Dr Ian Paisley who, in his book *My Plea for the Old Sword (KJV)*, wrote:

Divine Revelation plus Divine Inspiration plus Divine Preservation equals the Divine Bible. These all, without exception, cover the whole field of every Word of God. There is no such thing as verbal Revelation without verbal Inspiration and there is no such thing as verbal Inspiration without **verbal Preservation**. In all cases it is **not partial but plenary i.e. full, complete, perfect**. ...

The Divine Revelation, put into writing the verbally Infallible Scriptures through Divine Inspiration, must have Divine Preservation in order to be available to all generations. The verbal Inspiration of the Scriptures demands the verbal Preservation of the Scriptures. Those who would deny the need for verbal Preservation cannot be accepted as being really committed to verbal Inspiration. If there is no preserved Word of God today then the work of Divine Revelation and Divine Inspiration has perished.

In such a case any Bible is as good as any other. Hence the multiplication and continuing changes of perverted English versions of the Bible on the market today.

Those who believe in a partial preservation are not much better. To say that God has preserved most of the Original Scriptures but not them all, robs us of every Word of God. Therefore we cannot live [by His every word, Matt 4:4]. This is but another way to pen-knife God's every Word.

Those who do not believe that God preserved His Word are really going down the path of final rejection of that Book of which the Lord Jesus Christ said, 'The Word of God cannot be broken.' Thank God, no potency can disintegrate this Rock.¹

Dr Paisley went on to defend the VPP of Scripture and the KJV from Psalm 12:6-7:

Surely here we have the Doctrine of Divine Preservation divinely revealed. The preserved Scriptures cannot be lost or caused in any way to perish. As of the God who uttered them, so we can say, 'Thou remainest!'

It is interesting to note that the new Bibles vary the words of Psalm 12:6-7 and so eliminate the testimony of that verse to the Divine Preservation of the Scriptures. They insist that the 'them' of verse seven is not a reference to God's words but to God's people ...and destroy the text's testimony to the Preservation of God's Word.

God's providential preservation of His own Word ensured that the true Scriptures were not hidden away in the library of the Antichrist nor in a

monastery of ‘Greek Catholic’ idolatry at the time when Tyndale prepared his Bible. Faithful and true copies of the originals were at hand for the Divine Bombshell (Tyndale’s translation of God’s Holy Word into English) which would smash the Roman Antichrist. He translated into English the Preserved Word of God, not the Perverted Word of God.

A return to the Apostolic Gospel comes as a result of Tyndale’s work. A return to the Apostate Gospel comes as a result of the translation of Rome’s long hidden, perverted text and other such perverted texts in the Modern Perversions of the Scriptures.

The Authorised Version translated into English the Preserved Word of God and so preserved for the English speaking peoples of the World, the Word of the Living God, the only infallible Rule of Faith and Practice.²

Can Mr Lim say Amen to Paisley?

Now, let me respond to Mr Lim’s open letter of July 13, 2005 point by point.

Mr Lim’s Skewed Version of My Sermon

Mr Lim started by presenting a skewed version of my sermon: “I refer [to] your sermon last Sunday morning, which was diverted to promote your pet but unfounded doctrine of KJV Perfectionism in its underlying Hebrew and Greek apographs (copies). Your two points on the assigned Scripture text are that 1) ‘judge not according to appearance’ means not by dress, good looks, and a good singing voice, etc, and 2) ‘but judge righteous judgement’ means to hold to Verbal Plenary Preservation (VPP) of the KJV underlying texts.” He then went on to present his “true exegesis” of the text.

My Refutation

First, let me say that the topic I preached on, “Judge Righteous Judgement” (John 7:14-24), was not a topic I chose, but was one assigned to me. I indeed preached a two-point sermon based on the assigned theme, but Mr Lim’s skewed phrasing and slanted summary of what I preached do not accurately reflect my position on the VPP of Scripture, nor the tenor of my sermon. My two points in answer to the question, “How may we judge righteous judgement?,” were (1) Do not Judge According to Outward Appearance (John 7:24), but (2) Judge According to the Word of God (John 7:16-17). I did not spend every minute of my sermon talking about my “pet doctrine” as alleged. I applied my sermon

to a variety of issues in life. I spoke against the Hollywood philosophy that a good-looking outward appearance is the secret to success and happiness in life. I warned of how we as Christians are also prone to form impressions just by looking at a person's external appearance, and thereby make wrong judgements. I cited Samuel as an example of one who made a mistake in looking for the "tall, dark and handsome" man among Jesse's children to be Israel's new king (1 Sam 16). I read to the congregation 1 Sam 16:7, "But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature, because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as a man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart." I also cited 2 Cor 11:14-15 where Paul warned against Satan who presents himself handsome and charming, not ugly and terrifying, in his efforts to seduce and deceive the unwary and ignorant, "And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works." (I expect Satan and his minions to be very unhappy with my sermon; but believers? Surely not!)

In my second point, I pointed out that the only way believers can make righteous judgements today is by basing their judgements on the Word of God. I then went on to point out that if we are to make righteous/truthful judgements, we can only do so if we have a Perfect Standard, and this Perfect Standard cannot be man and his philosophy, but God and His Theology—His Word! I went on to ask the question: "Do we have a Perfect Written Standard in the Word of God today?" And the answer is an unequivocal "yes" based on God's unfailing promise of the infallible preservation of His words as taught in Ps 12:6-7, Matt 5:18, Matt 24:35, 1 Pet 1:24-25 and many other Scripture verses. The authority of the Scriptures is bound to its perfection, is it not? If the Scriptures that we have today are not totally infallible and inerrant, how then can the Scriptures be our only, final, and supreme rule of faith and practice?

In another letter to Dr SH Tow, Mr Lim's senior pastor, and the elders of Calvary Pandan BPC dated July 30, 2005, Mr Lim accused me of disturbing the peace of the Church, "As for disturbance of the peace, it was Dr Jeffrey Khoo's sermon on 10 Jul ... that really disturbed the peace and harmony of our Church. After the sermon, many were disgruntled and disturbed. I being just one of them." Is this true? Were "many"

indeed “disgruntled and disturbed?” If so, precisely how many? What was the percentage of members who felt that my sermon was erroneous and unedifying?

There was in fact no confusion or chaos in Calvary Pandan BPC after my sermon. I have not received any protest from members of Calvary Pandan except for Mr Lim’s open letter of unjust accusations against me which he personally distributed and mass emailed to his church members and others. This he did without the approval of his pastors or the Board of Elders. Was Mr Lim’s conduct ethically acceptable given his membership vows?

Now, if the Holy Spirit convicts us of sin when the truth is preached, do we then conclude that it is disturbing the peace and harmony of the church? Must every believer “feel good” before a sermon can be considered “edifying?” The B-P Church has always preached the unpopular but Biblical doctrine of separation, has it not? If such an “unpleasant” sermon is preached, and some members of the church are “disgruntled and disturbed,” should we then conclude that the preacher is divisive and unedifying? If we allow this, will we not create an ecumenical pulpit that will only seek to tickle the ears of the hearers? Is this not what Paul warned against in 2 Tim 4:2-3, “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth.” May the Lord continue to preserve the faithful pulpit ministry of Calvary Pandan BPC and all Bible-believing and Bible-defending BPCs.

Mr Lim’s Confusion over the VPP of Scripture in Relation to Translations

Mr Lim wrote, “The same verses [i.e. Ps 12:6-7, Matt 5:18, 24:35, 1 Pet 1:24-25] that you cited are also found in all the other Bible versions such as the Chinese United Version (CUV), the Indonesian Akitab [sic], The [sic] Thai Bible, NASV, NIV, NKJV, etc. Anyone reading these in those versions, if interpreting as you do, would conclude that it is their version that is VPP, rather than the KJV.”

My Clarification

Mr Lim claimed that he has read “carefully” all my papers on the VPP of Scripture, but I doubt that he has from what he has stated above. It must be underscored that VPP refers to God’s *special* providential preservation of every jot and tittle of His God-breathed *Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek words*, and *not the translated words* whether English, Chinese, Indonesian, or Thai. It is important to understand that the inspiration and preservation of Scriptures in light of Scripture itself (and accurately stated in the Westminster Confession) concerns the Scriptures in the “original languages” or the Hebrew Old Testament and the Greek New Testament, *not any version or translation*, ancient or modern. Versions and translations can be improved on (eg, *The Defined King James Bible* published by Bible For Today is certainly an improvement on the 1611 and 1769 editions of the KJV), but not the original language Scriptures which God has promised to keep pure, perfect, infallible, inerrant, and authentic.

Do note that the NASV and NIV render Ps 12:6-7 quite differently from the KJV. They may have the same verses but they do not have the same words. Ps 12:6-7 in the KJV reads:

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.

But the NIV reads quite differently, especially verse 7:

And the words of the LORD are flawless, like silver refined in a furnace of clay, purified seven times. O LORD, you will keep **us** safe and protect **us** from such people forever.

The NASV also reads rather differently:

The words of the LORD are pure words; As silver tried in a furnace on the earth, refined seven times. Thou, O LORD, will keep **them**; Thou wilt preserve **him** from this generation forever.

Which of the above translated words accurately translate the verbally and plenary preserved words of the Hebrew Scripture? I urge you to read Rev Dr Quek Suan Yew’s article, “Did God Promise to Preserve His Words?: Interpreting Psalm 12:6-7” for insights and answers.³

If we do not have a perfect written standard in a verbally and plenary preserved original language Scripture today, there will be no

way to prove which translation or version is correct; as anything goes. The NIV or NASV could be just as good as, if not better than, the KJV. Who is to say that the good old KJV is reliable and the many new and modern versions unreliable? Your judgement would be as good as mine. Man becomes the final authority, not the Scriptures. Please realise that the doctrine of the VPP of Scripture is the solid bedrock for the defence of the KJV. The moment we throw out the VPP of Scripture, we surrender our only sure defence of the KJV against the modern versions or perversions of the Bible. The devil knows this, and it is no wonder he is doing all he can to tear this doctrine down!

Mr Lim's Misinterpretation of Matt 5:18 and Matt 24:35

Mr Lim commented, "When the earth passes away, would not all that it contains including all material apographs also pass away? In these verses therefore, our Lord was not referring to apographs, but rather as the context clearly shows, to the absolute and inviolable claims of God and of the Son upon us, for Jesus spake as one having authority, and not as the scribes. (Mt 7:28)."

My Refutation

According to Mr Lim, Matt 5:18 means that all the words in the "material apographs" would pass away when the earth passes away. Mr Lim's interpretation of Matt 5:18 contradicts Matt 24:35 which clearly says, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Luke 21:33, Mark 13:31). Having created a contradiction in Scripture, he then attempted a "harmonisation" by spiritualising the term "words" in Matt 24:35 to mean the "claims" of God. I submit to you that the Scriptures must be understood literally, "words" mean precisely "words," not just "claims" or "doctrines," or "truths." Now, I do not dispute that the claims of God are inviolable, but how can we have God's claims without God's words?

Mr Lim is wrong to dismiss the apographs of the Scriptures, denying their infallibility and inerrancy. Please know that the reformers never thought of the infallibility of the Scriptures in terms of the non-existent autographs but the present and extant apographs. Francis Turretin (1623-87)—pastor-theologian of the Church and Academy of Geneva—wrote:

By original texts, we do not mean the autographs written by the hand of Moses, of the prophets and of the apostles, which certainly do not now

exist. *We mean their apographs* which are so called because they set forth to us the word of God in the *very words* of those who wrote under the immediate inspiration of the Holy Spirit.⁴

In the final analysis, whether the “material” apographs (or for that matter the “material” autographs which we no longer have) will pass away or not is immaterial and not the point. What we do know for sure in light of Jesus’ promise in Matt 5:18 and 24:35 is that every one of the inspired words of the Holy Scriptures in the autographs and the apographs will never pass away.

Mr Lim’s Misinterpretation of Ps 119:140

Mr Lim questioned, “Was the psalmist’s love of God’s Word due to the purity of the apographs? And this Psalm, being written before the completion of Scripture canon, if VPP pureness (completeness, perfect to every jot and tittle) is meant, should have been the last book of the Bible. Is not the purity here rather the purifying effect of God’s Word?”

My Refutation

It is absurd for Mr Lim to suggest that I take the psalmist to mean that Ps 119 is the last book of the Bible just because he wrote, “Thy word is very pure.” The psalmist was referring to the nature or quality of the Word, that it is pristine, pure and perfect in every aspect. This is also the case with Ps 19:7, “The law of the LORD is perfect.” The words “pure” and “perfect” are adjectives, describing the *nature* of God’s Word and not simply the effect of the Word.

Mr Lim’s Misrepresentation of the VPP of Scripture

Mr Lim misrepresents the VPP of Scripture when he wrote, “For the KJV to have an identical apograph text to the Divine Autographs (Originals), in jot and tittle terms, would necessitate a second inspiration either in the copying process, the textual editing process or the translation process.”

My Refutation

If Mr Lim knows basic theology and has indeed read my papers carefully, he would not wrong me by accusing me of advocating a “second inspiration” of the Scriptures. I did not confuse inspiration with preservation. Inspiration speaks of God’s miraculous one-time work of “breathing out” the original inspired words in the autographs in the days

of the prophets and apostles (2 Tim 3:16). Preservation, on the other hand, refers to God's supernatural and continuous work of keeping pure the very same original inspired words in all ages so that in every generation God's people will always have every iota of His words (Matt 5:18).

The processes and dynamics involved in God's work of inspiration and preservation are inscrutable and inexplicable. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgements, and his ways past finding out!" (Rom 11:33). I do not pretend to know everything about how God inspired His words, or how He preserved them. I simply believe Him—my Lord and my God—who is all-powerful to keep His words, His truths and His promises. I just take Him at His Word with simple, childlike faith, period. Bottom line is: "God says it, that settles it, I believe it." The logic of faith is precisely this: "The Bible says it, that settles it, we believe it."

Mr Lim believes in the partial or imperfect preservation of Scripture. But the problem with his view is that there is not a single verse in the Bible which says God's Word is imperfectly preserved, or we do not have a 100% perfect Bible in our possession today. What we do find however is that there are many verses in the Bible which teach the perfect, permanent, and perpetual preservation of God's inspired original language words (Ps 12:6-7, Matt 5:18, 24:35, 1 Pet 1:23-25). Please see George Skariah's doctoral dissertation on the perfect preservation of the Holy Scriptures which offers a most Christ-honouring and faith-building exegesis and exposition of no less than 50 Biblical verses/passages that prove this *doctrine* (not "theory" or "heresy" as Mr Lim would have us believe).⁵

Mr Lim's Dubious Affirmation

After arguing against the VPP of Scripture, Mr Lim says, "This does not mean that God's Word is not preserved for us! They are in the providential sense!"

My Critique

I had used the term "providential preservation" in my book *Kept Pure in All Ages: Recapturing the Authorised Version and the Doctrine of Providential Preservation*. Mr Lim uses the same word, but appears to understand it differently. In these days of deception, it is not enough just

to know what is said, it is equally if not more important to know what is meant by what is said.

There is a recent book entitled *God's Word in Our Hands: The Bible Preserved for Us*. The book title makes it appear that the writers believe and support the doctrine of the 100% preservation of the words of Scripture, but the contents of the book prove otherwise. Read my review of this book, "Bob Jones University, Neo-Fundamentalism, and Biblical Preservation" in *The Burning Bush*.⁶ In my critique, I exposed why and how BJU and other pro-Westcott/Hort advocates do not believe that God will and is able to preserve perfectly all of His words to the last iota, that all of His inspired words will always remain available and accessible to His people all the time until the end of time. Mr Lim's arguments against the KJV and VPP of Scripture are *déjà vu*, and not new to me. I have not only answered them in my above critique, but in two other earlier ones as well.⁷

Mr Lim's Quotation of Dean Burgon

Mr Lim quoted Burgon to argue that there is no such thing as VPP. He wrote, "Dean Burgon expresses it thus, 'But I would especially remind my readers of Bentley's golden precept, that The real text of the sacred writers does not now, since the originals have been so long lost, lie in any MS, or edition, but is dispersed in them all.'"

My Explanation

We are thankful to the Lord for Dean Burgon for a number of reasons: (1) Burgon was a defender of the Byzantine or Majority Text which he called the Traditional Text over against the Alexandrian or Minority Text of Westcott and Hort which he viewed as the Corrupted Text and rightly so. (2) Burgon was a strong defender for the KJV and spoke against any revision of it. Although Burgon defended the KJV in no uncertain terms, there was a weakness in his defence of it. It is unfortunate that Burgon did not defend the Textus Receptus—the Greek Text underlying the KJV—as strongly as he did the KJV. That is the reason why he spoke in terms of the "dispersed" rather than the "received" text.

Why did Burgon have such a relatively low view of the Textus Receptus? Dr E F Hills—a friend and classmate of Dr McIntire at Westminster, a ThD graduate of Harvard, and a Presbyterian defender of

the Textus Receptus—made an astute observation. He noted that Burgon was biased against the Textus Receptus because of his extreme Anglicanism which believes in the doctrine of apostolic succession. Dr Hills rightly commented that Burgon’s mistaken Anglican view of apostolic succession and emphasis on the NT quotations of the Bishops or Church Fathers failed him

when he came to deal with the printed Greek New Testament text. For from Reformation times down to his own day the printed Greek New Testament text which had been favored by the bishops of the Anglican Church was the Textus Receptus, and the Textus Receptus had not been prepared by bishops but by Erasmus, who was an independent scholar. Still worse, from Burgon’s standpoint, was the fact that the particular form of the Textus Receptus used in the Church of England was the third edition of Stephanus, who was a Calvinist. For these reasons, therefore, Burgon and Scrivener looked askance at the Textus Receptus and declined to defend it except in so far as it agreed with the Traditional Text found in the majority of the Greek New Testament manuscripts.⁸

Dr Hills went on to say that Burgon’s approach to identifying the preserved text is “illogical.” Hills wrote:

If we believe in the providential preservation of the New Testament text, then we must defend the Textus Receptus as well as the Traditional Text found in the majority of the Greek manuscripts. For the Textus Receptus is the only form in which this Traditional Text has circulated in print. To decline to defend the Textus Receptus is to give the impression that God’s providential preservation of the New Testament text ceased with the invention of printing. It is to suppose that God, having preserved a pure New Testament text all during the manuscript period, unaccountably left this pure text hiding in the manuscripts and allowed an inferior text to issue from the printing press and circulate among His people for more than 450 years. Much, then, as we admire Burgon for his general orthodoxy and for his defense of the Traditional New Testament Text, we cannot follow him in his high Anglican emphasis or in his disregard for the Textus Receptus.⁹

Mr Lim’s Endorsement of Textual Criticism

Mr Lim without qualification said, “Textual criticism is not a dirty word or a needless science.”

My Response

Textual criticism is not really a science. Subjectivity and speculation are part and parcel of textual criticism. Under pro-Westcott/Hort lecturers

and professors in my Bible college and seminary days, I had studied textual criticism and even practised it. Has it been an edifying exercise for me? Not a bit! In fact, it left me with more questions than answers and filled me with pride because it made me think I had the intellect or intelligence to judge which part of Scripture is God's word and which part is not. The principle of faith and doctrine is totally left out in the so-called "science" of textual criticism, and I found that to be very disturbing and dangerous to my faith in God's Word.

The subjectivity and speculation involved in textual criticism made A E Houseman to comment that "A textual critic engaged upon his business is not at all like Newton investigating the motions of the planets: he is much more like a dog hunting for fleas."¹⁰ Georg Luck of Johns Hopkins University rightly said, "our critical texts are no better than our textual critics."¹¹

If I were to build my faith in God's Word based on textual criticism, I would be building my house on sand and not on rock. Instead of subjective, speculative and rationalistic textual criticism, we should employ the Biblical principle of the VPP of Scripture to help us identify where God's words are. Based on Biblical doctrine of the VPP of Scripture (Ps 12:6-7, Matt 5:18, 24:35 etc), I believe I am building my house upon a rock-solid foundation. Thus, I refuse to hear the voice of textual critics, but the voice of my Lord Himself in His forever infallible and inerrant Word, "Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock" (Matt 7:24-25).

Dr Timothy Tow rightly used the Biblical principle of the glory of God to argue that the Bible today is perfect without any mistake because of God's perfect preservation of His words.¹² Does it glorify God to say that the Bible is imperfectly preserved based on the so-called "logic of *facts*," or to simply believe what the Bible so clearly says about itself, that the Bible is perfectly preserved based on the logic of *faith* (Heb 11:3, 6)?

Mr Lim's Textual Problems

Mr Lim wrote, "As for clear evidence of textual problems in the KJV underlying texts, I here cite two (we both know of more, yet only one is needed to disprove the Perfect KJV-VPP case)."

My Defence of the Hebrew and Greek Texts Underlying KJV

Mr Lim believes that there is "clear evidence of textual problems" in the underlying texts of the KJV. His "evidence" is "clear" only to him and all sceptics who consider apparent problems as actual problems due to their cynical approach toward the Scriptures. A faith-based, Christ-exalting, Biblical preservationist approach to textual identification does not see them as "problems," "discrepancies," or "mistakes" at all for they are not.

Mr Lim on 2 Sam 8:4 and 1 Chron 18:4

Mr Lim accuses me of using "a spiritualising, non-literal, and liberal interpretation of God's Word" in my attempt to harmonise or reconcile the apparent discrepancy in 2 Sam 8:4 and 1 Chron 18:4.

My Rebuttal

Harmonising the Scriptures is far from spiritualising the Scriptures. Contrary to what Mr Lim thinks, the harmonisation of Scriptures takes the Scriptures literally, 700 means 700, 7,000 means 7,000 in 2 Sam 8:4 and 1 Chron 18:4 respectively. Mr Lim dismisses my attempt at harmonisation by pontificating, "The obvious difficulty is that there are no groups." But Matthew Henry, the renowned puritan commentator himself, did not think such a harmonisation improbable. In his commentary on 2 Sam 8:4, he wrote, "The horsemen are here said to be 700, but 1 Chron. Xviii.4. seven thousand. If they divided their horse by ten in a company, *as it is probable they did*, the captains and companies were 700, but the horsemen were 7000."¹³

But Mr Lim dismisses such faithful attempts at defending the inerrancy of the Scripture with demeaning and conceited words which I do not care to repeat. His solution actually creates more problems because it looks like he agrees with the Westcott and Hort textual critical view that (1) older manuscripts are better, that (2) the old and traditional textual readings must be replaced by new and recently discovered ones, and the Ruckmanite view that (3) translations or versions can be more inspired than, and can thus be used to correct, the original language text.

Mr Lim on Matt 10:8

Following Burgon, Mr Lim doubts the reading of Matt 10:8 in the Textus Receptus concerning Jesus' commission to His disciples to "raise the dead."

My Rebuttal

Although we admire Burgon's stout defence of the KJV, and his powerful offence against Westcott and Hort and their Revised Version, we do not agree with his relatively low view of the Textus Receptus. Unlike Mr Lim, we do not follow Burgon blindly. The reason why Burgon held to such a disparaging view of the Textus Receptus is already explained above. Burgon as noted by Hills was coloured by his Anglican bias, and hence became clouded in his understanding of God's special preservation of the Scriptures in the days of the Protestant Reformation.

I thus agree with Hills that Burgon's approach to identifying the preserved text is "illogical." Unlike Burgon, Hills supported the authenticity of Matt 10:8 because he believed that it has been "placed in the Textus Receptus by the direction of God's special providence."¹⁴ Calvin in his commentary on Matt 10:8 took for granted the authenticity of Matt 10:8, and had no problem affirming that the Lord "is quite deliberate in telling them to raise the dead."¹⁵

Mr Lim's Puzzling Appeal

Mr Lim wrote, "Stop alleging that we say that the Bible contains errors!"

My Questions

If Mr Lim does not say that the Bible contains errors, then why does he keep on arguing for errors in the Bible (in 2 Sam 8:4, 2 Chron 22:2 and many other places) when there are no such errors to begin with? If Mr Lim does not believe there are any errors in the Bible, then why does he say that the Bible has "built-in redundancy?" Why is he on this crusade against those who believe the Bible is without any error? Why are his words contradicting his beliefs and practices?

Furthermore, if Mr Lim does truly believe he has a perfect, infallible, and inerrant Bible in his possession today, can he kindly produce it? With his denial of VPP, I do not think Mr Lim can produce

such a Bible. He does not have it. I submit to you that Mr Lim's Bible that contains no mistakes is simply non-existent, invisible and intangible.

True Biblical preservationists can confidently say they possess an existing, visible and tangible 100% perfect Bible today without any mistake because of God's infallible promise to preserve His inerrant Word throughout the ages to the last jot and tittle (Ps 12:6-7, Matt 5:18).

Dr Hills correctly observed that those who deny the VPP or special providential preservation of Scripture will not be able to affirm a perfect or an infallible and inerrant Bible today. Hills gave a very pertinent warning against those who ignore or reject the doctrine of the *special* providential preservation of Scripture:

If we ignore the providential preservation of the Scriptures and defend the New Testament text in the same way that we defend the texts of other ancient books, then we are following the logic of unbelief. For the special, providential preservation of the holy Scriptures is a fact and an important fact. Hence when we ignore this fact and deal with the text of the New Testament as we would with the text of other books, we are behaving as unbelievers behave. We are either denying that the providential preservation of the Scriptures is a fact, or else we are saying that it is not an important fact, not important enough to be considered when dealing with the New Testament text. But if the providential preservation of the Scriptures is not important, why is the infallible inspiration of the original Scriptures important? If God has not preserved the Scriptures by His special providence, why would He have infallibly inspired them in the first place? And if the Scriptures are not infallibly inspired, how do we know that the Gospel message is true? And if the Gospel message is not true, how do we know that Jesus is the Son of God?

It is a dangerous error therefore to ignore the special, providential preservation of the holy Scriptures and to seek to defend the New Testament text in the same way in which we would defend the texts of other ancient books. **For the logic of this unbelieving attitude is likely to lay hold upon us and cast us down into a bottomless pit of uncertainty. ...**

The Bible teaches us that faith is the foundation of reason. Through faith we understand (Heb. 11:3). By faith we lay hold on God as He reveals Himself in the holy Scriptures and make Him the starting point of all our thinking. ...

Like the Protestant Reformers therefore we must take God as the starting point of all our thinking. We must begin with God. Very few Christians, however, do this consistently. For example, even when a group of conservative Christian scholars meet for the purpose of defending the

Textus Receptus and the King James Version, **you will find that some of them want to do this in a rationalistic, naturalistic way. Instead of beginning with God, they wish to begin with facts viewed apart from God**, with details concerning the New Testament manuscripts which must be regarded as true (so they think) no matter whether God exists or not. ...

Conservative scholars ... say that they believe in the special, providential preservation of the New Testament text. Most of them really don't though, because, as soon as they say this, they immediately reduce this special providential preservation to the vanishing point in order to make room for the naturalistic theories of Westcott and Hort. As we have seen, some say that the providential preservation of the New Testament means merely that the same "substance of doctrine" is found in all the New Testament documents. Others say that it means that the true reading is always present in at least one of the thousands of extant New Testament manuscripts. And still other scholars say that to them the special, providential preservation of the Scriptures means that the true New Testament text was providentially discovered in the mid-19th century by Tischendorf, Tregelles, and Westcott and Hort after having been lost for 1,500 years.

If you adopt one of these false views of the providential preservation of Scriptures, then you are logically on your way toward the denial of the infallible inspiration of the Scriptures. For if God has preserved the Scriptures so carelessly, why would he have infallibly inspired them in the first place? **It is not sufficient therefore merely to say that you believe in the doctrine of the special, providential preservation of holy Scriptures. You must really believe this doctrine and allow it to guide your thinking. You must begin with Christ and the Gospel and proceed according to the logic of faith. This will lead you to the Traditional text, the Textus Receptus, and the King James Version.**¹⁶

Mr Lim's Undermining of the KJV

Although Mr Lim says he affirms wholeheartedly with Dean Burgon that "The Bible is none other than the voice of Him that sitteth upon the throne. Every book of it, every chapter of it, every verse of it, every word of it, every syllable of it, every letter of it, is the direct utterance of the Most High ...," he concludes that "The King James Version is however not so."

My Defence of the KJV

It must be clarified that any "perfection," "infallibility" or "inerrancy" that is attributed to the KJV (and for that matter all other faithful and accurate translations of the Bible) must be understood not in

the direct but *derived* sense. Dr Timothy Tow illustrates this point well, “The original text may be likened to ginseng, and its translation ginseng tea.”¹⁷

Nevertheless, I do not think Dean Burgon would take kindly to Mr Lim’s disparaging remarks against the KJV. Hear the Dean’s unreserved defence of the KJV:

Our Authorised Version is the one religious link which at present binds together ... millions of English-speaking men scattered over the earth’s surface. Is it reasonable that so unutterably precious, so sacred a bond should be endangered, for the sake of representing certain words more accurately,—here and there translating a tense with greater precision,—getting rid of a few archaisms? It may be confidently assumed that no ‘Revision’ of our Authorised Version, however judiciously executed, will ever occupy the place of public esteem which is actually enjoyed by the work of the Translators of 1611,—the noblest literary work in the Anglo-Saxon language. We shall in fact never have another ‘Authorised Version.’ ... **As something intended to supercede our present English Bible, we are thoroughly convinced that the project of a rival Translation is not to be entertained for a moment. For ourselves, we deprecate it entirely.**¹⁸

Mr Lim claims to “hold the KJV as reliable, trustworthy, venerable and beloved,” yet he spares no effort to attack those who defend the KJV and its underlying Hebrew and Greek texts. If Mr Lim is truly supportive of the KJV, he should be spending his time and energy doing all he can to defend the KJV and FEBC against the attacks made by pro-Westcott/Hort anti-preservationists of the BJU mould. Sadly, Mr Lim does the opposite. Instead of defending his own, he does all he can to support the enemy camp and undermine the KJV and VPP Scripture held by his pastors and FEBC.

Mr Lim’s Attack on the KJV

Mr Lim says “there are mistakes in the English of the KJV due to translation errors.”

My Defence of the KJV

Please note that I do not hold to Ruckman’s view that the KJV is “doubly inspired” or “separately inspired” for there is no such teaching in the Scriptures. Many find it very convenient to hit below the belt by misrepresenting FEBC’s view of the KJV. This only goes to show that

their arguments are so weak that they need to resort to such underhand blows just to get the upper hand.

Mr Lim believes “there are mistakes in the English of the KJV due to translation errors.” I for one do not believe there are mistakes in the English of the KJV. David Marshall—Singapore’s first chief minister—who had for his English textbook the King James Bible would have dismissed any puerile criticism of the English of the KJV. The KJV was written in an age when the English language was at its zenith, and we today can learn much good and high English from the KJV.

Mr Lim is quick to criticise the KJV for its “translational errors,” but I would rather not be so conceited and trigger-happy to criticise the KJV translation of the Holy Scriptures. Please know that the King James translators were extremely careful in their translation of God’s Word, and they have used at least one correct word, and at least one correct rule of grammar in their rendering of the inspired and preserved original language Scriptures. That is why “We uphold the Authorised (King James) Version to be the Word of God—the best, most faithful, most accurate, most beautiful translation of the Bible in the English language, and do employ it alone as our primary scriptural text in the public reading, preaching, and teaching of the Bible” (Article 4.2.1.2 of the FEBC Constitution which was unanimously passed by her Board of Directors on December 29, 2003). We agree with the Dean Burgon Society that “we can without apology hold up the Authorised Version of 1611 and say ‘This is the Word of God!’ while at the same time realising that, in some verses, we must go back to the underlying original language Texts for complete clarity, and also compare Scripture with Scripture” (“Articles of Faith,” Section II.A).

Dr Hills had wisely advised, “We must be very cautious therefore about finding errors in the text of the King James Version, and the same holds true also in the realm of translation. Whenever the renderings of the King James Version are called in question, it is usually the accuser that finds himself in the wrong.”¹⁹

Mr Lim’s Malicious Accusation

Mr Lim accused me of being “divisive, and self promoting ... Brethren are falsely attacked, and the unity of our churches affected.”

My Reply

Mr Lim's charge against me is both unjust and unjustifiable. His words against me are malicious. His senior pastor graciously gave him a chance to retract his statements but he refused. When publicly disciplined by his senior pastor and his pastor, instead of showing remorse he threatened them with a lawsuit. I believe Mr Lim owes his pastors and me an apology.

Bottom Line

The Bible is the Christian's sole and supreme authority of faith and practice. My faith in the present perfection of Scripture is based on the Biblical doctrine of God's infallible preservation of His forever inerrant Word as taught in Ps 12:6-7, Matt 5:18, and many other passages in the Bible.

What is Mr Lim's faith based on? On which book, chapter, and verse does Mr Lim base his doctrine of the non-VPP, imperfect, and partial preservation of Scripture? Is Mr Lim asking us to trust him and his scholarly judgement that there is no such thing as a perfect Bible today? I rather trust in my infallible and inerrant Lord and Saviour who has promised to preserve His infallible and inerrant words. I trust no man but the Lord Jesus Christ who "died for our sins according to the scriptures; and ... was buried, and ... rose again the third day according to the scriptures" (1 Cor 15:3-4).

It is never safe to trust in fallible men and their errant-prone commentaries, especially when their beliefs and judgements go against the clear teachings of the infallible and inerrant Word of God. We follow men and their comments only if and when they follow and agree with Christ and His words (1 Cor 11:1). I place my complete trust in Christ and Him alone, and I trust only the Bible—His Word—which I believe is not only perfect in the past (in the inerrant God-breathed Hebrew and Greek words of the autographs) but also perfect today (in the infallibly preserved Hebrew and Greek words of the apographs underlying the Reformation Bibles best represented by the KJV).

I appreciate the faithful and courageous words of Dr Paisley who believes that

this English Authorised Version is unsurpassably pre-eminent over and above all other English translations, ... I cry out 'There is none like that, give it me,' **and in so doing I nail the Satanic lie that the Authorised**

Version is outdated, outmoded, mistranslated, a relic of the past and only defended by stupid, unlearned, untaught obscurantists. ...

I believe this Book will always be the unsurpassable pre-eminent English version of the Holy Bible and no other can every take its place. **To seek to dislodge this Book from its rightful pre-eminent place is the act of the enemy, and what is attempted to put in its place is an intruder - an imposter - a pretender - a usurper.**²⁰

Dear friends, it is not enough just to believe and defend the VPI of Scripture, we must also believe and defend the VPP of Scripture with all our faith and with all our might with God's help. If we do not, the Biblical foundation of our Christian faith will be swept away by the destructive forces of unbelief and apostasy. "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" (Ps 11:3). Absolutely nothing! We would have no good news to preach to a lost world so in need of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour if He is not absolutely truthful in His promises, and if His words are not forever infallible and inerrant. We would also be exposed to the dangers of liberalism, postmodernism, ecumenism, neo-evangelicalism, and new heresies like open-theism and neo-deism.

Faith is the key to spiritual understanding. We believe in order to see. "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom 10:17). "But 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" (Heb 11:6). Do not trust in the weak words of fallible men; but in the very powerful and ever perfect words of the Holy Scriptures, infallible and inerrant, 100% inspired and 100% preserved by its almighty Author—the Lord Jesus Christ—who is "the same yesterday, today and for ever" (Heb 13:8). We have an immutable God who has given to us an indestructible Word.

"He who hath ears to hear, let him hear" (Matt 11:15).

Notes

¹ Ian R K Paisley, *My Plea for the Old Sword: The English Authorised Version (KJV)*, (Belfast: Ambassador, 1997), 102-3, emphasis mine.

² Ibid, 106.

³ Quek Suan Yew, "Did God Promise to Preserve His Words?: Interpreting Psalm 12:6-7," *The Burning Bush* (2004): 96-98.

⁴ Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology* (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1992), 1:106; see also my paper, "*Sola Autographa*

or *Sola Apographa*? A Case for the Present Perfection and Authority of the Holy Scriptures,” *The Burning Bush* 11 (2005): 3-19.

⁵ George Skariah, “The Biblical Doctrine of the Perfect Preservation of the Holy Scriptures,” unpublished Doctor of Theology dissertation, Far Eastern Bible College, Singapore, 2005.

⁶ Jeffrey Khoo, “Bob Jones University, Neo-Fundamentalism, and Biblical Preservation,” *The Burning Bush* 11 (2005): 82-97.

⁷ Jeffrey Khoo, “Bob Jones University and the KJV: A Critique of *From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man*,” *The Burning Bush* 7 (2001): 1-34, and “The Emergence of Neo-Fundamentalism: *One Bible Only*? or “Yea Hath God Said?,” *The Burning Bush* (2004):2-47.

⁸ Edward F Hills, *The King James Version Defended* (Des Moines: Christian Research Press, 1984), 192.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ A E Houseman, “The Application of Thought to Textual Criticism,” in *Selected Prose*, ed J Carter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), 131-2.

¹¹ Quoted by David Alan Black, ed, *Rethinking New Testament Textual Criticism* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 50.

¹² Timothy Tow, “My Glory Will I Not Give to Another,” *The Burning Bush* 11 (July 2005): 67-68.

¹³ Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible* (Wilmington: Sovereign Grace, 1972), 1:798, emphasis mine.

¹⁴ Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, 200.

¹⁵ David W Torrance and Thomas F Torrance, eds, *Calvin’s New Testament Commentaries: A Harmony of the Gospels: Matthew, Mark and Luke*, trans A W Morrison (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), 1:292.

¹⁶ Edward F Hills, *Believing Bible Study* (Des Moines: Christian Research Press, 1977), 216-20, emphasis mine.

¹⁷ Cited in Jeffrey Khoo, *KJV: Questions and Answers* (Singapore: Bible Witness Literature, 2003), 8

¹⁸ John William Burgon, *Revision Revised* (Collingswood: Dean Burgon Society, 2d printing, 2000), 113-114, emphasis mine.

¹⁹ Hills, *Believing Bible Study* , 83.

²⁰ Paisley, *My Plea for the Old Sword* , 10-11, emphasis mine.

CONTENDING IN TRUTH, AND TRUTH AFFIRMS THE VPP OF SCRIPTURE

A Loving Response to Rev ____'s Paper "Contending in Truth and in Love"

Jeffrey Khoo

Revised Edition, October 3, 2005

Preamble

Rev ____ of ____ Church has written a response to Carol Lee's paper "A Child of God Looks at the Doctrine of Verbal Plenary Preservation" published in the July 2005 issue of *The Burning Bush*. Since I am the editor of *The Burning Bush*, and since Rev ____ did quote me in a number of places on pages 1 and 5 of his paper, I believe I have the right of reply, and wish to do so in "truth and love" as suggested by his title.

Before I proceed, I must commend Rev ____ for believing that

(1) "the King James Bible is the English Bible *par excellence*," and that we should

(2) "unite to defend the Word of God against its real foes represented by the modern day Bible *perversions*" (p11).

Praise the Lord!

Rev ____'s Questions

Rev ____ asks,

(1) Can one be a God-fearing and God-honouring Christian who believes in the doctrine of creation *ex-nihilo* but not hold to VPP as a doctrine?

(2) Can one be a God-fearing and God-honouring Christian who believes in the doctrine of a literal six-day creation but not VPP?

(3) Can one be a God-fearing and God-honouring Christian who believes in the doctrines of the virgin birth, bodily resurrection and ascension of our blessed Saviour but not VPP?

(4) Can one be a God-fearing and God-honouring Christian who believes in the doctrine of a literal heaven and hell but not VPP?

(5) Can one be a God-fearing and God-honouring Christian and not subscribe to the theory of VPP?

My Reply

Let me answer Rev ____'s questions with the following questions:

(1) Can one be a God-fearing and God-honouring Christian who believes in the doctrine of creation *ex nihilo*, and a literal six-day creation, and yet **DENIES** that the first three chapters of Genesis are verbally and plenarily inspired and verbally and plenarily preserved, and hence infallible and inerrant, without any mistake?

(2) Can one be a God-fearing and God-honouring Christian who believes in the doctrines of the virgin birth, bodily resurrection and ascension of our blessed Saviour and yet **DENIES** that the Christian *today* possesses *each and every one* of the verbally and plenarily inspired words that tell us of our Lord's virgin birth, bodily resurrection and ascension?

(3) Can one be a God-fearing and God-honouring Christian who believes in the doctrine of a literal heaven and hell *which he has yet to see* **WITHOUT** believing that the very words that tell him about a literal heaven and hell are totally inspired and entirely preserved, and hence *presently* infallible and inerrant without any mistake, and therefore completely true and trustworthy?

(4) Can one be a God-fearing and God-honouring Christian today by believing that his Bible today contains mistakes because God did not infallibly preserve His inspired words to the last word, to the last letter, even to the last syllable as taught in Matthew 5:18, and 24:35?

I trust the above questions answer the questions posed by Rev ____.

Is Faith Based on the Words of Men or the Words of God?

Rev ____ rejects the VPP of Scripture on the basis of the words of certain "God-fearing and God-honouring Christians" with the assumption

that they had indeed rejected the VPP of Scripture, or that they actually believed:

(1) that God did not infallibly preserve His words,

(2) that God did allow some of His inspired words to be utterly lost and completely corrupted without any hope of restoration,

(3) that God took a “hands off” approach to the preservation of His inspired words and did not care at all to intervene in history to correct the intentional or unintentional mistakes the scribes made as they copied the Scriptures so as to restore for His people all of His inspired words and identify for them where His inspired words are precisely.

Rev ____ went on to argue, “The fact is that, over the ages, there had been God-fearing and God-honouring Christians who believe in the plenary verbal inspiration of the Word of God and not the VPP.” ***Surely, Rev ____ must know that our supreme and final authority of faith and doctrine is none other than the Bible itself and the Bible alone, and not man (B-P Constitution, article 4.2.1).***

In light of this, can Rev ____ please prove his non-VPP view from the Bible itself? That the Bible does not at all teach God’s infallible preservation of all of His inspired and inerrant words to the jot and tittle, and that God’s people (*including us today*) can be sure that we have the very words of God in our hands, 100%?

Rev ____ cited a host of “God-fearing” and “God-honouring” men to prove his point. Let it be known that *we do not deny that Turretin, Baxter, Owen, Wesley, Gill, Spurgeon, and Burgon were indeed “God-fearing” and “God-honouring” men*, but let us ask again, *does their being “God-fearing” and “God-honouring” mean that their words are infallible and inerrant, and that they were incapable of making mistakes in their comments and observations?*

Our faith must not be based on the words of men but purely on the inspired words of God which we have today by virtue of God’s many promises to preserve His forever inspired, infallible and inerrant words. ***“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, Mark 13:31, Luke 21:33).***

Let it be known once for all that in our defence of the KJV, and the VPP of Scripture, we do not question the salvation of these illustrious men.

Nevertheless, let it be stated without equivocation that our faith is hardly based on these men, but only on the Lord Jesus Christ, and on His forever infallible and inerrant words as cited above.

My Interaction with the Godly Men Rev ____ Cited

Now let me interact with the comments of those whom Rev ____ cited in support of his anti-VPP position. Let me deal with all of them one by one, point by point.

Richard Baxter (1615-1691)

Rev ____ wrote: “Baxter was the beloved pastor of Kidderminster. He warned of two extremes: On one end are those who deny the divinity of the Word of God. These, Baxter writes ‘give too little to the Scripture who deny it to be indicted by inspiration of the infallible Spirit of God, and be wholly true.’”

My Response: We agree with Baxter’s affirmation of the divine nature of God’s Word, and that we should not take the Word of God lightly, but consider the words of Scripture to be “inspiration of the infallible Spirit of God, and be wholly true.”

Rev ____ said: “At the other end are ‘those give too much (in bulk, but too little in virtue) to the Scripture,’ and included in this group are ‘those that say that God hath so preserved the Scripture, as that there are no various readings and doubtful texts thereupon, and that no written or printed copies have been corrupted. . . . All these err in over-doing.’ (*A Christian Directory*, p. 724-5).”

My Response: Obviously Baxter was not denying that every God-breathed word of the Sacred Scriptures to the last iota has been preserved (the doctrine of VPP). He was simply making a true observation that there are “various readings and doubtful texts.” No one who knows and understands VPP denies that there are “various readings” in the copies, but the correct reading has always been preserved, and has been identified from the multitude of faithful manuscripts, and through the successive editions of the Textus Receptus as the Lord guided His servants (from Erasmus, to Stephanus, then Beza, and finally the King James men) to restore or identify for us the true reading of the Greek NT.

Neither do we deny that there are “doubtful texts” which I am sure Baxter would agree are the corrupt Alexandrian, Westcott-Hort or critical texts that underlie the modern “perversions” (in Rev ____’s own words) of the Bible.

John Owen (1616-1683)

Rev ____ wrote: “Owen was a pastor, preacher and vice-chancellor of Oxford University. He was described by one biographer as ‘the greatest British theologian of all time.’ He wrote, the whole Scripture, entire as given out from God, without any loss, is preserved in the copies [not one particular copy] of the originals yet remaining; what varieties there are among the copies themselves shall be afterward declared. In them all, we say, is every letter and title of the word.”

My Response: Again we do not deny what Owen had said, and I would urge you to read my paper, “John Owen on the Perfect Bible,” *The Burning Bush* (July 2004): 74-85, and see how Owen affirms in no uncertain terms the present perfection of Scripture. Many fundamentalists today (like those from BJU) say that God has not preserved His *words*, but *only* His *message*, or *truth*, or *doctrine*, but Owen surely objects to this false view of providential preservation. Owen clearly believed in the preservation of the *words* of Scripture (ie, *verbal* preservation), not just the doctrines (ie, conceptual preservation), for he wrote, “Nor is it enough to satisfy us, that the doctrines mentioned are *preserved entire; every tittle and iota* in the Word of God must come under our care and consideration, as being, as such, from God.” As quoted by Rev ____ above, Owen affirmed, “the *whole* Scripture, *entire* as given out from God [ie, *plenary preservation*], *without any loss* [of any of the words] *is preserved* [ie, *verbal preservation*].”

Rev ____ went on to quote Owen concerning translations, “These copies, we say, are the rule, standard, and touchstone of all translations, ancient or modern, by which they are in all things to be examined, tried, corrected, amended; and themselves only by themselves. Translations contain the word of God, and are the word of God, perfectly or imperfectly, according as they express the words, sense, and meaning of those originals.”

My Response: Praise the Lord! Amen and Amen! On what basis do we *examine, try, correct and amend* our translations today? It is by “these copies [ie, *apographs*]” which are “the rule, standard, and

touchstone of all translations [whether English, Chinese, Korean, French or German, etc], ancient [eg, the Septuagint, or LXX] or modern [eg, NIV, NASV, RSV, TEV, ESV, CEV, TLB etc].” Translations “are” the Word of God, and may be deemed the “perfect” Word of God [ie, in the derivative sense] only if “they express the words, sense, and meaning of those originals [ie, the original language Scriptures—Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek—which God has inspired and preserved].

Rev _____ continued to quote Owen. “To advance any, all translations concurring, into an equality with the originals - so to set them by it as to set them up with it on even terms - much more to propose and use them as means of castigating, amending, altering any thing in them, gathering various lections by them, is to set up an altar of our own by the altar of God, and to make equal the wisdom, care, skill, and diligence of men, with the wisdom, care, and providence of God himself.” (*The Integrity and Purity of the Hebrew and Greek Text of Scripture, Works of John Owen*, Volume 16. AGES Library).

My Response: Again, praise the Lord! Amen, Amen, and Amen! No translation (not even the KJV can be more inspired than, or as inspired as the original language (Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek) Scriptures. As such we must never use a translation or a version (not even the KJV, not to mention the NIV, NASV, RSV etc, and certainly not the LXX, a Greek translation of the Hebrew OT) *to castigate, amend, or alter the original language Scriptures which we see the liberals, neo-evangelicals and neo-fundamentalists do in such places as Psalm 12:7, Judges 18:30, 1 Samuel 13:1, 2 Chronicles 22:2 etc.*

John Wesley (1703-1791)

Rev _____ wrote, “Wesley was the founder of the Methodist Church. In his *Explanatory Notes to the New Testament*, he writes, ‘I write chiefly for plain, unlettered men, who understand only their mother tongue [English], and yet reverence and love the word of God, and have a desire to save their souls. In order to assist these in such a measure as I am able, I design, first, to set down the text itself, for the most part, in the common English translation [which in Wesley’s time was the King James Bible], which is in general (so far as I can judge) abundantly the best that I have seen. Yet I do not say, it is incapable of being brought, in several places, nearer to the original.’”

My Response: I am thankful for Wesley's promotion of the KJV which he said was "the best" among all the other Reformation versions (Tyndale's, Coverdale's, Matthew's, Great, Geneva, Bishops), and indeed still is the best. Since a translation remains a translation, with limitations in the translated tongue, there is a need, even for those who believe the KJV to be the best English translation available, to go back to original language Scriptures betimes to get the fulness of meaning and for clarity. **This we do not deny, but rather affirm.**

Wesley was quoted as saying "Neither will I affirm that the Greek copies from which this translation was made are always the most correct." (*The Complete Works of John Wesley*, Volume 14. AGES Library).

My Response: Without the context, it is premature for me to judge what Wesley meant by what he said. But even at face value, this statement does not reveal to us anything about Wesley's view of Biblical preservation, that he denied the verbal and plenary preservation of the words of Scripture (according to Matt 5:18), or that he believed some of God's inspired words have been lost and no longer in existence.

John Gill (1697-1771)

Rev _____ quoted Gill concerning inspiration and translations: "Gill was a Baptist pastor. He was a contemporary of Wesley and George Whitefield. He says that divine inspiration is "to be understood of the Scriptures, as in the original languages in which they were written, and not of translations; unless it could be thought, that the translators of the Bible into each of the languages of the nations into which it has been translated, were under the divine inspiration also in translating, and were directed of God to the use of words they have rendered the original by; but this is not reasonable to suppose."

My Response: I agree with Gill totally. That has been my contention all along, that the "inspired" Scriptures must be understood in terms of the "***original languages***" (as stated in Article 4.2.1 of our B-P Constitution) and not the translated languages whether English, Chinese, Indonesian, Korean, Thai etc. We have never endorsed (in fact we strenuously reject) the view of Peter Ruckman (who incidentally earned his PhD from BJU) that the King James translators were "inspired" in their translation, and that the KJV is "more inspired" than its underlying original language Scriptures. I hereby enjoin all VPP opponents to cease

and desist from hitting below the belt. To score points by lumping us together with Ruckman would certainly be a violation of the 9th commandment (Exod 20:16).

Rev _____ went on to say, “On the differences between the various Greek texts and the various translations, Gill says, ‘Let not now any be uneasy in their minds about translations on this account, because they are not upon an equality with the original text, and especially about our own; for as it has been the will of God, and appears absolutely necessary that so it should be, that the Bible should be translated into different languages, that all may read it, and some particularly may receive benefit by it; He has taken care, in his providence, to raise up men capable of such a performance, in various nations, and particularly in ours; for whenever a set of men have been engaged in this work, as were in our nation, men well skilled in the languages, and partakers of the grace of God; of sound principles, and of integrity and faithfulness, having the fear of God before their eyes; they have never failed of producing a translation worthy of acceptance; and in which, though they have mistook some words and phrases, and erred in some lesser and lighter matters; yet not so as to affect any momentous article of faith or practice; and therefore such translations as ours may be regarded as the rule of faith.’ (*A Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, Book 1, Chapter 2. AGES Library).”

My Response: I am unable to see Rev _____’s point as regards “the various Greek texts” that he thinks Gill is saying for Gill does not deal with “the various Greek texts” in the above quotation at all, but that the translations are not as perfect as the “original text,” but nonetheless “worthy of acceptance” if they have been translated by faithful men who are “well skilled in the [biblical] languages,” who are “partakers of the grace of God [ie, born again],” who have “the fear of God before their eyes.” That translations or versions could possibly err because God did not “breathe out” English words or Chinese words or any translated words, but the original Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek words, **we agree with Gill, but there is nothing here in Gill that tells us that he denies VPP.**

Charles Spurgeon (1834-1892)

Rev _____ wrote of Spurgeon: “Spurgeon was the pastor of the London Metropolitan Tabernacle. He is also known was [sic] the Prince of Preachers and the last of the Puritans. In a sermon titled ‘The Bible

Tried and Proved’ based on Psalm 12:6, Spurgeon said, ‘I do not hesitate to say that I believe that there is no mistake whatever in the original Holy Scriptures from beginning to end.’”

My Response: What a wonderful statement by Spurgeon who used Psalm 12:6 to argue that the Bible is “tried and proved” (and may I add that this is so precisely because God has promised to keep and preserve His words as stated in the next verse, verse 7). I affirm with Spurgeon: “I believe that there is no mistake whatever in the original Holy Scriptures **from beginning to end [from Genesis to Revelation, from beginning till now].**”

Spurgeon says, “There may be, and there are, mistakes of translation; for translators are not inspired. (The *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*. Vol. 35. AGES Library).

My Response: **This we do not deny.** There are very many mistakes in the modern versions because of their use of the *false text* (Westcott-Hort Text) and their use of the *wrong method of translation* (dynamic equivalency). As far as the KJV is concerned, we take it to be “the very Word of God” in English, and hence do not think there are any mistakes in it because it was translated (1) on the basis of the true and complete text, and (2) by means of the verbal equivalence or word-for-word method (which is in keeping to the doctrines of VPI and VPP).

Rev _____ wrote: “Spurgeon generally preached from the King James Bible, but it may surprise some VPP proponents that he did not hesitate to use other versions and readings from older manuscripts when he found it helpful. Case in point, Spurgeon preached a sermon entitled ‘And We Are: A Jewel from the Revised Version’ based on 1 John 3:1. That three-word addition (and we are) in the Revised Version, according to Spurgeon is correct, ‘I have not the slightest doubt. Those authorities upon which we depend - those manuscripts which are best worthy of notice - have these words; and they are to be found in the Vulgate, the Alexandrian, and several other versions. They ought never to have dropped out. In the judgment of the most learned, and those best to be relied on, these are veritable words of inspiration.’ (The *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*. Vol. 32. AGES Library).”

My Response: **I strongly object to Spurgeon’s endorsement of the Revised Version of Westcott and Hort** (which is the progenitor of

all the modern perversions in the market today). Now, I have some questions for Rev ____:

(1) Is he supportive of Westcott and Hort? Does he adopt the Westcott-Hort theory that the Alexandrian manuscripts are better since they contain “older” readings?

(2) Is he saying that it is helpful to use the modern perversions since Spurgeon also did so and found them helpful?

(3) On page 11 of his paper, Rev ____ calls on us to unite “to defend the Word of God against its real foes represented by the modern day Bible perversions.” If so, why is he contradicting himself at this juncture by endorsing the Revised Version, the Westcott-Hort text, and say that it is useful and helpful to consult the other versions and older Alexandrian manuscripts which are decidedly corrupt?

I must categorically state (lest I be misunderstood) that I do not believe at all that Rev ____ is speaking hypocritically (as an ____ graduate, he is surely a cut above the so-called “fundamentalist” scholars from BJU who wrote against the KJV and VPP of Scripture, who say one thing, but mean something else), but I cannot help but think that he is confused.

John William Burgon (1813-1888)

Rev ____ cited Burgon: “Burgon is popularly known in BP circles as Dean Burgon. Burgon rightly took a strong stand against the inferior textual methods and erroneous presumptions of Brook Foss Westcott (1825-1903) and Fenton John Anthony Hort (1828-1892). Burgon was right in disagreeing with Westcott and Hort on the weight that they ascribed to a few but older manuscripts. Burgon is correct: Age of the manuscript does not equate to its quality.”

My response: I am very glad that Rev ____ takes a strong stand with Burgon *against the false textual critical method of Westcott and Hort that the few but older manuscripts are bad and must be rejected*. In light of this, he should disagree with Spurgeon’s view of the Revised Version and the so-called “older” manuscripts (since he, like Burgon, believes that “older” doesn’t mean “better”).

Rev ____ went on to point out: “However, on the Received Text, Burgon states categorically, ‘Once for all, we request it may be clearly understood that we do not, by any means, claim perfection [emphasis Burgon’s] for the Received Text. We entertain no extravagant notions on

this subject. Again and again we shall have occasion to point out . . . that the Textus Receptus needs correction. We do but insist, (1) that it is an incomparably better text . . . infinitely preferable to the ‘New Greek Text’ of the Revisionists. And (2) That to be improved, the Textus Receptus will have to be revised on entirely different ‘principles’ from those who are just now in fashion.’ (*The Revision Revised*, footnote on p. 21). Burgon was not averse to revising the Textus Receptus, meaning to say that he did not hold the Textus Receptus to be perfect and on par with the autographs.”

My Response: We are thankful to the Lord for Dean Burgon for a number of reasons: (1) Burgon was a defender of the Byzantine or Majority Text which he called the Traditional Text over against the Alexandrian or Minority Text of Westcott and Hort which he viewed as the Corrupted Text and rightly so. (2) Burgon was a strong defender for the KJV and spoke against any revision of it. Although Burgon defended the KJV in no uncertain terms, there was a weakness in his defence of it. It is unfortunate that Burgon did not defend the Textus Receptus—the Greek Text underlying the KJV—as strongly as he did the KJV. That is the reason why he disparagingly spoke of the need to “revise” the TR.

Why did Burgon have such a relatively low view of the Textus Receptus? Dr E F Hills—a friend and classmate of Dr McIntire at Westminster, a ThD graduate of Harvard, and a Presbyterian defender of the Textus Receptus—made an astute observation. He noted that Burgon was biased against the Textus Receptus because of his extreme Anglicanism which believes in the doctrine of apostolic succession. Dr Hills rightly commented that Burgon’s mistaken Anglican view of apostolic succession and emphasis on the NT quotations of the Bishops or Church Fathers “failed him when he came to deal with the printed Greek New Testament text. For from Reformation times down to his own day the printed Greek New Testament text which had been favored by the bishops of the Anglican Church was the Textus Receptus, and the Textus Receptus had not been prepared by bishops but by Erasmus, who was an independent scholar. Still worse, from Burgon’s standpoint, was the fact that the particular form of the Textus Receptus used in the Church of England was the third edition of Stephanus, who was a Calvinist. For these reasons, therefore, Burgon and Scrivener looked askance at the Textus Receptus and declined to defend it except in so far as it agreed with the Traditional Text found in the majority of the Greek New

Testament manuscripts” (Edward F Hills, *The King James Version Defended* [Des Moines: Christian Research Press, 1984], 192).

Dr Hills went on to say that Burgon’s approach to identifying the preserved text is “illogical.” Hills wrote: “If we believe in the providential preservation of the New Testament text, then we must defend the Textus Receptus as well as the Traditional Text found in the majority of the Greek manuscripts. For the Textus Receptus is the only form in which this Traditional Text has circulated in print. To decline to defend the Textus Receptus is to give the impression that God’s providential preservation of the New Testament text ceased with the invention of printing. It is to suppose that God, having preserved a pure New Testament text all during the manuscript period, unaccountably left this pure text hiding in the manuscripts and allowed an inferior text to issue from the printing press and circulate among His people for more than 450 years. Much, then, as we admire Burgon for his general orthodoxy and for his defense of the Traditional New Testament Text, we cannot follow him in his high Anglican emphasis or in his disregard for the Textus Receptus” (Ibid).

Rev ____ concluded by saying, “He [Burgon] only insisted, and rightly so, that any revision of the Textus Receptus must be done using the principles of Higher Criticism [sic].”

My Response: “Higher Criticism?!!” Rev ____ must be mistaken! Burgon did not advocate “Higher Criticism” (Read Burgon’s *Inspiration and Interpretation*). Let me say again that although we admire Burgon for his defence of the KJV, we do not follow him blindly in his relatively low view of the Textus Receptus.

Francis Turretin (1612-1687)

Rev ____ was extremely vague on what Turretin said about “contradictions” in the Bible. Rev ____ seems to give the impression that Turretin actually believes that there are “real contradictions” in the Bible citing his *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, volume I, page 71.

My Response: Well I checked, and the words “real contradictions” did not appear at all in Turretin (at least not in the place cited). Let me quote Turretin, in the same volume and on the same page, and you can see for yourself that Turretin denied any “contradictions” in the Bible. Now read carefully Turretin; he wrote, “Unless unimpaired integrity characterize the Scriptures, they could not be regarded as the sole rule of

faith and practice, and the door would be thrown wide open to atheists, libertines, enthusiasts, and other profane persons like them for destroying its authenticity (*authentician*) and overthrowing the foundation of salvation. For since nothing false can be an object of faith, how could the Scriptures be held as authentic and reckoned divine if liable to contradictions and corruptions?" [Anyone who can read English can see that this is a rhetorical question, expecting a negative answer—Turretin ***denies that there are any contradictions or corruptions in the Scriptures!***]

Now, if we read page 70 of Turretin's *Theology*, we find him vigorously denying that there are any "real contradictions" in the Scriptures. Turretin wrote, "Finally, others defend the integrity of the Scriptures and say that these various contradictions are ***only apparent, not real and true***; that certain passages are hard to be understood (*dysnoeta*), but not altogether inexplicable (*alyta*). This is the more common opinion of the orthodox, which we follow as ***safer and truer***." *This has all along been the primary contention and constant plea of VPP advocates in defending our Perfect Bible.*

Rev _____ quoted Turretin at length, and I am thankful that he quoted Turretin's understanding of what "original texts" mean. Rev _____ wrote, "On the purity of the sources, this question is asked, 'Have the original texts of the Old and New Testaments come down to us pure and uncorrupted?' Turretin first defines what he means by the original texts. '*By the original texts, we do not mean the autographs written by the hand of Moses, of the prophets and of the apostles, which certainly do not now exist. We mean their apographs* which are so called because they set forth to us the Word of God in the very words of those who wrote under the immediate inspiration of the Holy Spirit.'"

My Emphasis: Take note that when Turretin (and for that matter, the reformers) spoke of the "original texts" which are "pure and uncorrupted," ***he was not referring to the non-existent "autographs" but the "apographs" (ie, copies)*** which "set forth to us the Word of God in the very words of those who wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit." How can Turretin affirm this if God did not preserve every single one of His inspired words perfectly without any loss of any word whatsoever? To surmise that Turretin did not believe that God has indeed ***preserved entirely and fully His inspired words to the last jot and tittle***

(VPP) is to run counter to Turretin's explanation of the providential preservation of the Scriptures.

Now, in discussing Turretin there is a need to realise that he addressed doctrinal concerns in the 17th century when the issue primarily concerned the doctrine of salvation, and not the doctrine of the Scriptures as we know it today—in the 21st century—with the introduction of Westcott-Hort and the many modern perversions. It is not unreasonable to assume that for this reason, Turretin was unable to see the need to push the doctrine of the VPP of Scripture to its logical conclusion. ***It was not his battle, it is ours!***

As regards the “perfection” of versions, I am glad that Rev ____ quoted Turretin's view that a Bible version can be considered “perfect” but only in “another” sense—ie, in the *derived* sense, for “all versions are the streams; the original text [apographs] is the fountain whence they flow. The latter is the rule, the former the thing ruled, ... There is one perfection of things and truth to which nothing can be added and from which nothing can be taken away; another perfection of the version itself ... Such perfection is the word carried over into the versions. The latter is a human work and therefore liable to error and correction - to which indeed authority can belong, but only human (according to the fidelity and conformity with the original text), but not divine.” (*Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, Volume 1, p. 126).” So, it is not wrong to say that the KJV is “perfect,” but it must be understood in the derived sense—*insofar as it accurately translates the original*. This I made clear in my booklet—*KJV: Questions and Answers*, page 8.

G I Williamson

Rev ____ wrote, “GI Williamson's commentary on the Westminster Confession of Faith is used (endnote, p.80). Presumably, Williamson's commentary was used here because proponents of VPP have used his work to support the VPP theory (see Dr Jeffrey Khoo's *KJV: Questions and Answers*, p. 23).”

Well, what did I say in *KJV: Questions & Answers*, page 23? Let me quote in full:

(23) What does the Westminster Confession of Faith mean by the words, “kept pure in all ages”?

Here is an answer from Prof William F Orr of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary: “this affirms that the Hebrew text of the Old

Testament and the Greek of the New which was known to the Westminster divines was immediately inspired by God because it was *identical* with the first text that God had kept pure in all the ages. *The idea that there are mistakes in the Hebrew Masoretic texts or in the Textus Receptus of the New Testament was unknown to the authors of the Confession of Faith.*”

G I Williamson likewise did write to this effect in his commentary on the *Westminster Confession*, “This brings us to the matter of God’s ‘singular care and providence’ by which He has ‘kept pure in all ages’ this original text, so that we now actually possess it in ‘authentic’ form. And let us begin by giving an illustration from modern life to show that an original document may be destroyed, without the text of that document being lost. Suppose you were to write a will. Then suppose you were to have a photographic copy of that will made. If the original were then destroyed, the photographic copy would still preserve the text of that will *exactly the same as the original itself*. The text of the copy would differ in no way whatever from the original, and so it would possess exactly the same ‘truth’ and meaning as the original. Now of course photography was not invented until long after the original copy ... had been worn out or lost. How then could the original text of the Word of God be preserved? The answer is that God preserved it by His own remarkable care and providence.”

Rev ____ wrote that in two separate e-mails, Williamson, a retired Presbyterian minister wrote to clarify his views, and I have noted what Williamson had said way back in 2002 when a couple of my students wrote against me, and misrepresented me (which they subsequently retracted in a signed statement).

Let me just say that what Williamson wrote in his book speaks for itself (*res ipsa loquitur*). Let me also say that Williamson did not deny that the words of Scripture are verbally and plenary preserved (for that would be disastrous, and would contradict what he himself had written in his book). He simply wrote, “I do not believe that it [Textus Receptus] is quite equal to a photocopy of the autographa [though he qualified his statement by saying that he has “great respect” for the Textus Receptus]. It is also important to note that although he does not believe that the TR is an “exact replica” [as caricatured] of the autographs, yet he was careful to point out that “the foundation of the argument for the superiority of the TR is the doctrine of divine providence” (which is precisely the argument

of Dr Waite in Chapter 1 of his book—*Defending the King James Bible: A Fourfold Superiority*).

But the fundamental Baptists of BJU say they believe in “providence” and yet deny the TR in favour of WH. How will Rev ____ reconcile this with Williamson’s equation of the Textus Receptus with the doctrine of providence? I should think that Rev ____ should be picking on BJU instead of FEBC. May I also point out that Williamson’s half-hearted commitment to the TR may be due to his preference for the NKJV and possibly the so-called Majority Text edited by Hodges and Farstad. If so, Williamson would find himself in disharmony with the Trinitarian Bible Society (TBS) with which ____ BPC (and FEBC) finds herself more in alignment. As such I should think that Rev ____ should be siding with FEBC and TBS than with Williamson and the NKJV (which the TBS has ably critiqued as an inferior version to the good old KJV). But perhaps Rev ____ was ignorant of this? At any rate, the final analysis is this: Although Williamson does not uphold the TR as much as we do, he did not deny in any way that God has indeed preserved His words to the last jot and tittle, without any words lost (as seen in his excellent “photocopy” illustration) which is the doctrine of VPP.

Definition of VPP

What does VPP mean? “Verbal” means “every word to the jot and tittle” (Ps 12:6-7, Matt 5:18). “Plenary” means “the Scripture as a whole with all the words intact” (Matt 24:35, 1 Pet 1:25). So VPP means the whole of Scripture with all its words even to the jot and tittle is perfectly preserved by God without any loss of the original words, prophecies, promises, commandments, doctrines, and truths, not only in the words of salvation, but also the words of history, geography and science. Every book, every chapter, every verse, every word, every syllable, every letter is “by His singular care and providence, kept pure in all ages” (WCF I:8).

What and where are the preserved words of God today? They are the inspired *OT Hebrew/Aramaic words* and *NT Greek words* the prophets, the apostles, the church fathers, the reformers used which are today found in the *long and continuously abiding or preserved Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek words* underlying the Reformation Bibles best represented by the KJV, and **NOT** in those corrupted Alexandrian manuscripts and critical Westcott-Hort texts underlying the modern versions which the church had

seen fit to reject for all these millennia but revived by modern ecumenists and compromisers in these last days of apostasy.

Basically, those who hold to the VPP of Scripture believe and embrace the following tenets:

(1) God has supernaturally preserved each and every one of His inspired Hebrew/Aramaic OT words and Greek NT words to the last jot and tittle, so that in every age, God's people will always have in their possession His infallible and inerrant Word kept intact without the loss of any word (Ps 12:6-7, Matt 5:18, 24:35, Mark 13:31, Luke 21:33, John 10:35).

(2) The "providential" preservation of Scriptures is understood as God's *special* and not general providence. *Special* providence or *providentia extraordinaria* speaks of God's miraculous intervention in the events of history and in the affairs of mankind in fulfilment of His sovereign will for the sake of His elect and to the glory of His Name. The divine preservation of the Canon (books) and Text (words) of Scripture comes under God's *special* providence.

(3) The Bible is not only perfect (ie, infallible and inerrant) in the past (in the Autographs), but also perfect *today* (in the Apographs).

(4) The infallible and inerrant words of Scripture are found in the faithfully preserved Traditional/Byzantine/Majority manuscripts, and fully represented in the Printed and Received Text (ie, Textus Receptus) that underlie the Reformation Bibles best represented by the KJV, and **NOT** in the corrupted and rejected texts of Westcott and Hort that underlie the many modern versions of the English Bible like the NIV, NASV, ESV, RSV, TEV, CEV, TLB etc.

(5) There are no mistakes in the Bible, period. There are no mistakes or errors (scribal or otherwise) in such OT passages as Judges 18:30, 1 Samuel 13:1, 1 Kings 4:26, 1 Chronicles 18:3, 2 Chronicles 22:2 etc. If there are "discrepancies" in the Bible, the "discrepancies" are only seeming or apparent, **NOT** real or actual. Any inability to understand or explain such difficult passages in no way negates the infallibility and inerrancy of the Scriptures, applying the faithful Pauline principle of biblical interpretation: "let God be true, but every man a liar" (Rom 3:4).

(6) Knowing where the perfect Bible is is a matter of *textual recognition* and **NOT** textual criticism. In the field of textual recognition, Burgon is good, Hills is better, Waite is best.

(7) The Chinese Union Version (CUV) is the “Word of God” for the Chinese people today since it is the best, most faithful, most reliable, and most accurate version among the Chinese versions presently available. Great care ought to be taken not to undermine our Chinese brethren’s confidence in the CUV. Nevertheless, versions or translations are never superior to the inspired and preserved Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek Scriptures; thus there is a need to consult these original language Scriptures for clarity and fulness of meaning, and to compare Scripture with Scripture.

Rev ____ has taken no oath, but I have taken an oath that the Bible is perfect without any mistake. I will not bow to any pressure nor be cowered by any threat to force me to agree that the Holy Scriptures which I have in my hands today are imperfect or contain mistakes. I fear God and His judgement, not man and his criticisms. I seek the approval of God, not the popularity of men.

I pray that Rev ____ and all FEBC alumni would stand fast together with their alma mater on *the sole and final authority of the forever infallible and inerrant words of God*, “in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel” (Phil 1:27). *Soli Deo Gloria!*

IN DEFENCE OF THE FAR EASTERN BIBLE COLLEGE, THE REFORMED FAITH, AND THE REFORMATION BIBLE

Jeffrey Khoo

Preamble

A so-called “Truth” website has launched an incredible offensive against the Far Eastern Bible College with this allegation:

The Far Eastern Bible College (FEBC) has abandoned the historic reformed faith for KJV-onlyism and the verbal plenary preservation (VPP) of scripture. They teach that the Greek and Hebrew texts were miraculously restored by the KJV translators in 1611 to be word-for-word identical with the original manuscripts (autographa). Consequently, the FEBC has inadvertently joined the Charismatic movement in promoting progressive revelation and post-canonical inspiration.

Let me rebut this craftily-worded statement aimed at maligning not just FEBC, but also the Biblical and reformed doctrine of VPP and the faithful defence of the Reformation Bible (the KJV and its underlying inspired words in the original languages) over against the many neo-evangelical and ecumenical modern English versions that are based on the corrupt Westcott-Hort text (with its many missing verses and words).

100% Inspiration and 100% Preservation

God forbid that FEBC should abandon the Biblical Reformed Faith. Rather we reaffirm and call for a return to the Biblical Reformed Faith of *Sola Scriptura* in this 21st century of rampant unbelief and compromise not just in the evangelical but also the fundamentalist world.

FEBC reaffirms the Biblical Reformed Faith by believing that our faith must be based solely and squarely on *the Scriptures and the Scriptures alone*. Our faith and beliefs are not based on church traditions, human opinions, or personal experiences but only on the *forever* infallible and inerrant Word of God. In Article 4 of the FEBC

Constitution, we declare in no uncertain terms, “The Statement of Faith of the College shall be in accordance with that system commonly called ‘the Reformed Faith’ as expressed in the Confession of Faith as set forth by the historic Westminster Assembly together with the Larger and Shorter Catechisms.” As regards the Doctrine of Scripture, ***“We believe in the divine, Verbal Plenary Inspiration (Autographs) and Verbal Plenary Preservation (Apographs) of the Scriptures in the original languages, their consequent inerrancy and infallibility, and as the perfect Word of God, the supreme and final authority in faith and life (2 Tim 3:16, 2 Pet 1:20-21, Ps 12:6-7, Matt 5:18, 24:35).”***

This is our restatement and reaffirmation of the Westminster Confession of Faith (I:8) which declares, “The Old Testament in Hebrew ... and the New Testament in Greek ... being immediately inspired by God, and, by ***His singular care and providence, kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentic***; so as, in all controversies of religion, the Church is ***finally to appeal unto them***.” The Reformed Faith believes in the absolute sovereignty and faithfulness of God in keeping His Word to His people, that He is in complete control of the events of history and world affairs, and that He can intervene miraculously at any point in time to fulfil His prophecies and His promises.

It is clear in our writings that when we speak of the special and supernatural preservation of the Scriptures, we are speaking of it in terms of ***God’s work***—not man’s. This is in line with the Westminster Confession of Faith which states that the preservation of the Scriptures is by “*His singular care and providence*.” It is therefore utterly misleading to say that we “teach that the Greek and Hebrew texts were *miraculously restored by the KJV translators in 1611*.” If the inspired Greek and Hebrew texts were restored miraculously it was ***not by the King James translators but by the singular care and providence of God and God alone during the special period of divine intervention in the Great Protestant Reformation***. God has preserved His words pure throughout the ages and is preserving His words pure today, but there was a high point in His Biblical preservation work in the days of the Reformation. It is God who does miracles, not man, and He still works miracles today according to His sovereign will and time. According to Church historian Philip Schaff, “The Reformation of the 16th Century is, next to the introduction of Christianity, *the greatest event in history*.” Just as the Lord Jesus Christ came miraculously in “the fulness of the time” (Gal

4:4), so did the Reformation. In light of Biblical precedents and Divine providence (*providentia extraordinaria*), the Protestant Reformation was a “miracle event” from God.

Special Providence and the Reformation

Could God have restored for His Church all of His inspired and preserved words in the days of the Reformation? As the all-powerful God, He certainly could, and by faith we believe He surely did. Just as He restored the Old Covenant words of His Decalogue through His servant Moses (Exod 19:16-21:26, 31:18-32:28, 34:1-4; Deut 5:1-29, 9:20-21, 10:1-5), and all His words in the scroll which Jehoiakim cut up and burned (Jer 36:1-32), so we believe the Lord has similarly done for His New Testament words which have been kept pure in the Traditional and Majority manuscripts and are now found in the Printed Text of the Protestant Reformation—the time-tested and time-honoured Textus Receptus underlying the KJV. FEBC simply does not see the need for any kind of textual critical work today. As far as we are concerned, we have not only a *fixed and firm Canon (books) but also a fixed and firm Text (words)* we can call “the very Word of God,” infallible, inerrant, authentic, and absolutely authoritative. We believe that such a position is most necessary if we are to weather and survive the onslaughts of postmodernism, pop-modernism, open theism, and neo-deism that threaten the church today.

(It is absurd for anti-KJV/VPPists to suggest that FEBC has “joined the Charismatic movement in promoting progressive revelation and post-canonical inspiration,” whether advertently or inadvertently. Again, this is another attempt to caricature our position. We are quite aware of the hermeneutical and theological fallacies of Charismatism. See my book *Charismatism Q&A*.)

FEBC reaffirms the Biblical Reformed Faith by promoting and defending the Reformed doctrine of the *Special Providential Preservation* (also known as the Verbal Plenary Preservation) of the Scriptures, and the *Reformation Text* on which the Authorised King James Bible is based. As a College founded by the Rev Dr Timothy Tow, father of the Bible-Presbyterian (B-P) movement in Southeast Asia, FEBC is committed to defending the King James Bible which has been the official and only English Bible of the B-P denomination in Singapore since its founding in 1950.

KJV Versus Modern Versions

While a small number of B-P churches have replaced the KJV with the NIV or the NKJV, a good number still hold firmly onto the good old KJV and welcome no attempts to replace it with the newer and modern versions. Although FEBC had in the past used the Westcott/Hort-based United Bible Societies' corrupt and critical Greek text, it is now using the traditional and preserved Greek New Testament underlying the KJV (Scrivener's Textus Receptus) as published by the Dean Burgon Society and the Trinitarian Bible Society. This switch from the Westcott-Hort Text to the Textus Receptus was a result of an intensive and systematic study of the writings of J W Burgon (Anglican), E F Hills (Presbyterian), D A Waite (Baptist), and the Trinitarian Bible Society since 1992. We were saved from ignorance, and are now fully committed to the Biblical doctrine of the divine, verbal and plenary preservation of the God-breathed Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek words of Scripture underlying the Reformation Bibles best represented by the KJV. Articles 4.2.1.1, 2, and 3 of the FEBC Constitution state:

We believe the Hebrew Old Testament and the Greek New Testament underlying the Authorised (King James) Version to be the very Word of God, infallible and inerrant.

We uphold the Authorised (King James) Version to be the Word of God—the best, most faithful, most accurate, most beautiful translation of the Bible in the English language, and do employ it alone as our primary scriptural text in the public reading, preaching, and teaching of the English Bible. [Note that although we use only the KJV, we are *not* “*KJV-only*” in the *Ruckmanite* sense, which is clearly seen in our writings.]

The Board of Directors and Faculty shall affirm their allegiance to the Word of God by taking the Dean Burgon Oath at every annual convocation: “I swear in the Name of the Triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit that I believe ‘the Bible is none other than the voice of Him that sitteth upon the throne. Every book of it, every chapter of it, every verse of it, every word of it, every syllable of it, every letter of it, is the direct utterance of the Most High. The Bible is none other than the Word of God, not some part of it more, some part of it less, but all alike the utterance of Him that sitteth upon the throne, faultless, unerring, supreme.’”

FEBC reaffirms the Biblical Reformed Faith by encouraging the accurate translation of foreign language Bibles according to the Reformation Text underlying the KJV. Although FEBC, as an English-speaking school, believes that the KJV is the only Bible it should use in

the public preaching and teaching of the English Bible, it does not despise nor prohibit the use of Bibles in other languages. At FEBC, we have students from 16 countries, and we do not at all discourage them from reading their Bibles in their own native tongues. We only advise them to use the best, most accurate, most reliable version they have in their native language, and to go back to the inspired and preserved original language Scriptures which we identify to be those behind the faithful KJV and not the corrupt modern versions to check for accuracy and fulness of meaning. As far as English Bibles go, we believe the KJV to be the best English version of the Bible today, and for very good reasons.

We believe, as the Westminster divines did, that the Holy Scriptures “are to be translated into the vulgar language of every nation unto which they come, that, the Word of God dwelling plentifully in all, they may worship Him in an acceptable manner; and through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, may have hope.” Divinity and theology students of FEBC are required to study the original languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek) so that they might be faithful and careful expositors and translators of the whole counsel of God. A number of our degree graduates have completed their thesis projects involving work on their native language Bibles so as to make them closer and more accurate to the Reformation Text. Thus far, work has been done on the following foreign language Bibles by our students: Chinese, Falam Chin (Myanmar), Bahasa Indonesia, Kiswahili (Kenya), Kalenjin (Kenya), and Vietnamese.

Non-Issues

FEBC is aware that there are certain VPP and KJV defenders who differ with FEBC over the absolute certainty as regards the underlying texts or words. But as long as they (1) maintain VPP in the lineage of Byzantine/Majority manuscripts and the Textus Receptus, and (2) reject the corrupt Alexandrian/Minority manuscripts or Westcott-Hort Text, and (3) deny that there are scribal errors in places where there are absolutely none in the verbally preserved texts/words in the original languages, these slight differences of opinion over the verbally preserved texts/words among KJV defenders should remain as non-issues as we focus on our common goal to promote the best Text and the best Version for the

Church today based on the Biblical doctrine of the special providential preservation of Scripture (or VPP).

Using FEBC and its location as an analogy, all VPP and KJV defenders would say that FEBC exists (ie, we have an infallible and inerrant Bible in the original languages today). But if the question is asked, “Where is FEBC?” We at FEBC would answer, “FEBC is at 9A Gilstead Road” (ie, the infallible and inerrant Scripture is in the KJV edition of the Textus Receptus). Others might answer, “FEBC is in the Newton area” (ie, in the Byzantine/Majority/Received family of texts). If such be the case, then I believe there should be mutual respect and cooperation between the two slightly differing but agreeable positions.

Autographs, Apographs, and Authority

Another unfortunate statement cleverly phrased to put the doctrine of VPP, and the defence of the KJV and its underlying texts in a bad light, is one produced by a group of eleven Bible-Presbyterian (B-P) pastors as published in the Life B-P Church Weekly on September 25, 2005, which states,

We, the undersigned Bible-Presbyterian ministers, wholeheartedly believe and affirm that the inspired Word of God has absolutely no error in the Original Autographs. However, we reject the theory of Verbal Plenary Preservation propounded by some, who dogmatically claim that the Greek and Hebrew copies immediately underlying the King James Version are an exact replica of the Original Autographs. This insistent promotion of this theory has resulted in schism among brethren.

If the above statement is true that *only* the Autographs are absolutely without error, would it then be correct to say that the eleven pastors *do not believe that they do have* in their possession a 100% infallible and inerrant Bible today without any mistake, seeing that they believe only the *non-existent* and *intangible* “Original Autographs” to be the absolutely inerrant Word of God? If this be so, may we ask them, by what existing infallible and inerrant authority do they base their faith and practice, when they reject and do not embrace our belief in an existing infallible Scripture that is without any mistake?

It must be added that the words used by our detractors like “theory,” “dogmatically,” “exact replica,” and “schism” are attempts to give a distorted perception of VPP and its adherents. Without the context, and the necessary qualifications and clarifications, the above words make

those who believe in VPP, who are committed to the Hebrew Masoretic Text and Greek Textus Receptus and the preserved Hebrew and Greek words underlying the KJV, look like extreme and unreasonable people. It must be underscored that we at FEBC have no issue with those who affirm the present infallibility and inerrancy of the Scriptures in the *family of uncorrupted Traditional, Byzantine, Majority, and Received Hebrew and Greek apographs* God has providentially and specially preserved, but, without denying inerrancy, are uncertain about *some of the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek words immediately underlying* the KJV.

A minister in the group of eleven who resigned from the FEBC was in fact asked on September 23, 2003, in the presence of Rev Dr Timothy Tow and certain elders at the Parsonage, to confirm or harmonise his belief in a Perfect Bible existing within the family of uncorrupted texts by denying that scribal errors exist in certain passages of the KJV, as all extant Hebrew manuscripts—and not only the Hebrew manuscripts/texts “immediately” underlying the KJV—point to the KJV translators translating the original language texts in 2 Kings 8:26 and 2 Chronicles 22:2 correctly. Pointing to attempts at emending what he regards as scribal errors to be contrary to all Hebrew manuscript evidence and to be positing that God has failed to preserve all of His inspired, inerrant and infallible words within the family of texts, the minister kept mum. I had invited him back to the FEBC faculty if he would agree to change his view and affirm the present perfection of Scripture. It was no surprise that he did not take to my offer as he had joined others in attacking the use of key Scripture verses such as Matthew 5:18, 24:35, Mark 13:31, Luke 21:33 and Psalm 12:6-7 cited by VPPists to support special providential preservation or VPP.

The real issue seems to lie with detractors who claim to be preserving godly paths when they do not even believe in all the inspired words of God being verbally and plenary preserved, either within the family of Traditional and Preserved Texts or in the Hebrew OT and Greek NT words immediately underlying the KJV. Even worse, such detractors appear to be vacillating or changing in their beliefs so that VPPists are unsure where they actually stand on the issues.

Theory or Doctrine?

Anti-VPPists say that VPP is a “theory.” How is it a “theory” if it is taught explicitly in the Scriptures? A theory has no biblical basis, but the

VPP of Scripture is hardly a “theory,” for it is clearly taught in the following biblical passages:

Psalm 12:6-7—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.***

Psalm 33:11—***The counsel of the LORD standeth for ever***, the thoughts of his heart to all generations.

Psalm 78:1-7—Give ear, O my people, [to] my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old: Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. We will not hide [them] from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done. For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should ***make them known to their children***: That the generation to come might know [them, even] the children [which] should be born; [who] should arise and ***declare [them] to their children***: That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments.

Psalm 100:5—For the LORD [is] good; his mercy [is] everlasting; and ***his truth [endureth] to all generations.***

Psalm 105:8—He hath remembered his covenant ***for ever***, the word [which] he commanded ***to a thousand generations.***

Psalm 111:7-8—The works of his hands [are] verity and judgment; ***all his commandments [are] sure. They stand fast for ever and ever***, [and are] done in truth and uprightness.

Psalm 117:2—For his merciful kindness is great toward us: and ***the truth of the LORD [endureth] for ever***. Praise ye the LORD.

Psalm 119:89—***For ever***, O LORD, ***thy word is settled*** in heaven.

Psalm 119:152—Concerning ***thy testimonies***, I have known of old that thou hast ***founded them for ever.***

Psalm 119:160—Thy word [is] true [from] the beginning: and every one of ***thy righteous judgments [endureth] for ever.***

Isaiah 40:8—The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but ***the word of our God shall stand for ever.***

Isaiah 59:21—As for me, this [is] ***my covenant*** with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that [is] upon thee, and ***my words*** which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, ***from henceforth and for ever.***

Matthew 4:4—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.***

Matthew 5:17-18—Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. 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.

Matthew 24:35—Heaven and earth shall pass away, but ***my words shall not pass away.***

John 10:35—If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and ***the scripture cannot be broken;***

1 Peter 1:23-25—Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of ***incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.*** For all flesh [is] as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But ***the word of the Lord endureth for ever.*** And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.

Is not VPP a biblical doctrine? Surely it is! Every believer—young or old, man or woman, rich or poor, unlearned or educated, Jew or Gentile—by ***simple, childlike faith*** in God’s forever infallible and inerrant words written above—can say “Amen” to the truth that God has indeed preserved His inspired words, and every one of them to the last iota!

Where are the Inspired and Preserved Words?

Now if we have all of God’s inspired words preserved for us today, then the question is where precisely? ***The logic of faith based on the Biblical doctrine of VPP would lead us to the inspired Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek words that God has specially and providentially preserved in the traditional and majority manuscripts, and in the printed received texts underlying the Reformation Bibles which God has continuously and supernaturally kept pure throughout the ages without any loss of any of the inspired words and always available to His people even up till the present, which are today fully represented by the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures underlying the KJV which we have in our hands today.***

Are these Hebrew and Greek Scriptures underlying the KJV an “exact replica” of the autographs? If by “exact replica” is meant the miraculous reproduction of the exact tablets of stone of the Ten

Commandments, or the very first or original papyri or parchments the prophets and apostles wrote on, the answer would of course be no. It is absurd and ridiculous to even suggest this. The original autographs have perished, but the inspired **words** of God remain and continue to exist. VPP is speaking of the **preservation of the words** that God had originally breathed out and inscripturated in the Biblical Canon, and **not the preservation of the materials**—the clay tables, or papyri, or parchments. As I had explained in my paper, *A Plea for a Perfect Bible*, “The paper may be different, but the *contents* [or *words*] are the same.” These inspired *words* are preserved in *all ages*, and not only from 1611. Let me remind VPP detractors that my book is entitled *Kept Pure in All Ages*, and not *Kept Pure Since 1611*.

Faith or Criticism?

We do believe that the Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek words “immediately” underlying the KJV are the *fully* inspired and *fully* preserved words of God. As such we do not believe there is a need for any kind of textual criticism today. The so-called “science” of textual criticism is intrinsically *subjective and speculative* (since the autographs which no true evangelical or fundamentalist doubts are “absolute and perfect in every way” have long perished and are no longer existing). As such, we feel that modern textual criticism that employs rationalistic rules of human intellect and imagination feeds on the pride and vanity of sinful beings who wish to place themselves above the almighty and infinite God and His infallible and inerrant promises, who presumptuously arrogate themselves as critics and correctors of His Word or words, and by their “conjectural emendations” are conceited enough to think they are doing God and His Church a service.

If textual critics are so certain there is no perfect Bible today (and even castigate those that do), and are so sure of their ability and prowess to correct God’s words, then why cannot they produce one for us by now? Yea, we demand such a Bible from the high and mighty scholars of our modern age. Why cannot they produce it? We want to be absolutely certain about our Book on which we defend our faith and preach the good news of Jesus Christ. When can we have it? Are they conscientiously working towards the perfection of their Bible? Yet they castigate the saints who believe they already have a 100% infallible and inerrant Bible

in their hands today, and call them “fools,” “schismatics,” even “heretics!”

Distortions and Misrepresentations

Is the statement against the VPP of Scriptures produced by the group of eleven a fair representation of FEBC’s VPP position? By no means! Misrepresentation of the VPP position has been the consistent *modus operandi* of anti-VPP advocates. Instead of defending their non-VPP position from the Bible (until now, they have not quoted any scripture to support their position), they have resorted always to caricaturing, distorting and misrepresenting FEBC’s position in various ways, including saying or alluding to it as Ruckmanism, SDAism, and even Charismatism! It seems that they have to resort to such tactics in order to make their case against those who believe in the present perfection of the Bible. We do not know who among the group of eleven crafted or was instrumental in the crafting of the anti-VPP statement issued by the group. However, we know that one of the chief opponents of VPP had taught and published that a lie of necessity may be told in times of war.

If the group of eleven would rephrase their statement in the manner below, it would be a more accurate representation of what we believe and what they reject,

We, the undersigned Bible-Presbyterian ministers, wholeheartedly believe and affirm that the inspired Word of God has absolutely no error in the Original Autographs which the VPP fundamentalists also believe without equivocation. However, we reject their belief in the Verbal Plenary Preservation (as taught in Ps 12:6-7, Matt 5:18, 24:35, Mark 13:31, Luke 21:33, 1 Pet 1:23-25), and that all the inspired Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek words of the original apographs (ie, copies) underlying the King James Version are precisely the preserved words of the original autographs.

Now we do not consider as enemies those who might not hold to our position exactly as regards the words in the uncorrupted and preserved Traditional/Majority/Byzantine/Received family of manuscripts or texts but nevertheless *deny any discrepancy, contradiction or mistake in the Bible*, and are *against Westcott and Hort and the modern versions*. We are not as “dogmatic” as our detractors paint us out to be; there is definitely *charity* in our defence of the KJV and its underlying texts, *not at the expense of truth but on the basis of truth*. Charity was indeed displayed in a proposed but unpublished statement, “A Plea for a Perfect

Bible Again so as to Preserve Our Godly Path,” that sought peace and reconciliation, but was spurned by the powers that be on April 16, 2003.

Textual Issue and Separation

The group of eleven is a mixed group with differing views on the versions issue, who appear to see no need to defend the KJV or its underlying texts, or to warn against writers who deny the present infallibility and inerrancy of the original language Scriptures, who are decidedly anti-TR and anti-KJV, pro-Westcott/Hort and pro-modern-versions. They have been quick to find fault with FEBC’s defence of the KJV and its underlying texts, but not quick to refute the public attacks made by Bob Jones University (BJU) and Central Baptist Theological Seminary (CBTS) against the biblical doctrine of the special providential preservation (or VPP) of Scripture, the KJV and its underlying texts.

In fact, they have been actively promoting those books and cultivating the friendship of such institutions, and quoting them against FEBC. Why? Does this not contradict the biblical injunction of 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15 to separate from disobedient brethren? For enlightenment, see Charles Seet’s excellent paper on “The Principle of Secondary Separation,” in *The Burning Bush* (January 1996). The Rev Charles Seet, now the pastor of Life B-P Church, had also written an excellent expose of Westcott and Hort entitled, “The Inside Story of Westcott and Hort,” published in *The Burning Bush* (January 1998). Is the group of eleven B-P pastors now calling Westcott and Hort “friends,” and KJV/TR defenders “enemies?” Why are they attacking their very own school—FEBC—which stoutly defends the KJV and its underlying texts, and the doctrine of VPP which undergirds and safeguards the KJV and its underlying texts? Why are they taking sides with institutions like BJU and CBTS which promote Westcott and Hort and the modern perversions?

Charity or Schism?

“Can two walk together, except they be agreed?” (Amos 3:3). When differences arise, a splitting of ways may be inevitable. In a split, should one applaud the party who is more charitable? Or should one accuse one of the parties of schism when it takes two parties to disagree in order to split?

The statement by the group of eleven accuses VPP believers of causing schism. Can such an accusation be fair when these have chosen to follow our God-appointed, faithful and elderly pastor in the Rev Dr Timothy Tow who had given over to his detractors the very Life B-P Church the Lord had used him to found, build and pastor for over 50 years, to start a new church from scratch?

In the August 1, 2004 Weekly of True Life Bible-Presbyterian Church, the Rev Dr Timothy Tow wrote in his “Pastoral Chat” page:

The Truth How We Are Now Become True Life Bible-Presbyterian Church

In Vol. I No. 43 of our Weekly dated 25 July 2004 last week it was reported “The new name of our Church is gazetted True Life Bible-Presbyterian Church.” How have we now become True Life Bible-Presbyterian Church began like this.

At a Faculty Meeting [29 October 02] of Far Eastern Bible College Rev Colin Wong and Rev Charles Seet my two Assistant Pastors at Life B-P Church declared they could no longer take the Dean Burgon Oath of swearing allegiance to the Bible to be without mistake to the last syllable and letter. They said they had discovered some mistakes but these did not affect doctrine and were not serious.

Since this College has required absolute allegiance to the Bible since the seventies I gladly let them resign.

In order to protect the good name of FEBC I declared the Bible to be 100% perfect without any mistake.

As the Session of Life B-P Church took their side it turned out I had to resign from the Church to stand for a 100% Perfect Bible without mistake.

In the first week of October 03 the Lord provided us an Auditorium of RELC, situated near to Shangri-La Hotel, and under the name of FEBC we launched out as FEBC Lord’s Day Service at RELC. We took time to apply for registration as Word of Life or alternative True Life.

Since there is a Christian organisation already registered, the authorities let us use True Life and gazetted it as reported 25 July 04 last week.

Doctrine in the belief of a 100% Perfect Bible without any mistake and doctrine of belief in a Bible with some mistakes but not serious since they don’t touch doctrine resulted in our leaving Life B-P Church to start this service since first week of October 03. Now there are 300 worshipping at RELC and we have booked with RELC for another year.

This is the truth how it all started.

Dean Burgon Oath

I swear in the Name of the Triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit that I believe “the Bible is none other than the voice of Him that sitteth upon the throne. Every book of it, every chapter of it, every verse of it, every word of it, every syllable of it, every letter of it, is the direct utterance of the Most High. The Bible is none other than the Word of God, not some part of it more, some part of it less, but all alike the utterance of Him that sitteth upon the throne, faultless, unerring, supreme.” So help me God, AMEN.

Was not Jesus treated in the same way by His hometown Nazareth? “For Jesus himself testified, that a prophet hath no honour in his own country” (John 4:44). Pastor Tow did not desert his flock as some maliciously accuse him of. On the contrary, it was his session that had rejected him in favour of his two assistant pastors who had resigned from FEBC because they could no longer take the Dean Burgon Oath. Humbly and meekly, in the face of many unjust accusations (see “Summary of Facts” in the Life B-P Church Weekly, September 24, 2003) hurled at him non-stop, he departed to found a new church to take a stand for the present infallibility and inerrancy of Scripture he was forbidden to take at the old church. As far as FEBC is concerned, we the current faculty and students do appreciate our late principal and teacher—Timothy Tow—very much, and are thankful to God that he remained ever fervent and faithful to His Master even in such difficult and oppressive moments.

To the Glory of God Alone

In the spirit of its late founder—the Rev Dr Timothy Tow—we at FEBC want to train God’s people to become faithful saints and servants, not puffed-up scholars and usurpers. Why so? The infallible and inerrant words written by the Apostle Paul 2,000 years ago ring true even today,

*Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, **He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord** (1 Cor 1:25-31).*

In his defence of VPP and the KJV, the Rev Dr Timothy Tow never failed to remind us of this infallible principle of faith and ministry which is ***the glory of God***, quoting the Lord's forever infallible and inerrant words in Isaiah 42:8 and Jeremiah 9:23-24:

Isaiah 42:8—I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another.

Jeremiah 9:23-24—Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgement, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD.

We are quite happy to sing the words of Martin Luther,

Let goods and kindred go,

This mortal life also;

The body they may kill:

God's truth abideth still—

His kingdom is forever.

Sola Scriptura! Soli Deo Gloria!

BEARING TRUE WITNESS

A Response to “Bearing False Witness” by Charles Seet

Jeffrey Khoo

I write in response to the article and statement published in the Life Bible-Presbyterian Church (BPC) Weekly of January 27, 2008, namely, (1) “Bearing False Witness” by the Rev Charles Seet, and (2) “An Appeal to VPP Proponents” by the Life BPC Board of Elders (BOE).¹

Ninth Commandment

The Rev Charles Seet wrote an excellent article against breaking the ninth commandment, “Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour” (Exod 20:16). He rightly warned against lies, deceptions, boastings, flatteries, false accusations, gossips, perjuries, etc. Despite his warning against bearing false witness, it is necessary to reveal that the Rev Seet when he taught the Ten Commandments at the Far Eastern Bible College (FEBC) commented that there are times when employing “deceit” is not a sin. In his lecture notes, he wrote that in times of war it might be necessary to tell a lie (i.e. a “lie of necessity”). The Rev Seet is even quoted in the internet as an advocate of such a “lie of necessity.”²

Now, if the Rev Charles Seet believes that bearing false witness or telling a lie is acceptable in times of war, how can we be sure that he does not deem the present situation between Life BPC and FEBC to be “war,” and that he is not employing deceit in his writings and dealings with us? How can we be sure he is speaking truthfully since he believes that “Truth must always be given to whom it is due, but it may not be given to an **enemy** who may use that truth for **evil** purposes” (emphasis his). Does he see FEBC as an enemy? From his “Mark Them Which Cause Divisions” paper branding VPP a “heresy” without any biblical justification, and seeing it as an evil which must be destroyed together with its proponents, I cannot help but think that he sees us as enemies. He tells us not to bear false witness, but how can we be sure he is bearing

true witness at this time, and not employing deception or telling lies to destroy his enemies?.

At this juncture, will the Rev Charles Seet bear true witness by telling us whether it is true or not that an Elder of Life BPC had recommended the anti-KJV/pro-modern-versions book—*One Bible Only?*—privately to Lifers when the Rev Dr Timothy Tow was still the pastor of Life BPC, thereby undermining his leadership and his defence of the KJV against Westcott and Hort? Was it not true that another Elder had deemed FEBC “extreme” for rejecting the NKJV? Would he also consider the Trinitarian Bible Society (TBS) to be “extreme” since the TBS like FEBC rejects the NKJV? Will he testify honestly or will he apply the “lie of necessity”? Please be reminded of the inspired and preserved, infallible and inerrant words of God: “But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil” (Matt 5:37); “In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established” (2 Cor 13:1).

Selective Quotation

The Life BPC BOE say to quote selectively is to bear false witness. This is a strange allegation indeed. Scholars often quote selectively but fairly to prove a point based upon certain presuppositions and premises, and often write papers to build their own case or that of other published authors/scholars by introducing new arguments or evidences that had not been previously considered. This is not to say that those who have been quoted necessarily support the position or supposition of the author or writer or vice versa. Every scholar has to do his own research and thinking. This is all part of the scholastic exercise of iron sharpening iron (Prov 27:17). As far as Christianity is concerned, we do not go on a wild goose chase, but have a totally infallible and absolutely authoritative basis or source which is the 100% inspired and 100% preserved words of God by which we subject all our thinking and reasoning, convictions and conclusions. It is baffling why this should be considered “false witnessing.”

Now, the Rev Charles Seet and his Elders say I am guilty of “selective quotation,” and in their judgement, “bearing false witness.” They say that in my paper on John Owen’s view of the Perfect Bible, I was deceitful by hiding the fact that John Owen “advocated the exercise of diligence in searching the Word of God to solve textual variants in or

among the copies we have.” If they had read my paper carefully and thoroughly, they would not have wronged me, for I stated clearly in that article, “Owen did not deny the existence of textual variants (387). Nevertheless, he clarified that ‘the whole Word of God, in every letter and tittle, as given from him by inspiration, is preserved without corruption’ (388).”³ I also went on to deal with “textual criticism,” and showed how Owen was against it because the divine origin and nature of Scripture did not allow for it.

If I am guilty of “selective quotation,” then I am afraid the Rev Charles Seet and his Elders are guilty of it too. For instance, they quoted John Owen about “textual variants” but stopped short of what Owen went on to say about how textual critics have wrongly used a corrupt translation like the Septuagint (LXX) to correct or emend the inspired and preserved Hebrew text. Right after Owen said, “God by his providence preserving the whole entire, suffered this lesser variety to fall out, in or among the copies we have, for the quickening and exercising of our diligence in our search into his Word” (as quoted by the Life BOE), he wrote *in the very next paragraph*, “It was an unhappy attempt, (which must afterward be spoken unto,) that a learned man hath of late put himself upon, viz., to prove variations in all the present *Apographa* the Old Testament in the Hebrew tongue from the copies used of old, merely upon **uncertain conjectures** and the credit of **corrupt translations**. Whether that plea of his be more unreasonable in itself and devoid of any real ground of truth, or injurious to the love and care of God over his Word and church, I know not; sure I am, it is both in a high degree. The translation especially insisted on by him is that of the LXX. That this translation either from the mistakes of its first authors, (if it be theirs whose name and number it beam,) or the carelessness, or ignorance, or worse, of its transcribers—is corrupted and gone off from the original in a thousand places twice told, is acknowledged by all who know aught of these things. Strange that so corrupt a stream should be judged a fit means to cleanse the fountain; ...” (emphasis his).

It is clear Owen dismissed the LXX as a “corrupt” translation and is opposed to “uncertain conjectures” which we on the basis of VPP likewise dismiss and oppose. Why did the Rev Charles Seet and the Elders of Life BPC not go on quoting Owen and his warnings against textual criticism despite the textual variants but instead accuse me of “bearing false witness”? Jesus warned, “Judge not, that ye be not judged.

For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam *is* in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye" (Matt 7:1-5).

Burgon, Hills, and Waite

Now, it is without question that J W Burgon and E F Hills both believed in the jot-and-tittle preservation of the Holy Scriptures (Matt 5:18), and this is nothing short of verbal and plenary preservation (VPP).⁴ However, this does not mean that they agree on every point as regards the identification of the texts, and that was why I said, Burgon's Majority Text position is "good," Hills's Received Text underlying the KJV ("maximum certainty" but not "absolute certainty") is "better," and Waite's Received Text underlying the KJV (100% certainty of exact words kept intact) is "best."⁵ This has to do with the question of *consistency* in the identification of the preserved text or words by means of *the logic of faith*, but none of them ever denied VPP or the jot-and-tittle preservation of the Scriptures (Matt 5:18), unlike certain American fundamentalists, neo-evangelicals, and modernists today who say that Biblical preservation is not taught in the Scriptures, who dismiss it as a "new doctrine" invented by the Westminster divines, who believe that there are lost words in the Bible, and who employ conjectural emendation by attributing "scribal errors" to certain parts of God's Word when there are none (e.g. 1 Samuel 13:1, 2 Chronicles 22:2 etc). Based on God's promise of jot-and-tittle preservation (or VPP), I do not believe that God's people throughout the ages have been reading such "errors" or "mistakes" in the Bible, but the infallible and inerrant, inspired and preserved words of God.

Burgon, Hills, and Waite are all on the same team of KJV defenders, and they essentially agree as to where the inspired words of God are preserved. By way of illustration, if Burgon, Hills and Waite were to be asked, "Where is Life BPC/FEBC?," Burgon would answer, "It is in the Newton area," Hills would say, "It is along Gilstead Road," and Waite would reply, "It is at 9, 9A and 10 Gilstead Road." All three answers are

true (Burgon's answer is good, Hills's is better, Waite's the best), without denying the very existence and location of Life BPC and FEBC. In terms of location, the first is close, the next is closer, and the last is the closest, being most specific and certain. A Bible believer will not lose his way if he consults Burgon, Hills and Waite, but if he were to ask Westcott and Hort, the modern textual critics or modern versionists, they would tell him that Life BPC/FEBC is in Woodlands, and he would surely lose his way. Now, this veritable and charitable way of looking at the Biblical doctrine of VPP is not something the Rev Charles Seet and his Elders are ignorant of, for I had written a sincere letter on March 27, 2003 to the Life BPC session seeking for peace and unity on the basis of truth and love, but they rejected it on April 16, 2003. They were hard on Pastor Tow during session meetings for taking the same 100% view on Scripture among other things, which sadly drove him to his resignation a few months later, on August 20, 2003. Where was the verity, sagacity, and charity in all this? Let that sober, sagacious, and scholarly man answer. May the Lord raise up a Gamaliel (Acts 5:34-39)!

Textual Variants

The Rev Charles Seet and Elders of Life BPC accused me of deceit because, according to them, I hid or denied the existence of "scribal errors" or "textual variants" in the manuscripts. This allegation is false. I spoke about "textual variants" in my book, *Kept Pure in All Ages*.⁶ I also mentioned them in my paper, "A Plea for a Perfect Bible" where I said, "No one denies that scribal errors were committed during the work of copying Scripture. But the question is: Did God allow any of His inspired words in the autographs to be lost during this transmission process? Although the Church does not have the autographs (the very first scripts) today, she has the apographs (copies) which reflect the autographs. Providentially speaking, the autographs were *neither lost nor destroyed*."⁷

In light of God's promise to preserve every jot and tittle of His inspired words in the original languages (Matt 5:18), I am against attributing scribal errors to the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures when there are none to begin with. It is also important to understand that scribal errors are human errors committed during the copying of Scripture and should not be identified with Scripture for they have no part whatsoever in God's infallible and inerrant Word. God has ensured that none of His inspired words is lost and His inspired Word as a whole is not corrupted

in any way. Faithful scribes not only copied the Scriptures but also corrected any copying errors and identified the authentic words or readings by the guidance of the Holy Spirit throughout the ages and especially in the days of the Protestant Reformation. As such, we believe the *Hebrew and Greek texts, words or readings* underlying the Authorised, King James Bible are not only the closest to the autographs but *the very autographic texts themselves*, the 100% authentic and infallible apographs, by special or extraordinary providence (Rom 11:33-36).

Scribal Errors?

The Rev Charles Seet in his sermon, “The Word that Endures Forever” (October 28, 2007) said, “And some had undermined the authority of the scriptures by claiming that there are mistakes and discrepancies in the Bible and certain parts of the Bible are not true. ... Now the truth of the matter is that the alleged contradictions in the Bible are only apparent. They can be explained, they can be nicely harmonised.” **Amen!** This is precisely what VPP teaches and promotes and what I had encouraged him to do back in 2002, that the so-called “discrepancies” in the Bible, especially with reference to chronology, dates, numbers, spelling, names, and places etc are only apparent and not true discrepancies, and that we should harmonise and *not amend or change them by calling them “scribal errors.”*

Now, I would like to know from the Rev Charles Seet how he would square his statement above with what he wrote in his personal website when he said, “Alleged discrepancies and errors that have been adduced as proof of limited inerrancy can be explained in several ways: *Changes in spelling, changes in units of weight and measurement, different calendar systems, or mistakes made by scribes during the copying of manuscripts,*” and yet claim that “the allegation that I ‘*believe the Word of God is not 100% perfect but preserved with copy errors*’ is false”?⁸ If the Rev Seet believes that the Word of God is 100% perfect, and that it is not preserved with “copy errors” then why did he argue for such an error in 2 Chronicles 22:2 (and other like passages) when there is none to begin with? Why did he write in a paper submitted to the Rev Dr Timothy Tow after the July 30, 2002 faculty meeting that “scribal errors do exist, but they are so insignificant that they do not affect the preservation of the whole Bible,” and then gave a list of such scribal errors in 2 Kings 8:26/2

Chronicles 22:2, 2 Kings 24:8/2 Chronicles 36:9, 2 Samuel 8:4/1 Chronicles 18:4, 1 Kings 7:16/2 Kings 25:17, and Judges 18:30?

When the Rev Seet was asked about Matthew 5:18 in those days when he was still in FEBC, he replied that he had to reexamine what Jesus said in Matthew 5:18, that jot and tittle does not mean jot and tittle because he believed to be “fact” that 2 Chronicles 22:2 contains a scribal error. If he now denies that there are such mistakes in the Old Testament, then that is VPP is it not? Why does he now say VPP is “heresy” and we are “heretics” when we believe and teach that the Word of God is 100% perfect without any error or mistake (scribal or otherwise)? His words and actions are very contradictory and confusing.

The Rev Charles Seet and his Elders said that John Owen advocated the exercise of diligence in searching the Word of God to solve textual difficulties. We agree with Owen and have done just this through our papers defending the present infallibility and inerrancy of Scripture which are published in *The Burning Bush* (re Moses or Manasseh in Judg 18:30,⁹ the age of Ahaziah in 2 Chron 22:2,¹⁰ Saul’s reign in 1 Sam 13:1,¹¹ the numbers in Ezra 2 and Neh 7¹²). As the Lord enables, more papers would be published in future to defend the infallibility and inerrancy of the Hebrew and Greek texts/readings/words on which the KJV is based (e.g. Ps 22:16, Acts 12:4, Jude 25, etc) without undermining the veracity of the Scriptures and the faith of the saints by calling them “mistakes” or “errors” (scribal or otherwise).

Has the Rev Seet changed his view in light of his October 28, 2007 sermon? We are not sure at all since he remains vague and refuses to answer questions. But one thing is sure: By calling VPP a “heresy” which must be “stopped at its source,” he clearly forbids us to teach that “apparent discrepancies” in the original language texts or words immediately underlying the Authorised Version are *not due to “scribal errors.”* For our belief in the infallibility and inerrancy of every single word of the Hebrew Old Testament and Greek New Testament on which the Authorised, King James Bible is based (which they claim to uphold as “the very Word of God”), and teaching that there are no such errors or mistakes in our Bible in light of Matthew 5:18 and other Bible verses, he now brands us as heretics, bans us from the church sanctuary, and requires us to relinquish our lawful rights to possess and use our birthplace and home at 9, 9A, and 10 Gilstead Road. Is such an act just and fair, veritable and charitable?

Biblical Separation

Only recently, an Elder of Life BPC wrote to someone concerning the mega-church ministry of Joel Osteen and his wife. This Elder said, "... while I can listen and accept the teachings of the Osteens, FEBC may not—because they do not subscribe to VPP! Watch Joel Osteen Online and that will turn FEBC off for sure! FEBC will consider the Osteen's preaching humanistic, neo-evangelical, etc." Now, whether Joel Osteen subscribes to VPP or not, I do not know. Has he made any statement about it? Nevertheless, it is true that FEBC does not endorse Joel Osteen, and neither should Life BPC (if they adhere to their constitution). Although Osteen may say certain things right or somewhat right about practical living (humility, forgiveness, love, etc) which are also taught by many philosophers, moralists, and religionists, he has gotten other things very wrong. One very wrong thing is his inability to confess explicitly the uniqueness of Christ and Christianity, that Jesus is the only Saviour of the world and only Way to heaven in a "Larry King Live" interview in 2005, much like Billy Graham in a Robert Schuller interview in 1997.¹³ The neo-evangelicalism and ecumenism of Billy Graham is well known,¹⁴ and Joel Osteen is no different. It is thus no surprise that Osteen should say that Mormonism is Christianity in a Fox News interview on December 23, 2007.¹⁵

We do not judge Joel Osteen subjectively but objectively by the Perfect Standard of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the perfectly inspired and perfectly preserved words of God, but this Elder commends Osteen and condemns FEBC by no other standard than himself, according to his liking or disliking. It goes without saying that bearing true witness involves judging a person not by his appearance but by the righteous standards revealed in the Perfect Law of God (Ps 19:7, John 7:24, Heb 4:12), which is none other than His verbally and plenary inspired Word supernaturally preserved by His singular care and providence to the jot and tittle (Ps 12:6-7, Matt 5:18).

I am thus utterly amazed that an Elder of Life BPC has no qualms saying that he can "accept the teachings of the Osteens" without any qualification, and then slight FEBC's separatist stance against the error of humanism, neo-evangelicalism, etc. It shows a gross lack of knowledge, wisdom and discernment from a high-ranking church officer, a Sunday School superintendent and teacher, who should know better. Let it be

known that all pastors, elders and deacons of Life BPC are required to be “in full agreement with the doctrinal stand of the Bible-Presbyterian Church, *in particular with its Principle and Practice of Biblical Separation*” (Article 13:3), which is clearly spelt out in Article 6, “Principle and Practice of Biblical Separation.”

Lest they forget, permit me now to cite Article 6.8 which states, “In loyalty to God’s revealed Word, we, as an organised portion of the people of God, are obliged to oppose all forms of modernism, cultism, Romanism and false religions. Dialogue for the purpose of reaching a compromise between all true Bible believers and representatives of such beliefs is impious, unbiblical, treasonous and unfaithful to the holy God, as He has revealed Himself to us in His infallible, inerrant Word.” (Where and which is Life BPC’s “infallible and inerrant Word” may I ask?) Article 6.9 states without equivocation, “We are opposed to all efforts to obscure or wipe out the clear line of separation between these absolutes: truth and error, light and darkness. (See Jer 5:20; 2 Cor 6:14-18.) We refer to such efforts by New Evangelicals, Charismatic Christians, promoters of ecumenical cooperative evangelism and of the social gospel, and all churches and other movements and organisations that are aligned with or sympathetic to the Ecumenical Movement.” This must surely include separating from Westcott and Hort who denied the inerrancy of Scripture, the historicity of the creation account, and other fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith, and all the liberal, ecumenical, neo-evangelical, corrupt modern versions of the Bible today that stem from their corrupt Greek text.

In light of the constitutional requirements of Life BPC, especially as regards Biblical Separation, are the leaders of Life BPC truly “preserving godly paths,” or are they systematically removing the “godly paths” and dismantling the “landmarks” of the Bible-Presbyterian Church as founded by the Rev Dr Timothy Tow? FEBC is faithful to the doctrines and ethos of its founding father, and that is why he stands with his school of prophets, and hoping that the church he founded—beloved Life BPC—would repent and return to the godly paths he has originally established in his younger days and *now strengthened in his old age*. But it is indeed sad and tragic that the current leaders of Life BPC are dead set in getting rid of FEBC by stirring up hatred against FEBC, maligning it as a heretical institution. Even Dr Peter Masters of Spurgeon’s Tabernacle, who holds to a position very close to ours though not exactly, does not

deem VPP to be heretical but honourable, bearing true and not false witness!

Plea for Peace and Unity Based on Truth and Charity

As much as the Rev Charles Seet and his Elders have rightly exhorted us to bear true witness, we urge them to do likewise. Truth is open and does not hide. “If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:31-32).

Notes

¹ <http://www.lifebpc.com/weekly/080127.htm>.

² http://www.otweb.com/blog/index.php?id=107&t=On_Lying.

³ <http://www.febc.edu.sg/VPP3.htm>.

⁴ [http://www.febc.edu.sg/Verbal Plenary Preservation.htm](http://www.febc.edu.sg/Verbal_Plenary_Preservation.htm).

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ <http://www.febc.edu.sg/Theology3.htm>.

⁷ <http://www.febc.edu.sg/VPP9.htm>.

⁸ <http://web.singnet.com.sg/~sbseet/position.htm> (emphasis his).

⁹ <http://www.febc.edu.sg/VPP8.htm>.

¹⁰ <http://www.febc.edu.sg/VPP4.htm>.

¹¹ <http://www.febc.edu.sg/VPP63.htm>.

¹² http://www.febc.edu.sg/BBVol13_2b.htm.

¹³ <http://www.av1611.org/osteen.html>; http://www.worldnetdaily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=51461; and [http://www.febc.edu.sg/assets/pdfs/febc_press/A Theology For Every Christian Book 1.pdf](http://www.febc.edu.sg/assets/pdfs/febc_press/A_Theology_For_Every_Christian_Book_1.pdf) (pp 11-15).

¹⁴ http://www.freepres.org/pamphlet_details.asp?graham_facts.

¹⁵ <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,318054,00.html>; <http://www.apologeticsindex.org/646-joel-osteen-mormon-church>.

BIBLICAL AUTHORITY

A Response to Sermons by Colin Wong and Charles Seet against Verbal Plenary Preservation

Jeffrey Khoo

The twin doctrines of Verbal Plenary Inspiration (VPI) and Verbal Plenary Preservation (VPP) of the Holy Scriptures to the jot and tittle (Matt 5:18) are most vital and indispensable doctrines of the Christian Faith. That is why the Board and Faculty of the Far Eastern Bible College (FEBC) at the behest of its founding principal—the Rev Dr Timothy Tow—take the Dean Burgon Oath which concerns the total infallibility and inerrancy of the Bible which we have in our hands today to the last letter and syllable. As the Lord had raised up Martin Luther and John Calvin and others to defend the faith in the days of the Protestant Reformation, so did the Lord raise up Dean Burgon of Oxford and Chichester to defend the Traditional and Reformation Text and the Authorised Version (AV) or King James Version (KJV) against the Corrupt and Critical Text of Westcott and Hort which underlies many modern versions and perversions of the Bible today.

Accusation

On October 28, 2007, the Revs Charles Seet and Colin Wong—pastors of Life Bible-Presbyterian Church—preached against the Verbal Plenary Preservation (VPP) of the Holy Scriptures (sermons were published in www.lifebpc.com). The Rev Seet claims that VPP is “only a subjective opinion that has no biblical authority. ... nowhere in the entire Bible, Old Testament or New Testament is there any verse which says that God is going to restore the 100% purity of the Greek and Hebrew text of His Word to make that exactly like the original autographs.” The Rev Seet went on to accuse FEBC of taking away the authority of the Scriptures from God’s people by upholding VPP. The Rev Wong declares that the Bible is perfect, infallible and inerrant only in the autographs

(original or first manuscripts) and not the apographs (copies of the original manuscripts) claiming that his position (i.e., infallible and inerrant autographs, not apographs) is the Reformed position. We regret to say that the Revs Seet and Wong are mistaken on all counts, not considering their misrepresentation and caricature of VPP.

The Rev Wong made a very serious accusation which must be dealt with before we go on. He accused us of a “blatant lie” for saying that he does not believe the Bible is perfect. Now, he replies by asking, “Which Bible?” That is a good question. It must be categorically stated that we have never at any time accused the Rev Wong of denying that the Bible was perfect in the autographs, but the truth is he does not believe the Bible to be perfect today whether in the original languages or in any version or translation, and as such could not take the Dean Burgon Oath. Ask the Rev Wong: “Which Bible today do you consider to be infallible and inerrant?” I am sure he cannot tell you which for he does not know it nor have it; his perfect Bible is unknowable and non-existent!

What are truly lies are the spurious and malicious accusations hurled at FEBC and its faculty, that we believe in an “inspired KJV,” and that “anyone who does not use the KJV is condemned to hell.” We are called heretics, cultists, and schismatics; and threatened with relocation from our birthplace and home at Gilstead Road. Our only, humble plea is for a presently infallible and inerrant Bible, and for justice and equity.

Refutation

The charge that VPP is an unbiblical doctrine needs to be refuted (2 Tim 4:2). If VPP is not based on the Holy Scriptures—our sole and supreme authority of our beliefs and practices—then it is a useless doctrine indeed. However, contrary to the thinking and reasoning of the Revs Seet and Wong, VPP is indeed a biblical doctrine as clearly taught in Psalm 12:6-7, Matthew 5:18, 24:35, John 10:35, 1 Peter 1:23-25 and many other passages.

Furthermore, the belief that God is able to restore and preserve His inspired words is not without biblical precedents. There are at least two instances in the Old Testament when God did restore His words to 100% perfection after they had been destroyed by man. The first is found in Exodus 19:16-21:26, 31:18-32:28, 34:1-4 (cf Deut 5:1-20) when Moses in righteous anger smashed to pieces the two stone tablets containing the Ten Commandments which God had authored. Are the Ten

Commandments thus destroyed and lost, or have they been restored and preserved?

Let me quote our founding pastor and teacher—the Rev Dr Timothy Tow—who in an article on “God’s Special Providential Care of the Text of Scripture” published in the October-December 2002 issue of the Bible Witness wrote, “To re-establish the giving of the Law, God commanded Moses to hew another two tablets of stone and bring them with him back to the mountain top. ‘And he wrote on the tables according to the first writing, the ten commandments, which the LORD spake unto you in the mount out of the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly: and the LORD gave them unto me. And I turned myself and came down from the mount, and put the tables in the ark which I had made; and there they be, as the LORD commanded me’ (Deut 10:4-5). The Ark of the Covenant is the only holy furniture kept inside the Holy of Holies. God’s sacred commandments, intact and written on both sides of the two tablets so nothing can be added and nothing can be subtracted and were kept secure from any human intrusion. ‘For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven’ (Ps 119:89). The restoration of the two tables is to show that heaven and earth shall pass away, but His words shall not pass away. Not one letter or even the cross of a ‘t,’ and the dot of an ‘i.’ ‘For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law’ [Matt 5:18]. Jesus says, ‘The scripture cannot be broken’ (John 10:35).”

The second instance is recorded in Jeremiah 36. Here we find the wicked king Jehoiakim cutting up the inspired scroll and throwing it into the fire (vv21-23). Can man destroy the inspired words of God? God would have us know that His words are indestructible and eternal for He will preserve and even restore them by His omnipotence and omniscience. In verses 27, 28, and 32 we read, “Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, after that the king had burned the roll, and the words which Baruch wrote at the mouth of Jeremiah, saying, Take thee again another roll, and write in it all the former words that were in the first roll, which Jehoiakim the king of Judah hath burned. ... Then took Jeremiah another roll, and gave it to Baruch the scribe, the son of Neriah; who wrote therein from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the book which Jehoiakim king of Judah had burned in the fire: and there were added besides unto them many like words.” Our omnipotent and omniscient God is not only able to preserve His inspired words so that

none be lost, He is also able to restore them to perfection so that we today might know His exact words and live by His every word (Matt 4:4).

Sola Scriptura

The Rev Seet's concern that the absolute authority of the Holy Scriptures should be restored to God's people is admirable, and that is what VPP does. VPP promotes and defends the absolute authority of the Scriptures, that the Scriptures alone should be the supreme and final authority of every Christian's faith and practice (as stated in Life BPC's Constitution, Article 4.2.1), and not any human being or textual critic. Let it also be known that, contrary to what the Rev Wong thinks, the Reformed position on the infallibility and authority of the Holy Scriptures concerns the extant apographs and not the non-existent autographs (see Turretin, Owen, Muller, Letis).

How was the authority of the Scriptures taken away from God's people and the common folk in the dark ages? It was taken away when the RCC forbade the people from reading the Scriptures for themselves, permitting only the clergy to read and interpret the Scriptures, and prosecuting and executing anyone who dared to translate the Bible, preach the Bible, and distribute the Bible to the people. It is clear that VPP does none of these. VPP encourages people to study the Bible for themselves, and is especially concerned that they study it from the authentic and correct text, and not the heretical and corrupt one. In the light of the logic of faith which is based on God's promises of VPP as taught in the Holy Scriptures, and God's special providential work in history and in the church, we identify the authentic Scriptures to be the Traditional, Byzantine, Majority, and finally Received Text of the Church Fathers, the Reformers, and the Reformation saints, and not the heretical and corrupted Alexandrian, Minority, and Revised texts of liberals Westcott and Hort, and ecumenical textual critics. With an infallibly preserved original text and a very accurate translation of the Bible as found in the AV/KJV, we tell the people they need not depend on so-called human authorities (textual and higher critical scholars) and their theories and speculative methods, but can take God's Word as is, the infallible and inerrant Word which is absolutely authoritative—"Thus saith the LORD," "It is written"—in ascertaining truth from error. VPP encourages the accurate and faithful translation of the Bible into different languages that is based on the authentic and preserved text. Clearly, VPP

is directing God's people to return to the sole and supreme authority of a presently infallible and inerrant Scripture for all their beliefs and practices.

It is not the VPP but the non-VPP position which has undermined the absolute authority of the Scriptures, for to the non-VPPist, the perfect Bible is only the intangible, unavailable, and inaccessible autographs which all "scholars" admit are non-existent today. We, on the other hand, believe in the infallible original manuscripts (apographs) that God has supernaturally preserved. But as far as the Rev Colin Wong is concerned, he says, "I do not believe any single manuscript as being better than other [sic] within the same family. The reason is that there are no two manuscripts that are identical." So, the Rev Wong, with such imperfect manuscripts or copies, must rely on fallible human scholars and their man-made methods of textual criticism to decide or determine for him which is God's word and which is not. That is the reason why the Trinitarian Bible Society, the Dean Burgon Society, and FEBC are steering clear of textual criticism. That is why FEBC contends that the non-VPP position is not *Sola Scriptura* and is in fact against *Sola Scriptura* because the textual critical scholar is now made the final authority or an additional authority to the Scriptures.

Biblical Basis

The Rev Seet went on to argue that, "nowhere in the Bible can we find even a single verse that says or implies God will do this [i.e. restoring His exact words] through the translators of the King James Version and that He will do it in the year 1611." Such an argument is fallacious, for if we accept this argument, then we must also reject the 27 books of the NT Canon, for where in the Bible do we find any verse telling us that there will be a NT Canon and there are exactly 27 NT books in our Protestant Bible without any change for sure? If the Rev Seet's argument is accepted, then should we not similarly question the decision of the bishops of the Council of Carthage who identified for us all the inspired books of the NT in the year 397? With the recent discovery of new and older books like the Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Philip, and other Gospels and Epistles which bear the names of the Apostles, should we not revise our existing Canon according to The Da Vinci Code? Why should we be so dogmatic and insistent that our NT Canon be just 27 books? Let it be stated that the very basis on which non-

VPPists believe in a fixed NT Canon of just 27 inspired NT books is the very same reason why VPPists believe in all the inspired NT words of the Greek Textus Receptus on which the AV/KJV is based.

It goes without saying that in this postmodern age of uncertainty and confusion when anything goes, we need a fixed and firm foundation for our faith, existing and tangible, available and accessible. This immutable and immoveable foundation can only be our Lord Jesus Christ and His forever infallible and inerrant Word to the jot and tittle (Matt 5:18), and nothing else. We continue to pray that the leadership of Life BPC will uphold the AV/KJV not just by preference, but by affirming VPP and believing that the original language texts or words of the Holy Scriptures underlying the AV/KJV are without mistakes. “If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?” (Ps 11:3). May God help us!

DID GOD WRITE ONLY ONE BIBLE?

Jeffrey Khoo

The Board of Elders of Life BPC, in a statement issued on January 25, 2008, accused me of misrepresenting their pastors in my article “Multiversions Onlyism” (<http://www.febc.edu.sg/VPP71.htm>) which is a critique of Dr James D Price’s book against the KJV-Only position, a book the Rev Yap Beng Shin (pastor of Olivet BPC) helped print and promote. **(Note that the KJV-Only position was upheld in Life BPC’s 50th Anniversary Magazine [1950-2000], and the Statement of Reconciliation of January 5, 2003 by its Board of Elders when the Rev Dr Timothy Tow was still pastor of Life BPC.)**

It is no secret that the Rev Charles Seet and the Rev Colin Wong had publicly joined hands with the Rev Yap Beng Shin and others to attack the Biblical doctrine of the Verbal Plenary Preservation (VPP) of the Scriptures, a doctrine (to them a “heresy”) *which seeks to defend the KJV and its underlying texts/words* (see <http://www.lifebpc.com/ourstand/stmtvpp.htm>). In my article, I simply stated the facts and made the logical assumption, and not without reason. (I hope they will write a critique of Price’s pricy book to rid any appearance of evil, for his book has been promoted in Singapore, especially in BP churches. Anyway, since I have already done the work, why do they not simply accept my critique but instead criticise me for defending the KJV and its underlying texts/words?)

Now, could this not be the reason? The Rev Colin Wong, in his sermon—“Did God Write Only One Bible?”—preached at Life BPC on October 28, 2007, declared what is according to him Life BPC’s position on the quality of the manuscripts the KJV translators had in their possession. In his sermon, he said: **“On this Reformation Sunday, I would like to declare unto you what is Life BP Church’s position on the Word of God. Thus I have entitled my message, ‘Did God Write Only One Bible?’ ...**

“Since the translation of the KJV or the Authorized Version of 1611 there has been more concrete manuscript evidence that is available today, which is far superior to that which was available to the King James Version translators in 1611.”

Now, if the manuscripts today are “far superior” to those of the KJV, how then can Life BPC make the claim that the KJV and its underlying texts are “the best?” It just does not make sense!

Later in his sermon, the Rev Wong criticised the Verbal Plenary Preservation (VPP) of the Holy Scriptures, and FEBC’s defence of the good old Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek words on which the AV/KJV is based, and claimed he is backed by the Trinitarian Bible Society (TBS): **“...[T]he Trinitarian Bible Society and many other faithful and truthful Bible scholars do not hold or support the VPP position. Mr A J Brown of the Trinitarian Bible Society said and I spent many hours with the staff there when I was in London ministering there. ...”**

I wrote to the Rev Malcolm Watts, Mr D P Rowland, and Mr David Larlham, officers of the TBS, for clarification concerning Rev Wong’s view of the “manuscript evidence” and “Mr A J Brown” quoting his words above. Mr David Larlham, the Assistant General Secretary of TBS, was very kind to reply, and I quote him in full:

Thank you for your e-mail of 29th October about the Rev Colin Wong’s sermon ‘Did God Write Only One Bible?’. I am sorry it has taken us a while to respond. As you have written to probably the three busiest men within TBS, we regret to say that we have not had the opportunity to listen to the sermon you mention. I think it must be acknowledged that we are unlikely to find the opportunity for some time to come, in the midst of all the other more pressing duties that lie upon us.

While it would be unfair to comment in any detail upon Mr Wong’s message without hearing it, **I can state unequivocally on behalf of the Society that the views you say that Mr Wong expressed concerning the manuscripts available to the translators of the English Authorised Version in 1611 are most definitely not those of TBS.**

Whereas Dr David Allen, our current senior Deputation Speaker, most consistently upholds and articulates the views held by the General Committee of the Society, **we would suggest that neither you nor the Rev Wong should place any such reliance upon the comments of Mr Andrew Brown going back around 20 years.**

I trust that your ‘deep concerns’ are allayed. From a careful perusal of our current publications, our website, and our Statement of Doctrine of Holy Scripture and Word List, it ought to be obvious where the Society stands, and historically has always stood, on such matters. Where any member of staff or representative may have deviated from those views, they had no mandate to do so and no heed should be paid to any such statements.

Readers ought to note that Mr A J Brown, former editorial secretary of the TBS, was quoted not only by the Rev Colin Wong, but also Life BPC’s “Godly Path” paper (<http://www.lifebpc.com/ourstand/godlypath.htm>), and Calvary Jurong’s Anti-VPP paper (<http://www.truth.sg/response/caljurong.htm>) to discredit FEBC and its defence of the KJV and its underlying texts or words.

I am thus heartened to know that TBS does not encourage placing a reliance on Mr A J Brown’s views as expressed in 1984, and am particularly delighted by TBS’s excellent critique of the NKJV as published in their *Quarterly Record*, October-December 2007 (<http://www.trinitarianbiblesociety.org>). I would also recommend Dr David Allen’s excellent lecture on the Special Providential Preservation of the Word of God (<http://www.bible-sermons.org.uk/audio-sermons/767-special-providential-preservation-of-the-word-of-god>).

Does the Board of Elders of Life BPC stand with the TBS on the superiority of KJV and its underlying texts, and reject the modern corrupt versions including the NKJV? If they do, then are we not on the same page? If not, then it is they who are schismatic, not us. Let us not play into the hands of Satan, the false accuser, who seeks to divide and conquer. Both Life BPC and FEBC would only stand to lose if we do not regroup to fight the good fight of faith to the glory of God. (Are they not obliged to keep Article 6 of the Life BPC Constitution on Biblical Separation?) Let us therefore follow the lead of our founding pastor—the Rev Dr Timothy Tow—by taking a separatist stand for the KJV, against Westcott and Hort and the modern versions, on the basis of truth, earnestly contending for the once-for-all-settled faith based on the sole and supreme authority of the forever infallible and inerrant words of God in these last days of apostasy and compromise (Jude 3, Matt 5:18, 24:35). “For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth” (2 Cor 13:8).

MAKING THE WORD OF GOD OF NONE EFFECT

An Examination of the Paper, “Mark Them Which Cause Divisions,” by Life Bible-Presbyterian Church

Jeffrey Khoo

The Rev Charles Seet and the Elders of Life Bible-Presbyterian Church (Life BPC) in their church weekly of January 13, 2008 published a paper entitled, “Mark Them Which Cause Divisions,” denouncing the Verbal Plenary Preservation of the Holy Scriptures as “a heresy.” (The paper can be found in <http://www.lifebpc.com/ourstand/markthem.htm>.)

What is Verbal Plenary Preservation (VPP)?

What is Verbal Plenary Preservation or VPP? “Verbal” means “every word to the jot and tittle” (Ps 12:6-7, Matt 5:18). “Plenary” means “the Scripture as a whole with all the words intact” (Matt 24:35, 1 Pet 1:25). So VPP means the special, providential preservation of all the inspired words of the Holy Scriptures to the last jot and tittle, without the loss of any of the original words, prophecies, promises, commandments, doctrines, and truths. As such, the VPP Scriptures are totally infallible and inerrant not only in the words of salvation, but also the words of history, geography and science. Every book, every chapter, every verse, every word, every syllable, every letter of God’s inspired words is supernaturally preserved by God Himself to the last iota.

What and where are the words of God today? They are the inspired OT Hebrew/Aramaic words and NT Greek words the prophets, the apostles, the church fathers, the reformers used which are today found in the long and continuously abiding and preserved words underlying the Reformation Bibles best represented by the time-tested and time-honoured KJV, and NOT in the corrupted Alexandrian manuscripts and

critical Westcott-Hort texts underlying the liberal, ecumenical, and neo-evangelical modern English versions.

VPP a Heresy?

What is heresy? The Rev Charles Seet and Elders of Life BPC define “heresy” as “a chosen course of thought or action which varies from the true exposition of the Christian faith as prescribed by the Word of God.” They mention some examples of heresy from the ancient past, namely, Gnosticism, Sabellianism, Arianism, and Nestorianism.

How do they identify a heresy? They say heresy has these three characteristics: (1) it is new, (2) it is infectious, (3) it is destructive. Actually, many heresies are not new but old ones with a new guise or disguise (e.g. Arianism is today found in the Jehovah’s Witnesses). What is infectious and destructive is not necessarily heresy either for truth is infectious and destructive as well (e.g. in the Protestant Reformation, the doctrines of *Sola Gratia*, *Sola Fide*, and *Sola Scriptura* spread quickly and destroyed the superstitious yoke of the Roman Church). Anyway, based on these criteria (i.e. new, infectious, and destructive), VPP is condemned as “heresy” by the current leadership of Life BPC. They say “the mouths of heretics must be stopped” at its source. The source of this heresy is the Far Eastern Bible College (FEBC).

First let us analyse their less than definitive definition of heresy. They say heresy is “a chosen course of thought or action.” Yes, life is all about choices, and our decisions to act according to our chosen paths. Jesus says there are basically two ways and the way we choose will determine our eternal destiny, “Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it” (Matt 7:13-14). Choosing to think and act alone or to go with the minority is not heresy or heretical (e.g. 1 Kgs 19:10), though “heresy” from the Greek *haireomai* means “to choose.” I believe they understand that too. So, they went on to say that a thought or act is heresy when it “varies from the true exposition of the Christian faith.” But what constitutes “true exposition?” Who determines what is true and what is not true? The liberals, neo-evangelicals, charismatics, Roman Catholics, and cults all claim to possess a “true exposition” of the Christian faith too.

What is the Christian Faith?

So what is the Christian faith? Do they consider the Christian faith to be defined by the “Five Fundamentals,” namely, (1) the inerrancy of Scripture, (2) the virgin birth of Christ, (3) His miracles, (4) substitutionary atonement and (5) resurrection? If they do, then why is VPP a heresy when it affirms #1, the total inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures which is the foundation of all our doctrines? By calling VPP a heresy, are they saying that the Scriptures are no longer inerrant? And if the Scriptures are no longer inerrant, how can they know for sure what the Christian faith truly is “as prescribed by the Word of God?”

The Rev Charles Seet and Elders of Life BPC must surely be aware that their church constitution (article 4.2.1) states unequivocally that the Word of God is “infallible and inerrant” and their “supreme and final authority in faith and life.” So before they can really ascertain what is orthodox and what is heretical they must first tell us precisely (1) what is the Word of God, (2) where is the Word of God, and (3) which is the Word of God, infallible and inerrant? Did they?

They say the KJV is “the best English translation of the Scriptures, made by godly translators from the best Greek and Hebrew texts.” We agree. They quoted the Westminster Confession of Faith (1.8) which speaks of the “singular care and providence of God” in preserving His Word and that we have the “very Word of God and fully reliable.” We agree (but we are more precise in saying that God preserved not only His Word but also His *words* to the jot and tittle according to Matthew 5:18 as quoted by the Westminster theologians). They identify the KJV to be “the very Word of God.” We agree. But they say God’s Word is providentially preserved in “the body of manuscripts” without saying precisely which manuscripts. Now, are these manuscripts the Hebrew and Greek texts the KJV translators used? Know that in their 2003 Statement of Clarification, they say that the underlying texts of the KJV are not perfect. Now if the underlying texts are not perfect, then how can they know for sure they have the “very Word of God” and say they have “maximum certainty?” Although they claim to base their judgement on the “very Word of God,” they really do not have the “very Word of God” since they condemn VPP as a heresy, and if they do have the “very Word of God,” it is not exactly the Word of God as originally given, only a close resemblance of it since it is not so perfect.

Can an inexact or imperfect Word of God be truly authoritative, or “prescriptive” as they say? I submit that without a presently infallible and inerrant Word of God to the jot and tittle (Matt 5:18), the Rev Charles Seet and Elders of Life BPC have no basis whatsoever to condemn VPP as a heresy and us as heretics. By condemning VPP as a heresy, they set themselves up as the supreme and final authority in place of the Bible, and judge the beliefs and practices of others based on their likes and dislikes, their whim and fancy. At any rate, at least they no longer misrepresent us as believing in “an inspired KJV” or “a perfect version” but that we assign “100% purity to the ... Greek and Hebrew texts immediately underlying the KJV, [that they] are the exact words of the original writings, i.e. the very words used when God first gave His word by inspiration to the Bible writers.” We maintain that our position is entirely consistent with Article 4.2.1 of the Life BPC Constitution.

Illogical Arguments

A failure to submit fully to the absolute authority of the Holy Scriptures will lead to a logic that is upside down. For instance, the Rev Charles Seet and Elders of Life BPC say that the KJV is “the best,” that the Hebrew and Greek texts are “the best,” that they have “the very Word of God” which is “fully reliable.” But one wonders how they can have such “maximum certainty” on the KJV as the “very Word of God” and “fully reliable” if the Hebrew and Greek texts (i.e. the inspired original language words) underlying it are *not* 100% pure or perfect (according to their 2003 Statement of Clarification)? How can the KJV be 100%, the “best,” the “very Word of God” as they say, without its underlying texts being 100% also? It is simply illogical!

The Rev Charles Seet and Elders of Life BPC lump those who teach VPP together with the heretics (Gnostics, Sabellians, Arians, Nestorians) of times past. These men were heretics for sure for they were out to destroy the Gospel by corrupting the Scriptures, by denying Christ’s 100% deity and/or 100% humanity and the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. They teach doctrines that cause people to have a low view of the Holy Scriptures, of Jesus Christ and of the Triune God, and by so doing tear people away from the only Source and Foundation of salvation which is Christ and His words. This is what heresy does and what heretics do.

Does VPP cause people to have a low view of the Bible? Does VPP destroy the Gospel? Does VPP tear people away from Christ? It is clear

as day that VPP does none of these! VPP upholds the present perfection of the Holy Scriptures! VPP gives people confidence in the Gospel of Jesus Christ by affirming that they can trust every single word of the Bible which teaches the preexistence of Christ, His virgin birth, His sinless life, His crucifixion, His burial, His resurrection, His ascension, and everything else it teaches without any mistake! VPP instills in people full confidence in the Reformation Bible—the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek words God has inspired in the beginning and preserved continuously in the traditional, Hebrew Masoretic Text, the Greek Byzantine or Majority manuscripts and finally the Textus Receptus—which gave us the Tyndale and Geneva translations and best of all the Authorised or King James Version which God has used to bless so many millions in the last four centuries!

The Rev Charles Seet and Elders of Life BPC appear to be upset that more and more people are having a high confidence on the KJV by believing in the biblical truth of VPP. More and more believers are blessed by this truth of the Scripture's present perfection in the original languages. Many of the saints praise the Lord for VPP because it glorifies their Triune God (1 John 5:7). Our night classes are attended by 200-300 people coming from 38 different churches (BP and non-BP). They are very glad to hear that our almighty God has indeed kept His promise to preserve His inspired words to the last jot and tittle (Matt 5:18). They now have every confidence to live by His every word (Matt 4:4) in the midst of a wicked and crooked generation. Why cannot they rejoice with their fellow brethren over this?

It is tragic that the Rev Charles Seet and Elders of Life BPC, instead of encouraging the faith of the saints to believe in the present perfection of Scriptures, are doing all they can to hinder and stop the preaching and teaching of this precious truth to our students. Not only that, by one stroke of their pen, they condemned as heretics their spiritual father Timothy Tow, FEBC, True Life, Truth, Calvary Jaya BPCs, and all who believe in VPP. (Thankfully, we are not living in medieval days when "heretics" like Huss and Tyndale were burned at the stake, but even if we were, it would have been a privilege to be martyred for Christ of whom we are most unworthy.)

Now, if there is no such a thing as a Perfect Bible today, available, accessible, and identifiable, then on what basis do they judge that VPP is a heresy and we are heretics? Is it through a vision, a dream, a voice? Or

is it through the Bible? And if it is through the Bible, then how do they know it is right if the Bible is not so right or not so perfect today? That was why the psalmist wrote, “If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?” (Ps 11:3). I submit that when they judge and condemn us who believe in a Perfect Bible as heretics, they do so out of their own thinking and feelings—they set themselves up as the supreme standard and authority to judge and condemn others.

The Rev Charles Seet and Elders of Life BPC seem to think that just because a doctrine is divisive or leads to a division, it is therefore a heresy. If that is the case, then should they not call Jesus a heretic too for Jesus said, “Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather *division*” (Luke 12:51)? God forbid!

They say they believe in the “Preeminence of Christ.” If so, I truly hope they will see Jesus Christ as the Perfect Standard and follow His truthful and loving ways by retracting their malicious and defamatory statements made against fellow Christians who uphold the total infallibility and inerrancy of the divinely inspired and preserved words of God (VPI/VPP). Jesus is not now on earth to teach us directly, but He has left us with His Holy Spirit—who is the Spirit of Truth (John 14:17), and His Holy Scriptures—which is the Word of Truth (John 17:17). These are our Perfect Standards today to judge what is truth and what is error, what is right and what is wrong.

No Change in the VPP Truth

Truth does not change, and VPP does not change either. Although we have quoted certain godly men and institutions, it does not mean that they are infallible or incapable of making mistakes. We quote them only when they say the right things according to the Scriptures. So yes, we admit our quotations of them have been selective. We follow them only if they follow the Scriptures, just as Paul tells the believers to follow him as he follows Christ (1 Cor 11:1). By the way, I did not arrive at VPP by reading Wilkinson, a 7th Day Adventist. I came to this position by reading Burgon (Anglican), Hills (Presbyterian), and Waite (Baptist), and examining what they teach in the light of Scripture, and I am thoroughly convinced by Scripture and Scripture alone, my supreme and final authority of faith and practice. Furthermore, to conclude that VPP is 7th Day Adventism because of Wilkinson is another piece of twisted logic. I eat rice, the Malays eat rice, so I am Malay?

The Rev Charles Seet and Elders of Life BPC question the verbally and plenary preserved text by saying that it “mutates into more virulent forms over time.” There was no mutation, no evolution! The verbally and plenary inspired (VPI) *words*, by special providence, are all preserved in Beza’s 5th which was the main Greek Text used by the King James translators, plus all the earlier ones by Erasmus and Stephanus, and put together by Scrivener. The inspired and preserved text (words) underlying the KJV is known by various names—the Traditional Text, the Common Text, the Standard Text, the Received Text, the Reformation Text, the Ecclesiastical Text. What is so “virulent” about them? The various names given to the text underlying the KJV may be new or recent, but the words in the text are certainly not new for they are as old as the Bible—the very inspired words of the autographs God has preserved “by His singular care and providence” in the faithful apographs, and not the corrupt ones of Westcott and Hort.

“Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend” (Prov 27:17). Constructive debates have their place as we seek to express the truth clearly and accurately. Improvements and refinements to statements of faith that square with the Scriptures are neither “mutations” nor “virulent.” Truth is Truth, God’s Word is Truth, and “we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth” (2 Cor 13:8). The Rev Charles Seet and Elders of Life BPC themselves admit that our VPP statements have become “more plausible” and “appealing.” That is because it is based on the truth of God’s Word, and the Holy Spirit is guiding His people to His truth (John 16:13). But instead of acknowledging the truth when they see it, they now seek to hinder the truth by calling it “heresy,” and stirring up hatred by such emotive terms as “gangrene-like,” “payload,” “venomous,” “virulent,” “toxic,” “destructive,” “horror.” It is not safe, dear friends, to change the truth of God into a lie (Rom 1:25). “But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth” (Jas 3:14).

We are living in a postmodern age which resists any 100% certainty of truth and morality. The desire of this age is to be vague, so that everything can be open to personal interpretation and subjective judgement. It goes without saying that truth is not vague, but precise. Jesus said, “But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil” (Matt 5:37). That is why FEBC says “Yes” to the Word of God, and takes a declared position for

the jot-and-tittle preservation of the Scriptures without doubt so that we might live “by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matt 4:4, 5:18). It behoves every believer to resist the postmodern philosophy which aims to destroy the forever infallible and inerrant words of God (Pss 12:6-7, 119:89), and the once-for-all-settled faith of the saints (Jude 3). But what have the Rev Charles Seet and Elders of Life BPC done? It is very sad to see them bent on destroying FEBC and VPP by choosing to say “No” to the very Word of God in all its present perfection by quoting the traditions, opinions and methods of men, thereby “making the Word of God of none effect” (Mark 7:13).

It is utter folly and stupidity to make the Word of God of none effect when God Himself has magnified His Word above all His Name (Ps 138:3). Why is it so hard to believe that the Bible is 100% perfect, without any mistake, today? Know that “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” (Heb 11:6). Things that are impossible with men are possible with God (Matt 19:26).

A REVIEW OF JACK SIN'S ARTICLE, "A GRAVE MATTER: VERITY, SAGACITY AND CLARITY IN THE TEXTUAL DEBATE"

Biak Lawm Thang

Introduction

"A Grave Matter: Verity, Sagacity and Clarity in the Textual Debate" is an article written by the Rev Dr Jack Sin, pastor of Maranatha Bible-Presbyterian Church, Singapore.¹ Rev Sin wrote this article with a concern over the textual issue being debated among Bible-Presbyterian churches in Singapore, which he sees as causing "grievous events," "devastating disunity and heated disagreements within the churches, Christian families and kindred friends." The problem caused by this debate, we are told by Rev Sin, goes beyond a local level and affects foreign missions. Under these circumstances, therefore, his purpose is to offer "an objective and biblical appraisal" of that textual debate. This is a noble goal, for the Christian must always be "objective and biblical" in his approach to all things, but whether Rev Sin himself has fulfilled this or not remains to be seen.

On "Honesty" in "Biblical Scholarship"

Rev Jack Sin called for "honesty" in "biblical scholarship" particularly in the area of the New Testament Greek Text debate. This is certainly commendable, and it may be added that honesty must be cultivated not only in this area but also in *all* areas of Christian living (Rom 12:17; 2 Cor 8:21; Phil 4:8; 1 Pet 2:12; Matt 5:37; 2 Cor 1:7; Jas 5:12).

But what does Rev Sin mean by "honest biblical scholarship"? An analysis of his entire paper shows that what Rev Sin means by "honesty" in the NT textual issue is to conclude that all the words of God are not preserved exclusively in the *Textus Receptus* (TR) underlying the King James Version (KJV) but in "all the providentially preserved Majority or

Traditional or Byzantine Greek manuscripts of over 5,000,” and his contention that the divine, perfect preservation of God’s words in the Greek New Testament underlying the KJV cannot be biblically or theologically proven.

Rev Sin believes that the Byzantine family of manuscripts, not the Alexandrian family, preserves the words of God. But it may be observed that when it comes to the Greek printed texts that represent those over 5,000 manuscripts, his commitment to “honesty” has made him unable to know or identify the inspired and preserved words in the various editions of the TR. At this point, he disagrees with Dr Edward F Hills whom he appears to follow since he quotes him frequently as an authority, for Hills had no problem identifying the *Greek Text of the KJV* to be God’s approved Text. A portion from Hills which Rev Sin failed to quote, though he should have in the quest for “honesty” in biblical scholarship, reads,

But what do we do in these few places in which the several editions of the Textus Receptus disagree with one another? Which text do we follow? The answer to this question is easy. We are guided by the common faith. *Hence we favor that form of the Textus Receptus upon which more than any other God, working providentially, has placed the stamp of His approval, namely the King James Version, or, more precisely, the Greek text underlying the King James Version.*²

It is a fact that there exists variant readings in the Greek manuscripts that number over 5,000 and that even in the TR editions there are a few minor differences. This is admitted by those who believe in the doctrine of Verbal Plenary Preservation (VPP) for it is a fact, and hence it is wrong to imply otherwise. Yes, Hills (and others as well) does recognise the existence of those variants and the difficulty in making a textual decision in certain cases, yet he does not stop there, for a specific identification of the text is necessary if every word of God is to be authoritative, and he did identify the KJV Greek Text to be the God-approved Text as the above quotation shows. For practical purposes, others like the Trinitarian Bible Society (TBS), which has been quoted by the Rev Sin as another authority, also uses the KJV Greek Text as edited by F H A Scrivener.³ What the VPPists believe is no different. The VPPists believe that out of the several editions of the TR, the TR underlying the KJV is the best and purest for it *perfectly* preserves *all* the words of God originally given by divine inspiration. As such, holding the

TR of the KJV in our hands, we can say without apology, "This is the very Word of God." (Note that the issue is not about translations, but the Bible in the original languages.)

Such a Bible position means that there is no need for the Bible scholar to practise textual criticism. The Bible scholar or student can confidently use and devote his time to the sincere exposition of the truth of God's words, not doubting the text at all. Hills is thus an "honest" textual scholar, for though he recognises the difficulty in the textual issue, he calls on Christians to be guided by "the logic of faith" to identify specifically the Greek Text of the KJV to be the God-approved Text in the light of God's *special* providence. Is this not precisely what has always been taught by VPPists? "Honesty" in the textual debate should not fail to mention Hills's precise identification of the providentially preserved and authentic Text to be the Greek Text of the KJV.

Rev Sin's quotation of J W Burgon also appears to lack "honesty." Although he pays tribute to Burgon for his defence of "the historic faith and the Bible," his quotations contain only a few portions of Burgon's inconsistent statements on the textual issue. Many good points Burgon made about the TR in opposition to the Alexandrian manuscripts are not made known to the readers. "Honesty" in biblical scholarship should be *unbiased* in the assessment of the issue at hand by presenting the *necessary* facts so that the readers can judge for themselves.

On Plurality of Manuscripts and Singularity of Text

Rev Jack Sin provides a clarification of his and Maranatha BPC's position on the textual matter, which denies the VPP position. He believes that the perpetual preservation of God's words lies in the plurality of Byzantine-type manuscripts. He went on to say that **"the TR underlying the KJV does NOT fully represent the full body of the providentially and perpetually preserved Byzantine or Traditional (or sometimes called Majority) Text."** While this may sound appealing, it must be pointed out that this position essentially leads to uncertainty about textual variants, whereas the VPP position identifies exactly where and what the inspired *words* are by the logic of faith.

Moreover, this question must be asked: On what basis does Rev Jack Sin base his plurality of the Byzantine manuscripts position over the TR position? He has failed to provide even a single testimony in the

infallible Scriptures to support his plurality of manuscripts position which has *perpetually* failed to identify the precise text or words of God. This means that Rev Sin still has to play the subjective and rationalistic game of textual criticism before he can proceed to do his exegesis, at least in some areas. How then can he claim that his position is “objective and biblical”? A person may believe whatever he wants, but the important question is: Is it proven or justified by the Holy Scriptures? Having rejected the biblical passages of Psalms 12:6-7, 19:7, 119:89, Isaiah 40:8, Matthew 5:18, 24:35, 1 Corinthians 13:8 which teach the doctrine of VPP either explicitly or implicitly, Rev Sin is left without any biblical basis for his position. If this is so, then he has arrived at his conclusion by means of his *subjective* interpretation or view of the Greek manuscripts, and not on any objective, biblical or exegetical grounds!

The most important thing in the textual issue (and in all other matters as well) is that no one should build his faith on the fallible authority of men, but on the infallible authority of the Holy Scriptures. However appealing a certain position might appear, if it is not squarely built on or concretely substantiated by Scripture, then it is only an *opinion* void of authority. A child of God must rest his faith on the testimony of the infallible Scripture and on it alone. Is belief in the *present* or rather the *forever* perfection of the words of God biblical? These passages Deuteronomy 8:3; Psalms 12:6-7, 19:7, 119:89; Proverbs 30:5; Matthew 4:4, 5:18, 24:35; Luke 4:4, 16:1, 21:33; John 10:35 say “Yes.”

Failing to substantiate his position from the infallible Scriptures, Rev Sin appealed to human authority. The authorities he quoted include the Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF), International Council of Christian Churches (ICCC), Trinitarian Bible Society (TBS), and Pensacola Christian College (PCC). It must be pointed out that no human authority is exempt from making mistakes. Admittedly it is not uncommon in theological debates to quote human authority, and it is certainly justifiable if the quotation is made within the boundaries of the Holy Scriptures which are our sole and supreme authority of faith and practice. But the question that needs to be raised is: Did Rev Sin quote correctly in the right context for the right purpose? One finds it difficult to say yes. For instance, the TBS identifies the texts it accepts as the true texts: “The Trinitarian Bible Society recognises and receives the Masoretic Hebrew and Greek Received Texts as providentially preserved

and authentic.” As to the qualities of these texts, the TBS says, “These texts of Scripture reflect the qualities of God-breathed Scripture, including being authentic, holy, pure, true, infallible, trustworthy, excellent, self-authenticating, necessary, sufficient, perspicuous, self-interpreting, authoritative and inerrant (Psalm 19:7-9, Psalm 119). They are consequently to be received as the Word of God (Ezra 7:14; Nehemiah 8:8; Daniel 9:2; 2 Peter 1:19) and the correct reading at any point is to be sought within these texts.”²⁴ This is a fine statement based on Scripture and it does not contradict the VPP position. To insinuate otherwise would suggest a lack of “honesty” and a failure to be “objective.” A close study of the other authorities he quoted will find them to be quite in line with VPP.

On Other Language Bibles and Other Matters

Rev Jack Sin rightly notes that “no translation of one language to another will ever be perfect.” It should also be noted that no VPPist would assign perfection to a translation. The whole issue is all about the Bible in the original languages. VPP is not against other language Bibles which have been faithfully translated from the providentially preserved Masoretic Hebrew Text and Greek Textus Receptus.

Rev Sin's admonition to avoid “excessively emotive” tone in the defence of God's Word, however, is instructive and should be taken to heart. Words or tone, which may cause offence unnecessarily, when the truth can be presented otherwise without compromise, should be carefully avoided. The defence of God's Word should be carried out by presenting the truth as clearly as possible without any compromise and yet in love, meekness and in all wisdom so that it may have its full effect (Eph 4:2; 1 Pet 3:15; Col 1:28). Caricature, insinuation, misrepresentation and disparagement should have no place, for they will only blind the truth, and thus do no service to the cause of the truth.

Rev Sin's mention of the problem of “NPP” (New Perspective on Paul) and “the Human Quest for Perfection” is entirely irrelevant to the current textual debate. One wonders why such mention is made at all. Neither is Rev Sin clear about the reason why he brings up these two categorically different matters. Is it an attempt to put VPP in the same box? One hopes not.

Conclusion

Rev Jack Sin's expressed intention to assess the textual issue "objectively" and "biblically" with the spirit of "honesty" is surely commendable. Every theological issue must be appraised objectively and biblically. However, after analysis, the paper gives one the impression that the Rev Sin has fallen short of his noble goal, for he has no biblical authority for his own plurality of manuscripts position over against the *perfect preservation of words* position of VPPists which he is attempting to refute. Neither was he entirely fair in his quotation of the works of others nor unbiased in his presentation of the opposing view. His appraisal which is destitute of biblical proof, citing only human authorities with partial quotations, cannot be considered "biblical," or "objective" or "honest."

Since Rev Sin's position is without biblical proof, he should not put in a bad light the VPPists who are able to support their position from Scripture, for that is a disservice to the cause of Christ. He should not engage in the unfruitful and unedifying work of criticising and disparaging the doctrine of VPP which is built upon the infallible testimony of the Scripture itself, but should rather re-examine his own position whether it is really tenable or found wanting when weighed on the biblical scale. Any position which lacks basis from the infallible and inerrant Scriptures needs urgent and serious re-examination. Only God's Truth will stand forever, "For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth" (2 Cor 13:8).

Notes

¹ <http://www.maranatha-bpc.com/>; <http://www.lifebpc.com/ourstand/>
Rev Jack Sin - A Grave Matter.pdf.

² Edward F Hills, *The King James Version Defended* (Des Moines, Iowa: The Christian Research Press, 1984), 223, italics added. Take note also that Hills uttered these words at the concluding part of his treatise.

³ Trinitarian Bible Society, "Statement of Doctrine of Holy Scripture," <http://www.trinitarianbiblesociety.org/site/statement.pdf>, 6.

⁴ Ibid, 4.

PART V

Historia

THE STORY OF THE ENGLISH BIBLE

A Comparison between Faithful Bibles of the Protestant Reformation and Corrupt Versions of Modern-Day Deformation

Jeffrey Khoo

Albert Einstein once said, “A man with one watch knows what time it is, a man with two watches is never sure.” Allow me to restate Einstein by making it applicable to the Bible: **“A Christian with one Bible knows what the Truth is, a Christian with two Bibles is never sure.”**

There is but one Bible (the 100% inspired and 100% preserved Bible in the original languages of Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek) though there be many translations of it. Insofar as translations go, there are good versions and there are bad versions. Bad versions are due to a corrupt base-text or a wrong translation method, or they could be due to both. The English translations of the Bible can be divided into two main periods of production: Versions produced in (1) the period of the Reformation (16th and 17th century), and those produced in (2) the period of Deformation (19th and 20th century).

Reformation Translations

No Bible, no Reformation! “Faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom 10:17). It is God’s Word that brought about the 16th century Protestant Reformation. The Reformation did not happen by chance or by accident. It was a special event preplanned by God and it finally happened in God’s perfect time. According to Church historian Philip Schaff, “The Reformation of the 16th Century is, next to the introduction of Christianity, *the greatest event in history*.” Just as the Lord Jesus Christ came miraculously in “the fullness of the time” (Gal 4:4), so did the Reformation. In light of Biblical precedents and Divine

providence (*providentia extraordinaria*), the Protestant Reformation was a “miracle event” from God.

The Reformation fire was lit by the Light of God’s Word. The Word of God had to be put into the hands of the common folk. The Lord used His servants like Wycliffe, Tyndale, Coverdale, and finally the King James translators to put the Bible into the hands of the people in the pew so that they might know the truth, and the truth shall make them see and set them free (John 8:32).

Wycliffe’s Translation

John Wycliffe (1330-1384) was the most famous Oxford theologian of the 14th century. He was called “The morning star of the Reformation” for his attacks against the heresies of the Roman Catholic Church. Wycliffe spoke against the false RCC doctrine that salvation was by works and the selling of indulgences or “forgiveness tickets.” He believed the Scriptures to be the perfect Word of God from God’s very own mouth and superior to the sayings of the pope or the Church. He was told to stop teaching his personal convictions as truth. All who taught or defended Wycliffe’s views were threatened with excommunication and execution. This threat did not deter Wycliffe from defending the faith. Gifted with a sharp pen, he continued to write in defence of the truth.

The RCC had kept the people in spiritual darkness and bondage. No one was allowed to read or even own the Bible. Only the priest could read and interpret the Bible for the people. One can imagine that the interpretations of Scripture would be twisted to fit the corrupt doctrines and practices of the Roman Church.

Wycliffe realised that the best way of freeing the people from the shackles of Rome was to let the people read the Bible for themselves. Wycliffe was the first to translate the whole Bible into English. The translation was done not from the Hebrew and Greek since Wycliffe knew no Hebrew nor Greek, but from the Latin Bible—the Vulgate. Although the translation was not as accurate as could be since it was not from the original languages, it was accurate enough for God’s purpose to be fulfilled. At long last, the people could finally read for themselves the truth of salvation by grace through faith in Christ alone.

It has to be noted that it was not easy to mass produce the Bible in Wycliffe’s day because the printing press has yet to be invented. To

produce one copy of the Bible would take about 10 months. One copy would cost about 5000 chickens. How much would it cost to buy that many chickens today? Since it was so costly, the Bible was sold in parts or in pages. Some could only pay a few cents just to have the New Testament to read for just a day.

To spread the gospel truth, a group of pastors known as the Lollards used Wycliffe's translation to read and preach the Word to the common folk. For reading the Bible and preaching the gospel to the people, many of these Lollards were burned to death. Many copies of Wycliffe's Bible were also burned. Nevertheless, the production of Wycliffe's Bible could not be stopped, and the world today still has 200 copies of it. Faith is the victory, and the Bible is indestructible.

Wycliffe's Bible spearheaded the Reformation movement which led many to reject the falsehoods of the RCC. It goes without saying that the RCC hated Wycliffe intensely. Their hatred for him was so great that they did all they could to dishonour him at the 40th anniversary of his demise. Seeking to wipe out all memory of Wycliffe, the RCC dug up his bones, burned them, and cast the ashes into the River Swift. God would see to it that such a disgraceful act of wicked men would serve only to hasten the Reformation instead of deterring it. The more the Truth is opposed, the more it will flourish. The Truth cannot be snuffed out. As Luther later wrote, "The body they may kill, his truth abideth still; His kingdom is forever."

Tyndale's Translation

William Tyndale (1494-1536) was a scholar of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures having studied at Oxford and Cambridge. Seeing how the priests were so ignorant of the Scriptures, and how the people were so lost without God's Word, he decided to translate the Scriptures into English from the original languages. He completed translating the NT in 1525. 15,000 copies were printed and distributed in England. The Church of England then under the Roman Catholic Church refused to allow the people to read the English NT. The Church burned every copy of Tyndale's Bible they could find. For translating the Scriptures, the Church branded Tyndale a criminal. He was arrested and put in prison.

When in prison, Tyndale wrote this letter to the Marquis of Bergen which revealed how greatly he loved the Bible and how much he suffered for Christ: "I believe, right worshipful, that you are not unaware of what

may have been determined concerning me. Wherefore I beg your lordship, and that by the Lord Jesus, that if I am to remain here through the winter, you will request the commissary to have the kindness to send me, from the goods of mine which he has, a warmer cap; for I suffer greatly from cold in the head, am afflicted by a perpetual catarrh, which is much increased in this cell; a warmer coat also, for this which I have is very thin; a piece of cloth too to patch my leggings. My overcoat is worn out; my shirts are also worn out. He has a woollen shirt, if he will be good enough to send it. I have also with him leggings of thicker cloth to put on above; he has also warmer night caps. And I ask to be allowed to have a lamp in the evening; it is indeed wearisome sitting alone in the dark. But most of all I beg and beseech your clemency to be urgent with the commissary that he will kindly permit me to have the Hebrew bible, Hebrew grammar, and Hebrew dictionary, that I may pass the time in that study. In return may you obtain what you most desire, provided that it be consistent with the salvation of your soul. But if any other decision has been taken concerning me, to be carried out before winter, I will be patient, abiding by the will of God, to the glory of the grace of my Lord Jesus Christ, whose spirit (I pray) may ever direct your heart. Amen.”

Tyndale was finally condemned to death. He was strangled and burned at the stake. Tyndale was ready to die for His Lord and His Truth: “That light o’er all thy darkness, Rome, in triumph might arise; an exile freely I become, freely a sacrifice.” His dying words were: “Lord, open the King of England’s eyes.”

Coverdale’s Translation

Myles Coverdale (1488-1569) was a graduate of Cambridge University who became an Augustinian priest. Influenced by the Reformation movement, he broke away from the Roman Catholic Church. From England, he fled to the Continent where he found Tyndale and there helped Tyndale with his translation work. Coverdale continued Tyndale’s work and completed translating the Old Testament. The whole Coverdale Bible was completed in 1535.

By that time, the King of England had already broken all ties with Rome, and was eager to see an English Bible. Coverdale’s Bible received the king’s approval. Tyndale’s prayer was answered; the Lord had opened the eyes of the king of England.

Great Bible

In 1537, another Bible was published in England called the Matthew's Bible. It was the work of Thomas Matthew (1500-55) who was a friend of Tyndale. Thomas Matthew was not a translator but an editor of the Bible. He combined the Tyndale and Coverdale translations to form a complete Bible. The Matthew's Bible was the basis for the Great Bible. Published in 1539, it received the king's authorisation for public use. It is called the Great Bible for its size and cost. The Great Bible was later revised in 1568 and became known as the Bishop's Bible.

Geneva Bible

The persecution of the reformers by the Roman Catholic Church led many of them to seek refuge in Geneva. It was in that great city that William Whittingham (1524-79)—Calvin's brother-in-law, and Knox's successor as pastor of the English Church in Geneva—translated the NT in what was to become the Geneva Bible. Whittingham used the Textus Receptus (Stephanus' edition), and next to Tyndale became the version that had the most influence on the KJV. The Geneva Bible was both Calvinistic and anti-Catholic. It became very popular with the people because it was inexpensive and handy. The KJV was its successor.

King James Bible

The King James Bible (KJB/KJV) is built upon all the Reformation versions of the English Bible and is undoubtedly the best English version of all. It has stood the test of time and blessed many millions all over the world in the last 400 years.

There are four reasons why the KJV is superior to all other English Bible versions:

It Is Based on a Verbally and Plenarily Preserved Text

All Christians should believe in the inspiration and preservation of Scripture (2 Tim 3:16, Ps 12:6-7). Jesus used the OT Scripture during His earthly ministry, and considered every word of it to be inspired. In Matt 5:18, He said, "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." This surely implies that the Hebrew Scriptures have been preserved through the centuries, to the extent that every bit of it has been left intact. If God has so providentially preserved the words of the OT Scriptures so that none of them is lost, will He not also preserve the NT Scriptures in the same way? Based on God's promises and power, we can say with certainty that we have the

autographs of the NT in the verbally and plenarily preserved Hebrew and Greek manuscripts (or words) on which the KJV is based.

It Is Translated by Godly and Able Scholars

The King James Version is an excellent translation of the Holy Scriptures. It is a good fruit. It is a good fruit because it comes from a good tree (Matt 7:15-20). The KJV is a good translation because of good translators; in terms of their intellect and learning, they were brilliant; and in their faith and devotion towards God, they were vibrant. There were a total of 54 scholars of the highest rank who translated the KJV. They were not only men of great learning but also of great piety. They were skilled in the biblical languages, and lived in a period when the English language was at its glorious height. It was a most providentially opportune time to translate the Scriptures into the English tongue. They began their work in 1604 and completed it in 1611—a total of seven years. I do not think that today one can assemble such an august company of devout Bible scholars and theologians.

The KJV is a result of God's special providence. Consider Alexander McClure's "Evaluation of the KJ Translators and Translation." He wrote, "As to the capability of those men, we may say again, that by the good Providence of God, their work was undertaken in a fortunate time. Not only had the English language, that singular compound, then ripened to its full perfection, but the study of Greek, and of the oriental tongues, ... had then be carried to a greater extent in England than ever before or since. ... it is confidently expected that the reader of these pages will yield to the conviction, that all the colleges of Great Britain and America, even in this proud day of boastings, could not bring together the same number of divines equally qualified by learning and piety for the great undertaking. Few indeed are the living names worthy to be enrolled with those mighty men. It would be impossible to convene out of any one Christian denomination, or out of all, a body of translators, on whom the whole Christian community would bestow such confidence as is reposed upon that illustrious company, or who would prove themselves as deserving of such confidence" (*Translators Revived*, 63-4).

How do new versions and their translators compare to the KJV and its translators? According to McClure, "As to the Bible in its English form, it is safe to assume the impossibility of gathering a more competent body of translators, than those who did the work so well under King

James's commission. ... And what has not been done by the most able and best qualified divines, is not likely to be done by obscure pedagogues, broken-down parsons, and sectaries of a single idea, and that a wrong one,—who, from different quarters, are talking big and loud of their 'amended,' 'improved,' and 'only correct' and reliable re-translations, and getting up 'American and Foreign Bible Unions' to print their sophomorical performances. How do such shallow adventurers appear along side of those venerable men ... The newly-risen versionists, with all their ambitious and pretentious vaunts are not worthy to 'carry satchels' after those masters of learning. Imagine our greenish contemporaries shut up with an Andrews, a Reynolds, a Ward, and a Bois, comparing notes on the meaning of the original Scriptures! It would soon be found, that all the aid of our moderns could render would be in snuffing the candles, ... Let tinkers stick to the baser metals; and heaven forefend that they should clout the vessels of the sanctuary with their clumsy patches" (*Translators Revived*, 233-4).

I dare say that the Bible scholars, theologians, and linguists of today fail to come even close to the calibre of scholarship and spirituality that we find in the King James translators. I sincerely doubt that the KJV will ever be surpassed by a superior translation. In any case, until the Lord providentially raises up equally faithful and competent servants to give us a new version which is equally accurate and reliable, let us stick to the good old version—the KJV.

It Is Accurately Translated Word for Word

The KJV employs a superior method of translation. The KJV uses the verbal/formal over against the dynamic equivalence method of translation. The verbal/formal equivalence method is the only acceptable method for the translation of the Holy Scriptures. Why? Simply because the Bible is the *verbally* inspired Word of God!

God gave a very serious warning in Rev 22:18, "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, 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." In any attempt to translate the Scriptures, it is paramount that there should be no addition to, subtraction from, and changing of God's

Word. It must be word for word translated without any alteration of its divine sense or intent.

The dynamic equivalence method is a subjective and interpretive thought-for-thought method. Such a method may be applied to human literature, but certainly not Holy Scripture. The Bible's divine origin and its verbal inerrancy forbid it. "Virgin" must be translated "virgin," and not "young woman" (as in the RSV), and "blood" must be translated "blood," and not "death" (as in the TEV), and "only begotten" must be translated "only begotten," and not just "one and only" (as in the NIV).

It Is Faithful to Historic Protestant Theology

The KJV preserves all the fundamental doctrines of the Christian Faith like the (1) Inspiration of Scripture (2 Tim 3:16), (2) Preservation of Scripture (Ps 12:6-7), (3) Virgin Birth of Christ (Isa 7:14), (4) Eternal Generation of Christ (John 1:14,18, 3:16,18, 1 John 4:9), (5) the Holy Trinity (1 John 5:7-8), (6) the deity and humanity of Christ (1 Tim 3:16), and many others. The modernistic 20th century versions on the other hand have unfaithfully manipulated these Biblical texts to change or corrupt these and other fundamental truths of the Christian faith.

One fundamental doctrine of the Christian faith that is undermined or attacked by the modern versions is the doctrine of the Trinity. They attack this important doctrine by scissoring out the clearest proof-text for the doctrine of the Trinity which is 1 John 5:7, "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one." Some will argue that the absence of 1 John 5:7 does not affect the doctrine of the Trinity because there are many other biblical passages that teach it. The doctrine to them is thus not lost. While the doctrine may not be lost, a very strong testimony for it has surely been. Which other scriptural passage is as crystal clear as 1 John 5:7 in expressing the unity of the three Persons of the Godhead? We lose a very valuable proof-text by such flippant statements against the traditional preserved text in favour of the critical cut-up text. This is not a small matter as some would like to think. Paul warned, "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" (Gal 5:9). The 7% of missing words in the Scripture in the modern versions may be considered very little, but it is this little leaven that is destructive to God's Word, and to His Church. Furthermore, God has promised to preserve all of His words not just His doctrines, and by faith in His promise of perfect preservation, we believe 1 John 5:7 are the inspired words of God as given in the original.

Deformation Versions

The KJV has been the undisputed Bible of the English world since 1611. But a turning point came in the late 19th century. It was a period of time when theological liberalism was at its height. Not only were the fundamentals of the Christian Faith attacked, the words of God were altered by such liberals as Westcott, and Hort.

In 1881, Westcott and Hort produced their edition of the Greek NT. This Greek edition differed greatly from the Greek NT underlying the KJV. Westcott and Hort made no less than 9970 changes to the inspired and preserved Greek NT underlying the KJV. Their Greek NT was based on corrupt and unreliable manuscripts, namely, the Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus. The corruptions of the Westcott and Hort had been ably and convincingly exposed by Dean Burgon.

A multitude of English versions based on the Westcott and Hort text have been produced. This brought about the steady doctrinal and practical declension of the Church, and that is one reason why there is widespread apostasy and compromise in the Church today.

Revised Version

The RV of 1885 (NT: 1881) was the first version that sought to “correct” the KJV. This was so desired because of the emergence of the new but corrupt text of Westcott and Hort which differed significantly from the Textus Receptus underlying the KJV. The WH Text differed from the TR in 5,788 places. Among those invited to produce the RV were apostates and heretics, namely, (1) Westcott and Hort themselves, (2) John Henry Newman—#1 Roman Catholic theologian in the English speaking world at that time, (3) G Vance Smith—a Unitarian (i.e. one who denies the doctrine of the Trinity).

In his book—*The Revision Revised* (1883), Dean Burgon ably exposed the errors of the WH Text from which the RV was translated. For example, in the WH Text, Luke 23:34: “Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” is absent; and a marginal note says, “some ancient authorities omit.” Burgon, in holy indignation, wrote against this blatant attack on God’s Word, “These twelve precious words ... Drs. Westcott and Hort enclose within double brackets in token of the ‘moral certainty’ they entertain that the words are spurious. And yet these words are found in every known uncial and in every known cursive Copy, except four; besides being found in every ancient Version: and, what,—

(we ask the question with sincere simplicity),—what amount of evidence is calculated to inspire undoubting confidence in any existing Reading, if not such a concurrence of Authorities as this? ... We forbear to insist upon the probabilities of the case. The Divine power and sweetness of the incident shall not be enlarged upon. We introduce no considerations resulting from Internal Evidence. True, that ‘few verses of the Gospels bear in themselves a sure witness to the Truth of what they record, than this.’ (It is the admission of the very man [i.e. Dr Hort] who has nevertheless dared to brand it with suspicion.) But we reject his loathsome patronage with indignation. ‘Internal evidence,’—‘Transcriptional Probability,’—and all such ‘chaff and draff,’ with which he fills his pages *ad nauseam*, and mystifies nobody but himself,—shall be allowed no place in the present discussion” (*Revision Revised*, 82-3).

There were many other missing verses like 1 John 5:7 as discussed above. Many readers of the RV were greatly disturbed by the excision of the Trinitarian verse from the Bible. They felt that the doctrine of the Trinity had been undermined. It is no wonder that the RV never caught on, and not surprisingly since gone out of print. The ASV of 1901 was the American edition of the RV. As with the RV, it also did not measure up to the standard set by the KJV, and has been cast aside.

Revised Standard Version

The RSV (1952) is a revision of the ASV. It is an ecumenical Bible translated by 32 “scholars” from various modernistic denominations belonging to the National Council of Churches. Read “Rome and the RSV” by Dr Hugh Farrell (Trinitarian Bible Society).

In the original edition of the RSV, John 7:53-8:11 on the woman taken in adultery was taken out from the main text and placed in the margin. The last 12 verses of Mark were excised entirely. Today we have them back in the rightful places. Why? The RSV of course did not sit very well with the fundamentalists. This was because the RSV made a blatant attack against the virgin birth by rendering the Hebrew *’almah* as “young woman” (Isa 7:14). The Virgin Birth of Christ was meant to be a miraculous sign to the house of David. If a young woman conceives, how then can it be a sign? It is a God-given miracle only if a virgin conceives. It is something supernatural and unique. The angel Gabriel quoting Isa 7:14 said that the prophecy of the Virgin Birth was fulfilled in Jesus who came from the womb of Mary, a *parthenos*, “a virgin.” Was the angel

wrong when he told us that this is the meaning of the word *'almah* in Isa 7:14? No, these so-called scholars of the RSV were in error, not the angel. The angel surely knew Hebrew and Greek much better than they! Matt 1:18 and 25 tell us in no uncertain terms that Mary was a virgin from the time she conceived Jesus till the time she gave birth to Him.

It is no wonder that Rabbi Israel Bettan criticised the RSV. He said of the RSV, "The Revised Standard Version is not a faithful translation, and in some places the revisers do violence to the original Hebrew. It is a good book on the Bible, but it is not the Bible. When asked to compare the King James Version with various other translations, the rabbi said that of the English versions mentioned the King James Version was, in his opinion, the most faithful to the original" (*The Brethren Missionary Herald* [Feb 1958]). The same is said by Dr Robert Alter (BA, Columbia University, MA, PhD, Harvard University) who is professor of Hebrew at the University of California, Berkeley, "Modern English versions put readers at a grotesque distance from the Hebrew Bible. To this day, the Authorized Version of 1611 (the "King James Bible") ... for all its archaisms ... remains the closest we have ... of the original."

Bruce Metzger and company produced a revision of the RSV called New RSV (1989). In support of the feminist movement, it has replaced generic masculine nouns/pronouns with gender-inclusive terms. The English Standard Version (ESV) published in 2001 is the latest revision of the RSV. Although it corrects the RSV by rendering *'almah* as "virgin" in Isa 7:14, it is still deficient and untrustworthy because it is based on the corrupt text of Westcott and Hort.

New English "Bible"

The NEB (1970) was a British work published by the Oxford and Cambridge University Presses. The translation committee consisted of those from UK Protestant Churches, viz the Church of England, Church of Scotland, the Churches of Wales and Ireland, the Methodist, Baptist, and Congregational churches, and the Society of Friends. Most of the verses relegated to the margin in the WH text are also found only in the margin of the NEB. There are thus missing verse numbers.

The NEB denies that Gen 3:15 (NEB: "I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your brood and hers. They shall strike at your head, and you shall strike at their heel.") is the first gospel divinely predictive of the virgin-born Messiah. Look at the NEB's corruption of

Gen 3:15: (1) “thy seed and her seed” is changed to “your brood and hers,” and (2) The singular “it” (he) is changed to “they,” and “his” is changed to “their.” Why? There can be no other reason but to deny that Gen 3:15 is Messianic, divinely predictive of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It also attacked the prophecy of the virgin birth in Isa 7:14 following the steps of the RSV. The NEB translates the word “virgin” as “a young woman is with child.”

Today’s English Version or “Good News” for Modern Man

Published by the American Bible Society, the NT of the TEV (1966) was translated by Robert Bratcher, a modernist. The complete Bible came out in 1976 and was renamed the Good News Bible (GNB).

The TEV/GNB attacks the blood of Christ. In 10 places the word “blood” has been replaced by the word “death” (Acts 20:28, Rom 3:25, 5:9, Eph 1:7, 2:13, Col 1:14, 20, 1 Pet 1:19, Rev 1:5, 5:9). The Greek *haima* means “blood” not “death.” If Jesus’ death was a bloodless one, it would have been in vain, for “without shedding of blood there is no remission” (Heb 9:22 cf 1 Pet 1:19).

The TEV/GNB employed the dynamic equivalence method of translation. Dr Tan Wai Choon criticised the TEV: “a translation of this type is not really a translation at all but a paraphrase and commentary. Very little of the TEV (i.e. the Good News Bible) is literal. Almost every verse has been injected with the opinion of the translator as to what he thinks the Greek text means, rather than what it says. ... Aside from its basic failure to provide a literal translation, it is simply not accurate” (“What’s Wrong with the Good News Bible?” FEBC Press, nd, np). The sound criticism above applies equally to the NIV which adopts the same erroneous method of translating Scripture.

Living “Bible”

The Living Bible (1971) was translated by Kenneth Taylor. It was not a translation of the original text, but a paraphrasing of the ASV. According to Taylor, paraphrasing is “to say something in different words than the author used. It is a restatement of the author’s thoughts, using different words than he did.” This is a most unacceptable method of translating the Scriptures. It is deceptive to name it the “Living Bible.” It is neither “Bible” nor “Living.” Such a paraphrase should be called “The Deadly Bible.” I heard a prominent Bible professor at an ETS

(Evangelical Theological Society) meeting say that if he wanted to find out what the Scripture does not mean, he would consult the Living Bible.

Consider the vulgar and inappropriate language used: Gen 13:17, God tells Abraham to “hike in all directions;” 1 Sam 20:30, Saul reviling Jonathan, “You son of a bitch!;” 2 Sam 13:11, “Come to bed with me, my darling;” Isa 41:24, “Anyone who chooses you needs to have his head examined;” Zech 8:9, Jehovah says, “Get on with the job and finish it;” Matt 11:19, “You complain that I hang around with the worst sort of sinners;” Mark 2:16, “How can He stand it, to eat with such scum;” John 9:34, “You illegitimate bastard;” John 11:49, “You stupid idiots;” Acts 4:36, “Barny the Preacher.”

The Living Bible has sold at least 40 million copies. In 1996 they released the New Living Translation which is not much of an improvement from the old one. See David Cloud, “The New Living Translation: A Weak Rendering of a Corrupt Text,” *O Timothy* 13 (1996):1-11.

New American Standard “Bible”

The NASB (1971) is another revision of the ASV, prepared by 32 scholars who believed in the inspiration of the Bible, and published by the Lockman Foundation. It is a literal translation of the Scriptures which sought to be “as close as possible to the actual wording and grammatical structure of the original writers.” Although it has adopted a correct translational methodology, it failed in using a correct text.

Dr Frank Logsdon who was one of the NASB translators, and who wrote the preface, later renounced the version he helped produce. He renounced all attachment to the NASB because it was based on the Westcott and Hort text. One may ask, “Well, didn’t he know it in the first place?” Logsdon testified, “Well up to that time I thought the Westcott and Hort was the text. You were intelligent if you believed the Westcott and Hort. Some of the finest people in the world believe in that Greek text, the finest leaders that we have today. You’d be surprised; if I told you you wouldn’t believe it. They haven’t gone into it just as I hadn’t gone into it; [they’re] just taking it for granted. ... But I finally got to the place where I said, ... ‘I’m in trouble, I can’t refute these arguments; it’s wrong; it’s terribly wrong; it’s frightfully wrong; and what am I going to do about it? ... I must under God renounce every attachment to the New

American Standard” (See “From the NASV to the KJV,” by S Franklin Logsdon).

New International Version

The NIV (1978) is said to be the best-selling Bible version today. Although the NIV may be written in modern-day English, it is an untrustworthy version because it is based on the corrupt Westcott-Hort text, and on a dynamic equivalence method of translation.

According to Jack Moorman, there are a total of 140,521 Greek words in the traditional Greek New Testament. Now, out of these 140,521 words, 2,886 words are missing in the corrupted Greek text used by the NIV. The NIV for instance omits the following 17 verses in their entirety: Matt 18:11, 23:14; Mark 7:16, 9:44,46, 11:26; 15:28; Luke 17:36, 23:17; 5:4; Acts 8:37, 15:34, 24:7, 28:29; Rom 16:24; 1 John 5:7. For other examples please see Jack A Moorman, *Modern Bibles: The Dark Secret* (California: Fundamental Evangelistic Association, nd).

There are numerous mistranslations of God’s Word in the NIV. Let me highlight a couple of these mistranslations. The NIV clearly mistranslated Ps 12:7 on the preservation of God’s words. The NIV reads, “And the words of the LORD are flawless like silver refined in a furnace of clay, purified seven times. O LORD, you will keep us safe and protect us from such people forever” (Ps 12:6-7). Note the change from “keep them” to “keep us,” and “preserve them” to “protect us.” They changed the pronouns from third plural (i.e. “them”) to first plural (i.e. “us”). Is this a correct or accurate translation?

In Hebrew, the first word is *tishmerem*. The -em suffix means “them” not “us.” He will keep “them” (so KJV) is correct. The second word is *titzrennu*. The -ennu suffix (with an energetic *nun*) is third singular (i.e. “him”), not first plural (i.e. “us”). The energetic nun is emphatic (i.e. “every one of them,” see KJV marginal note). So it should be translated preserve “them” (i.e. “every single word of His words”) not “us” (i.e. “every single person of His people”). By incorrectly and inaccurately translating Ps 12:7, the NIV has effectively removed the doctrine of Bible preservation from this text.

Another serious mistranslation of the NIV is found in Isa 49:12 on God’s promise to the Chinese (see Timothy Tow, “NIV Turns ‘Land of Sinim’ into ‘Region of Aswan’ by a Twist of the Ball-Pen!” *The Burning Bush* 2 [1996]: 73-5; the article is published online at <http://>

www.febc.edu.sg/burningbush.htm). By translating Sinim as Aswan, the NIV has erased the Chinese people from the Bible!

A Return to the Reformation

In an age when the pressure to be popular, to compromise and to apostasise is so great, there is a real need to remember and to return to the old time faith of the Protestant Reformation as expressed in the Biblical dicta of Grace alone, Faith alone, Christ alone, Scripture alone, and to the Glory of God alone. In this postmodern and postconservative age, the temptation is great to renounce the forever infallible and inerrant Word of God as found in the 100% inspired and 100% preserved Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek words of the Reformation Bible and the KJV, and to denounce the Protestant Reformation of Luther and the Reformed Faith of Calvin as a mistake in the history of the church.

But true Protestant sons and Bible-loving Christians should resist the seduction of ecumenical unity at the expense of truth, and the temptations of a neo-deistic worldview that denies the present perfection of the Holy Scriptures.

Let us hold fast to the fundamental doctrine of the verbal plenary inspiration and verbal plenary preservation of the Scriptures, and the biblical practice of personal and ecclesiastical separation.

THE REFORMATION BIBLE

Jeffrey Khoo

No Bible, no Reformation! “*Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*” (Rom 10:17). It was God’s Word that brought about the 16th Century Protestant Reformation. The Reformation did not happen by chance or by accident. It was a special event preplanned by God and it finally happened in God’s perfect time. According to Church historian Philip Schaff, “The Reformation of the 16th Century is, next to the introduction of Christianity, the greatest event in history.” Just as the Lord Jesus Christ came miraculously in “the fullness of the time” (Gal 4:4), so did the Reformation. In light of biblical precedents and special providence (*providentia extraordinaria*), the Protestant Reformation was a “miracle event” from God.

The Reformation fire was lit by the Light of God’s Word. The Word of God had to be put into the hands of the common folk. The Lord used His servants like Wycliffe, Tyndale, Coverdale, and finally the King James translators to put the Bible into the hands of the people in the pew so that they might know the truth, and the truth shall make them see and set them free (John 8:32).

A Good Fruit of the Reformation

The Authorised or King James Version (AV/KJV) is built upon all the Reformation versions (Wycliffe, Tyndale, Coverdale, Geneva etc) of the English Bible and is providentially the best of all the English versions. It has stood the test of time and blessed many millions all over the world in the last 400 years.

There are four reasons why the KJV is superior:

It Is Based on the Perfectly Preserved Text

All Christians should believe in the inspiration and preservation of the Holy Scriptures (2 Tim 3:16, Ps 12:6-7). Jesus used the OT Scriptures during His earthly ministry, and considered every word of it to be inspired. In Matt 5:18, He said, “*Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or*

one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” This surely implies that the Hebrew Scriptures have been preserved through the centuries, to the extent that every bit of it has been left intact. If God has so preserved the words of the OT Scriptures so that none of them is lost, will He not also preserve the NT Scriptures? Based on God’s promises and power, we can say with confidence that we have the very Word of God today in the divinely preserved Hebrew and Greek texts (or words) on which the KJV is based.

It Is Translated by Godly and Able Scholars

The King James Version is an excellent translation of the Holy Scriptures. It is a good fruit. It is a good fruit because it comes from a good tree (Matt 7:15-20). The KJV is a good translation because of good translators; in terms of their intellect and learning, they were brilliant; and in their faith and devotion towards God, they were vibrant. There were a total of 54 scholars of the highest rank who translated the KJV. They were not only men of great learning but also of great piety. They were skilled in the biblical languages, and lived in a period when the English language was at its glorious height. It was a most providentially opportune time to translate the Scriptures into the English tongue. They began their work in 1604 and completed it in 1611—a total of seven years. Without doubt, the KJV is a result of God’s special providence.

Consider Alexander McClure’s “Evaluation of the KJ Translators and Translation.” He wrote, “As to the capability of those men, we may say again, that by the good Providence of God, their work was undertaken in a fortunate time. Not only had the English language, that singular compound, then ripened to its full perfection, but the study of Greek, and of the oriental tongues, ... had then be carried to a greater extent in England than ever before or since. ... it is confidently expected that the reader of these pages will yield to the conviction, that all the colleges of Great Britain and America, even in this proud day of boastings, could not bring together the same number of divines equally qualified by learning and piety for the great undertaking. Few indeed are the living names worthy to be enrolled with those mighty men. It would be impossible to convene out of any one Christian denomination, or out of all, a body of translators, on whom the whole Christian community would bestow such confidence as is reposed upon that illustrious company, or who would prove themselves as deserving of such confidence” (*Translators Revived*, 63-4).

It Is Accurately Translated Word for Word

The KJV employs a correct method of translation. The KJV uses the verbal/formal over against the dynamic equivalence method of translation. The verbal/formal equivalence method is the only acceptable method for the translation of the Holy Scriptures. Why? Simply because the Bible is the *verbally* inspired Word of God!

God issued a very serious warning in Rev 22:18, *“For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, 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.”* In any attempt to translate the Scriptures, it is paramount that there should be no addition to, subtraction from, and changing of God’s Word. It must be translated word for word without any alteration of its divine sense or intent.

The dynamic equivalence method is a subjective and interpretive thought-for-thought method. Such a method may be applied to human literature, but certainly not Holy Scripture. The Bible’s divine origin and its verbal inerrancy forbid it. “Virgin” must be translated “virgin,” and not “young woman” (as in the RSV), and “blood” must be translated “blood,” and not “death” (as in the TEV), and “only begotten” must be translated “only begotten,” and not just “one and only” (as in the NIV).

It Is Faithful to Historic Protestant Theology

The KJV preserves all the fundamental doctrines of the Christian Faith like the (1) Inspiration of Scripture (2 Tim 3:16), (2) Preservation of Scripture (Ps 12:6-7), (3) Virgin Birth of Christ (Isa 7:14), (4) Eternal Generation of Christ (John 1:14, 18, 3:16, 18, 1 John 4:9), (5) the Holy Trinity (1 John 5:7-8), (6) the deity and humanity of Christ (1 Tim 3:16), and many others. The modernistic 20th century versions on the other hand have unfaithfully manipulated these biblical texts to change or corrupt these and other fundamental truths of the Christian faith.

One fundamental doctrine of the Christian faith that is undermined or attacked by the modern versions is the doctrine of the Trinity. They attack this important doctrine by scissoring out the clearest proof-text for the doctrine of the Trinity which is 1 John 5:7, *“For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and*

these three are one.” Some will argue that the absence of 1 John 5:7 does not affect the doctrine of the Trinity because there are many other biblical passages that teach it. The doctrine to them is thus not lost. While the doctrine may not be lost, a very strong testimony for it has surely been. Which other scriptural passage is as crystal clear as 1 John 5:7 in expressing the unity of the three Persons of the Godhead? We lose a very valuable proof-text by such flippant statements against the traditional preserved text in favour of the critical cut-up text. This is not a small matter as some would like to think. Paul warned, “*a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump*” (Gal 5:9). By faith in God’s promise of perfect preservation of not just His doctrines but also His words to the last iota (Matt 5:18, 24:35), we believe 1 John 5:7 to be the inspired words of God as given in the original.

A Return to the Reformation

In an age when the pressure to be popular, to compromise, and to backslide is so great, there is a real need to remember and to return to the old-time faith of the Protestant Reformation as expressed in the biblical dicta of Grace alone, Faith alone, Christ alone, Scripture alone, and to the Glory of God alone. In this postmodern and apostate age of uncertainty and unbelief, the temptation is great to denounce the forever infallible and inerrant Word of God as found in the 100% inspired and 100% preserved Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek words of the Reformation Bible and the KJV, and to renounce the Protestant Reformation as a mistake in the history of the church.

But true Protestant sons and Bible-loving Christians should resist the seduction of ecumenical unity at the expense of truth, and the temptations of a neo-deistic worldview that denies the present perfection of the Holy Scriptures.

What of the many new and modern versions of the Bible today? Albert Einstein once said, “A man with one watch knows what time it is, a man with two watches is never sure.” Allow me to apply Einstein’s words to the Bible, “**A Christian with one Bible knows what the Truth is, a Christian with two Bibles is never sure.**” Let us be sure of God’s Truth by returning to the good old Bible, the one Bible of the great Protestant Reformation, which we have in our hands today!

THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHRISTIAN CHURCHES (ICCC) AND THE KING JAMES BIBLE

Jeffrey Khoo

The Far Eastern Bible College believes in the verbal inspiration of the Holy Scriptures—every word of Scripture is *theopneustos*, God-breathed. “All Scripture is inspired of God and is profitable . . .” (2 Tim 3:16, KJV). We oppose the English Revised Version (RV) of Westcott and Hort (and all like versions) which rendered 2 Tim 3:16 thus, “Every Scripture inspired of God *is* also profitable . . .” By placing the copula “is” *after* the words, “inspired of God,” instead of *before* it as in the KJV, the RV has made 2 Tim 3:16 to mean that *certain parts of Scripture are not inspired of God*; only those portions that are inspired are profitable. The KJV placed the copula “is” right after “All Scripture.” This leaves no ambiguity whatsoever that *all of Scripture, to its jot and tittle, is inspired of God*.

The Far Eastern Bible College rejects and opposes all modern versions like the New International Version (NIV) that are a result of the dynamic equivalence method of translation which licentiously add to, subtract from, and manipulate the Scriptures, and those that cast doubt, and/or omit verses based on corrupted readings of the Westcott and Hort Text. We fully concur with the recently passed Bible Resolution of the International Council of Christian Churches (ICCC) which met at its 50th Anniversary in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, August 11-14, 1998. The Bible Resolution reads,

WHEREAS despite the fact that there are over 150 so-called “versions” of the Bible extant around the world today, there have been no new discoveries of ancient texts to legitimize this plethora of modern “versions” pouring off the presses and being sold as the “latest” Bible, and

WHEREAS a single exception to this has been the discovery of the now-famous Dead Sea Scrolls in the 1940’s in caves on the Judean mountain

range and contained in clay jars with the texts written on leather and papyrus, and

WHEREAS fragments of all the books of the Hebrew Bible (except Esther) confirm almost to the letter the accuracy of the Authorized King James Version of the Old Testament, and

WHEREAS most of the modern versions are based upon the discredited and perverted Westcott and Hort transcription and not on the Textus Receptus (The Received Text) attested to by scholars for over 300 years, from which the Authorized King James Version was translated by the greatest theologians and textual critics of 17th Century England, who were academic experts, indeed, in Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic, and

WHEREAS self-styled theologians who reject the inerrancy and inspiration of the Scriptures have gone so far as to make a looseleaf notebook and tear out those passages they do not accept, even organizing what they designate as “Jesus Seminars” across the United States in which they declare that Jesus never did and said the things recorded in the four Gospels; and that the Gospel of John is the worst and is 90 percent fiction, and the obedient secular press quotes them from coast-to-coast, and

WHEREAS this same KING JAMES VERSION has been used around the world by an overwhelming majority of Christian Clergymen, Evangelists, Bible Teachers, Missionaries and Youth Leaders to bring millions of people to have a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ for more than three centuries,

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, that the International Council of Christian Churches, assembled in the historic English Reformed Church in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, observing its 50th Anniversary, August 11-15, 1998, urge all Bible-believing churches worldwide to use only the Authorized KING JAMES VERSION in their services and in their teaching ministry, and warn the followers of Christ against these innumerable “new” bibles which are not translations at all, but revisions conforming to the personal bias and views of those who have originated them and who are profiting by commercial sales of such.

Is there any who calls himself a fundamentalist that will scoff at this resolution? There are indeed “fundamentalists” who simply pay lip-service to the doctrine of biblical inspiration and preservation. In the same breath they say yes and no to the Word of God they claim to uphold: “Yes to the KJV; No to the Textus Receptus.” Dr Carl McIntire, President of the ICCA did well to quote J Gresham Machen in the January 17, 1957 issue of the *Christian Beacon*, “The worst sin today is to say that you agree with the Christian faith and believe in the Bible, but

then make common cause with those who deny the basic facts of Christianity. Never was it more obviously true that he that is not with Christ is against Him.” How can those who claim to believe in a verbally inspired Bible support Westcott and Hort—the Bible and Christ denying progenitors of our modern English versions? Westcott and Hort were modernists and Mariolators, supporters of Freud and Darwin. They applied the scissors to the traditional and preserved Greek Text of God’s Word used and accepted by God’s people down through the ages. These unregenerate duo hoodwinked the Church into accepting their mutilated text, save Dean J W Burgon who in righteous indignation rose to debunk Westcott and Hort in his masterly 600-page treatise—*The Revision Revised*.

Therefore, fundamentalists who continue to promote the Westcott-Hort Greek text which is now renamed “Eclectic,” and all the corrupt English “Bibles” that flood the Christian market are not fighting against Satan, but against Christ. I repeat the words of Machen, “The worst sin today is to say that you agree with the Christian Faith and believe in the Bible [viz, the KJV], but make common cause with those [viz, Westcott and Hort] who deny the basic facts of Christianity. Never was it more obviously true that he that is not with Christ is against Him.”

“When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him” (Isa 59:17). “For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth” (2 Cor 13:8). “Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity” (2 Tim 2:19).

KICKING AGAINST THE PRICKS

The SCCC Contradicts the ICCC on VPP

Jeffrey Khoo

The Singapore Council of Christian Churches (SCCC), which is the national affiliate in Singapore of the International Council of Christian Churches (ICCC), in its Reformation Rally of 2007 passed another statement¹ against the Verbal Plenary Preservation (VPP) of the Holy Scriptures. This latest statement is clearly not in line with the ICCC resolutions on the Bible made in Amsterdam 1998 and Jerusalem 2000 which the SCCC claims to reaffirm. In the *Far Eastern Beacon* of Easter 2008, the SCCC quoted the ICCC resolution that “The King James Version in English has been faithfully translated from these God-preserved manuscripts—the Masoretic Text preserving the Old Testament and the Textus Receptus preserving the New Testament.”² This is what VPP affirms—the Hebrew/Aramaic words of the Masoretic Text, and the Greek words of the Textus Receptus are the very inspired and preserved words of God, and the Authorised or King James Version (AV/KJV) is a faithful translation of those divinely inspired and preserved original language words.

It is unfortunate that in the same paper, the SCCC misrepresents VPP by putting the cart before the horse claiming that VPP is KJV³ when VPP is the special providential preservation of the divinely inspired words of the Holy Scriptures in the original languages (i.e., Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek words, and not English words or any other foreign language words in Bible translations or versions). It must be underscored that VPP recognises and requires the translation of true and faithful versions of the Bible into other languages that are based upon the God-preserved manuscripts or verbally and plenarily preserved texts, namely, the Hebrew Masoretic Text and the Greek Textus Receptus from which the KJV has been faithfully translated as affirmed by the ICCC.⁴

It ought to be made known that the Far Eastern Bible College (FEBC) has been championing the ICCC resolution on the preservation of Scripture passed at its 16th World Congress in Jerusalem in the year 2000. The ICCC statement #11 affirmed, “Believing the OT has been preserved in the Masoretic text and the NT in the Textus Receptus, combined they gave us the complete Word of God. The King James Version in English has been faithfully translated from these God-preserved manuscripts.”⁵

In the same issue of the *Far Eastern Beacon* (Easter 2008), the SCCC also republished a 2005 letter by the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions (IBPFM) denouncing the doctrine and promotion of VPP which clearly contradicts what the SCCC has reaffirmed in the very same paper to be the ICCC position on Biblical preservation, the KJV and its underlying original language texts. The SCCC paper in the *Far Eastern Beacon* is inherently inconsistent and contradictory. Wittingly or unwittingly, the SCCC anti-VPPists have undermined the testimony of the ICCC and their own credibility by their very own words and actions.

It is worth noting that Dr Lynn Gray Gordon, former General Secretary of the IBPFM, in his commentary on the Westminster Confession of Faith, states unequivocally that “The Holy Scriptures have been *miraculously* preserved down through the ages.”⁶ This is nothing less than the VPP of the Holy Scriptures by special or extraordinary, supernatural or miraculous providence (“by His singular care and providence”) as affirmed in the Westminster Confession of Faith (Chapter 1, Section 8). But the SCCC says that the continuing preservation of the one Holy Scripture, the Bible, is merely “**general** [i.e. not special, non-miraculous, without direct, extraordinary divine intervention], **but not plenary** [i.e. not full, complete, 100% to the jot and tittle].”⁷ Is this Biblically correct, theologically sensible, and logically tenable? Is this the Reformed understanding of the Holy Scriptures and of *Sola Scriptura*?

How we thank God for the Biblical doctrine of the verbal and plenary preservation and the present infallibility and inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures in the original languages (Ps 12:6-7, Matt 5:18, 24:35, John 10:35, 2 Tim 3:16-17)! Insofar as the KJV is concerned, Dr Gordon rightly disclaimed the KJV as an “inspired version” but nonetheless

upheld the KJV to be “free from error in thought, fact and doctrine.”⁸ VPP proponents say Amen to this.

The SCCC statement illustrates the fallacy of human logic and the fallibility of the words of men. Man’s writings are full of contradictions, discrepancies and errors, but God’s words are perfect, infallible, and inerrant, without any contradiction, discrepancy, or mistake to the last letter and syllable. It proves all the more that the words of God are forever infallible and inerrant, and always trustworthy, our sole and supreme authority of faith and practice. The logic of faith is the key to a consistent Bibliology. The logic of unbelief, on the other hand, produces illogical thinking and ungodly deeds. Dr Gordon rightly observed, “Sin is an irrational thing. It makes a man act not only wickedly, but foolishly.”⁹ It baffles the mind to see the SCCC holding a Reformation Rally only to undermine the Reformation Bible, the Hebrew Masoretic Text and the Greek Textus Receptus on which the KJV is based by denying and denouncing VPP. Even the Rev K C Quek—former General Secretary of the ICCC—himself testified that he does not “see ‘main contradictions’ between the clause 4.2.1 in the existing Constitution of our B-P Churches and the VPP theory.”¹⁰ Indeed, we see no contradiction whatsoever.

May the SCCC and its member churches retract all their statements against VPP before they do further damage to the testimony and credibility of the ICCC and the legacy of Dr Carl McIntire who believed without question that Psalm 12:6, 7 proves the perfect preservation of the words of God.¹¹

It is indeed truthful that VPP is a blessed doctrine which preserves godly paths to the glory of God alone. How true our Saviour’s words, “It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks” (Acts 9:5)!

Notes

¹ The SCCC had issued an earlier statement, “Inspiration and Translations of the Holy Scriptures,” a resolution passed in its 49th AGM on October 29, 2005, and published in the November-December 2005 issue of the *Far Eastern Beacon*. See also Jeffrey Khoo, “Inspiration, Preservation, and Translations,” *The Burning Bush* 13 (2007): 12-13.

² “Re-affirming SCCC Stand on the Word of God,” “IBPFM Resolution on Bible Inspiration,” *Far Eastern Beacon* 39:1 (Easter 2008): 4.

³ *Ibid*, 5.

⁴ *Ibid*, 4.

⁵ “ICCC 16th World Congress Statements,” *Far Eastern Beacon* (Christmas 2000): 13.

⁶ Lynn Gray Gordon, *The World's Greatest Truths* (Singapore: Far Eastern Bible College Press, 1999), 25.

⁷ “Re-affirming SCCC Stand on the Word of God,” 5. Emphasis in the original, but explanations in parenthesis are mine.

⁸ Gordon, 26.

⁹ *Ibid*, 174.

¹⁰ “A Founding Leader of the B-P Movement in Singapore Replies to a Query on the Church Constitution” (<http://www.lifebpc.com/ourstand/querycc.htm> accessed on June 19, 2008). The B-P Constitution 4.2.1 reads, “We believe in the divine, verbal and plenary inspiration of the Scriptures in the original languages, their consequent inerrancy and infallibility, and as the Word of God, the Supreme and final authority in faith and life.”

¹¹ Hear his sermon entitled — “Help, LORD!” (Psalm 12) — preached on January 11, 1992, accessible from www.sermonaudio.com.

THE RESOLUTIONS OF THE ICCC AND SCCC ON BIBLE VERSIONS

Paul Ferguson

Introduction

In September 2008, the *Far Eastern Beacon* published by the Singapore Council of Christian Churches (SCCC), which is the national affiliate in Singapore of the International Council of Christian Churches (ICCC) contained an article titled “On VPP: Kicking against the Pricks” by Joshua Lim and Philip Tang (hereafter “the Beacon Article”). This article was designed to be a rejoinder to an article in *The Burning Bush* of July 2008 by Dr Jeffrey Khoo called, “Kicking against the Pricks: The SCCC Contradicts the ICCC on VPP.” The authors state their conclusion in paragraph one of the Beacon Article by confidently claiming, “Upon reading the ICCC and SCCC Statements, we found that the SCCC and ICCC are consistent in their views regarding the preservation of the Holy Scriptures.”

The Beacon Article by Joshua Lim and Philip Tang is a strange kind of defence and even at first glance is riddled with inaccuracies, inherent inconsistencies and absurd definitions. Paradoxically, it even begins by contradicting and undermining the original ICCC Resolution in 1998 by describing it as “ignorant” and by doing so seems to imply that the ICCC was an extreme King James Version Only (KJVO) organisation.¹ This crass and sweeping dismissal of the ICCC’s General Assembly (which is partly made up of the SCCC’s delegates) hardly is suggestive that the Beacon Article is a reliable advocate of the consistency of the SCCC with the ICCC. It also surely delineates the desperation of the current leadership of the SCCC when it is reduced to utilising authors² to defend it who have such contemptuous feelings towards its sister organisation.

The part of the ICCC Amsterdam Resolution that caught the ire of the Beacon Article was the concluding resolution,

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, that the International Council of Christian Churches, assembled in the historic English Reformed Church in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, observing its 50th Anniversary, August 11-15, 1998, urge all Bible-believing churches worldwide to *use only the Authorized KING JAMES VERSION* in their services and in their teaching ministry.

The authors of the Beacon Article are, however, right in implying that the ICCC in 1998 and 2000 before the passing away of Dr Carl McIntire was strongly KJVO. Indeed, the ICCC Founder—Dr McIntire—in a message delivered on November 1, 1992 (accessible from sermonaudio.com), rejected any belief that we do not have the pure Words of God for us in our Bible today,

Verse 6—*“The Words of the Lord are pure Words.”* Not one of them is mistaken. *“As silver tried in the furnace purified seven times;”* all the dregs are out. Here is a marvelous affirmation and vindication that God’s Word is perfect. *“The Words of the Lord are pure Words”* and that’s the big issue that you and I have in the Christian world today ...

Dr McIntire was also convinced that we have all of these Words available to us and drew not just from Psalm 12 but also the Westminster Confession of Faith,

Verse 7—how I love this. *“Thou shalt keep them O Lord;”* that is keep His Words. *“Thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.”* No matter what happens, one generation comes and another passes away, God is going to preserve these Words and they are going to carry their power that He attends with them when they come. From one generation to another the Words of God will be preserved throughout all the generations. Now I am very happy that in the great Confessions of the Christian world, our Confession—the Westminster Confession—has its Chapter One on the Word of God. ... Now the Lord says, “I am going to keep my Word—it is like silver that has been tried. I am going to keep that to all generations, all generations.” That means that no matter what the conditions are, God is going to have on this earth some churches and some pastors until the last generation were taken away who will maintain this Word like we are doing here.

Far Eastern Bible College (FEBC) applauds this historic stance of ICCC and seek to uphold this as Dr Jeffrey Khoo explains, “It ought to be made known that the Far Eastern Bible College (FEBC) has been championing the ICCC resolution on the preservation of Scripture passed at its 16th World Congress in Jerusalem in the year 2000.”⁷³

It is regrettable that in recent years the SCCC has departed from both the letter and spirit of these ICCC resolutions. The 1998 ICCC resolution is very clear on its unequivocal rejection of any other English Bible version and the need to militantly defend the KJV when the ICCC stated they,

... urge all Bible-believing churches worldwide to use only the Authorized KING JAMES VERSION in their services and in their teaching ministry, and warn the followers of Christ against these innumerable “new” bibles which are not translations at all, but revisions conforming to the personal bias and views of those who have originated them and who are profiting by commercial sales of such.

A good example of this departure by the SCCC was their utilising guest speakers at recent SCCC rallies in Singapore such as Dr Edward Panosian of Bob Jones University (BJU) in 2005 and Rev Tan Eng Boo in 2008 who both wholly reject and oppose the historic ICCC position. Panosian is a Church History Professor at BJU which openly endorses the Alexandrian Texts as, “a whole, superior to the text based upon manuscripts of the Middle Ages.”⁴ Indeed, BJU was one of the educational institutions to assist the Lockman Foundation’s publication of the New American Standard Version (NASV) in 1971. In a BJU booklet rejecting the KJVO position, Panosian sought to undermine the KJV by arguing that,

Neither the Received Text nor the Westcott and Hort Text is either right or wrong, liberal or conservative. The latter is older and nearer to the original, but both are the Word of the living God.⁵

Panosian’s colleague at BJU, Dr Samuel Schnaiter is even more candid and concedes in his 1980 PhD dissertation titled, “The Relevancy of Textual Criticism to the Modern English Version Controversy for Fundamentalists,” that,

With regard to preservation, however, no Scripture explicitly declares anything of this sort of guidance to apply to the manuscript copyists as far as the precise wording of the text is concerned. Some have deduced such supernatural guidance from Scripture. They note passages that promise God’s Word shall never perish or be lost. However, such promises of preservation in view of the wording variations must apply only to the message of God’s Word, not its precise wording.⁶

The same Dr Schnaiter and his other BJU colleague, Ron Tagliapietra, had even the audacity to accuse our Lord of deception in

citing as the Words of God an imperfect source when they wrote, “It is obvious that Jesus did not consider the lack of the autographs an important matter, and He called the extant copies inspired in spite of any ‘typos’ in them.”⁷

The 2008 SCCC speaker, Rev Tan Eng Boo of Grace Bible-Presbyterian Church, is just as forthright and has publicly stated,

Why should the Church be reading only the KJV when the masses of people today do not understand it? Depriving the lost to understand the Scripture is a sin. It is hindering the unsaved to know the truth. In Grace Church, we must never go to the extreme as these people are doing today. Our official Bible is the KJV, but we will also use the New King James Version (NKJV), New American Standard Bible (NASB), and the English Standard Version (ESV).⁸

The *Far Eastern Beacon* in its September 2008 edition carries an advertisement for its Reformation Rally 2008 which features another non-KJV speaker, Dr Robert Vannoy from Biblical Theological Seminary in USA, who uses all kinds of modern translations in his writings.⁹

In light of these trends, it is surely pertinent to question the sincerity of the current leadership of the SCCC’s commitment to the ICCC resolution to, “urge all Bible-believing churches worldwide to use only the Authorized KING JAMES VERSION in their services and in their teaching ministry,” and in warning “the followers of Christ against these innumerable ‘new’ bibles which are not translations at all.” It seems wholly inconsistent for SCCC to repeatedly pass resolutions against the Verbal Plenary Preservation (VPP) position whilst sponsoring speakers who hold contradictory and openly hostile positions to the ICCC and thereby neglecting their own clear commitments in “warning” the advocates of the modern versions. Indeed, the Rev Tan Eng Boo has even called the ICCC and SCCC position of only using the KJV a “sin” and they feel they can fellowship and use him as their speaker!

ICCC 1998 Resolution

The 1998 ICCC resolution begins in recital one by expressly ruling out any so-called “Majority Text” position of men like Zane Hodges and that of Rev Colin Wong¹⁰ of Life Bible-Presbyterian Church (a leading member of SCCC) by expressly stating, “there have been no new discoveries of ancient texts to legitimize this plethora of modern ‘versions’ pouring off the presses and being sold as the ‘latest’ Bible.”

The 1998 ICCC resolution also includes an express faith-based presuppositional commitment to VPP not based upon textual criticism but on providential blessing in its recitals when it rejects all other modern versions because it argues, “this same KING JAMES VERSION has been used around the world by an overwhelming majority of Christian Clergymen, Evangelists, Bible Teachers, Missionaries and Youth Leaders to bring millions of people to have a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ for more than three centuries.”

The 1998 ICCC resolution then gives a workable definition of the Textus Receptus (Received Text) that makes it clear that it is an identifiable text and not some uncertain group of words scattered throughout manuscripts or in the Byzantine Family manuscripts. By their choice of words, the ICCC have deliberately restricted the Textus Receptus (Received Text) to the printed texts underlying the KJV when they state, “WHEREAS most of the modern versions are based upon the discredited and perverted Westcott and Hort transcription and not on the Textus Receptus (The Received Text) attested to by scholars for over 300 years, from which the Authorized King James Version was translated by the greatest theologians and textual critics of 17th Century England.”

This ICCC position is not surprising and is identical to groups such as the Trinitarian Bible Society (TBS) who also state, “The Greek Received Text is the name given to a group of printed texts, the first of which was published by Desiderius Erasmus in 1516.”¹¹

ICCC 2000 Statement

The ICCC builds upon the 1998 resolution by strengthening their KJVO position in a 2000 Statement in Jerusalem. They initially begin by applying the words of inspiration to preservation when they say,

Believing that God not only inspired the Bible without errors in fact, doctrine and judgment but preserved the Scriptures in all ages for all eternity as the Westminster Confession of Faith standard says—“the O.T. in Hebrew and the N.T. in Greek ... being immediately inspired by God and by His singular care and providence kept pure in all ages are therefore kept authentical. ... they are to be translated into the vulgar language of every nation unto which they come,” ...

It should be noted that the ICCC clearly argue that preservation is the exclusive work of God Himself “in all ages for all eternity” so we can only conclude that this work was perfect. The concept of God’s

“imperfect preservation” is an oxymoron. There are no scriptural passages that support a view that God said that He wanted us to have 93-98% of His Word. The Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF) concurs and states the Bible is “kept pure in all ages.” Any other conclusion as to the perfection of this preservation would explicitly accuse God of being imperfect in His actions and works. Interestingly, the ICCC specifically *link* the inspiring of the Bible “without errors in fact, doctrine, and judgment” with that of preservation in one sentence. No attempt is made by the ICCC (or indeed the WCF) to *distinguish* between the Bible’s perfect inspiration and perfect preservation, which we would expect if this was their belief. It is also interesting that the ICCC here accepts that Bible translations have flowed *directly* from this perfect work of preservation by God. Nothing in these words of the ICCC could be reasonably construed to imply that these Words are still hidden in manuscripts or lost rather than in our Reformation Bibles.

The WCF position is not surprising in light of history as initially, all of the various Protestant Confessional statements (such as the Westminster, the Philadelphia etc.) contain statements about the preservation of Scripture that were written in response to text-critical problems and challenges of the Counter-Reformation. As one commentator put it, “these creeds descriptively appealed to the consensus of history for determining the boundaries of the texts of Scripture.” In the 5th century, Satan in order to destroy the Church had to lead the common man to turn to the Church instead of the Bible for authority. Throughout the next ten centuries of “Satan’s Millennium” the church and society plunged into the Dark Ages because the people were kept from the objective revelation of God. Only a remnant survived thanks to the Received Text in groups such as the Waldensians.

The WCF which the ICCC utilises as its basis for arguing concerning preservation has also a number of other things to say about the subject. In section I (5) of “Holy Scripture” the Confession states,

We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the Church to an high and reverent esteem of the Holy Scripture. And the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole (which is, to give all glory to God), the full discovery it makes of the only way of man’s salvation, the many other incomparable excellencies, and the *entire perfection thereof*, are arguments whereby it does *abundantly evidence itself to be the Word of God*: yet

notwithstanding, our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts.

In effect, the WCF states that the “entire perfection” of the Words of Scripture for us today is to be primarily evidenced by the *internal evidence* of Scripture. This is problematic for anti-VPP advocates such as the current SCCC leadership as they do not believe the Scriptures in our hands is perfect and cannot even identify what imperfections it actually has. The final expression in this section of the WCF also poses a tremendous problem for the SCCC as the WCF states another evidence of Scripture perfection is, “our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts.” If the SCCC position is true and we do not have all of the Words of God perfectly preserved in the underlying texts of the KJV, then they are in effect arguing that the Holy Spirit is bearing witness in our hearts with a perfect Word that is different from the imperfectly preserved Bible we have in our hands. This position is dangerously close to the heretical views of the Neo-Orthodox writers such as Karl Barth that the Bible is “the word of God” but not “the words of God” so it is only when one reads the text that it existentially, “becomes the word of God” to him. One of the Beacon Article authors, Philip Tang, implicitly admits his Barthian position when he previously wrote,

The fact that Biblical manuscripts are the *best* preserved of all ancient manuscripts *does not make the Bible infallible and inerrant*; it is infallible and inerrant because God is the author. *It is not the physical letters of the Word that are important but the meaning they convey, the precepts, the sense of it that matters.*

....it is clear that God’s Word shall stand forever, fully preserved (Pro 22:12) and be *written in the hearts of the believers*.¹²

The SCCC and Philip Tang’s position by definition now requires a “charismatic post-canonical” work of re-inspiration in the heart when we receive “an inward message” that we cannot test by the written Word¹³ even though the WCF states that all experiences must be tested by the Bible as, “in all controversies of religion, the Church is finally to appeal unto them.” We simply ask, how can the Holy Scriptures be a certain and infallible rule if they are based on a fallible text? We cannot appeal to the “pure Word of God” preserved in heaven as it is something that we

cannot use. This dangerous and new “thought preservation” position of the SCCC and its supporters in Singapore such as Zion, Grace and Life Bible-Presbyterian Churches, however, is completely inconsistent with the WCF which rejects any such “new revelations of the Spirit” by stating,

The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man’s salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture: *unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit.*

The ICCC also interestingly in their resolution reject the erroneous interpretation of the Board of Elders of Life Bible-Presbyterian Church (LBPC), a leading member of SCCC, in respect of Matthew 24:35. LBPC state that,

This verse must be interpreted in the context of the end-time prophecies that Jesus gave in vv.4-34. It indicates the certainty and reliability of all these prophecies. The words of Jesus will continue to be certain, valid and trustworthy even after the universe ceases to exist.¹⁴

The Elders of LBPC believe only “the end-time prophecies,” “all these prophecies” or “the words [of prophecy] of Jesus” are “certain, valid and trustworthy.” They add further in the same statement that this verse is one of a number in which, “what can be understood from these verses is that the Word of God will be providentially preserved rather than exactly preserved.” One is tempted to ask LBPC how they are sure that these are the actual “words of Jesus” and that they “will continue to be certain, valid and trustworthy” if they come from what they accept is an imperfect, inexact and incomplete source? What LBPC are really saying is that, “heaven and earth shall pass away, but most of the words or the general sense of what God said won’t pass away.” In essence, God did not do what He promised He would do. If LBPC believe we do not have an absolutely and entirely infallible text then on what authority do they base their beliefs? Are they appealing, as do the other religions and cults, to a man or a system as our “final authority”? However, the Reformation was predicated upon the presupposition that we are to appeal to the Bible as our “final authority.” How does LBPC know for certain that John 3:16 and Ephesians 2:8-9 are not just the error or corruption of some first century scribe? By their preservation belief system this is a possibility that cannot be discounted as, according to

them, it is “heretical,” “false and impractical” to demand an absolutely and entirely infallible and inerrant text!

The ICCC, by contrast, is unambiguous in its 1998 resolution in linking VPP with Matthew 24:35 when they state:

Believing God safeguarded the Bible in times past and will continue to do so in the future and all eternity. He preserved one Holy Scripture, the Bible. “Heaven and earth shall pass away but my words shall not pass away;” Matthew 24:35.

Baptist author, Kent Brandenburg, explains the fallacy of LBPC’s position,

The eschatological context doesn’t affect the teaching on preservation—it enhances it. The Lord Jesus Christ assures His disciples that His promises not only shall certainly be fulfilled but also shall remain available for the comfort of His people during that troubled period which shall precede His second coming. ... His words were preserved because they were written down. Heaven and earth are physical entities that will pass away, that is, disappear. They can be less counted upon in their preservation than Jesus’ Words. Heaven and earth will disappear in the end times, so Jesus’ Words are time sensitive. They’ll be around surely when heaven and earth will not. Why not just take the plain meaning of the text?¹⁵

The fallacy of the LBPC view is also exposed by David Sorenson,

The same critics object that these are His *spoken* words and not His *written* Word. This implied is that though His spoken words may last forever, His written Word will not. However, what these selfsame critics seem to miss is that the Holy Spirit inspired the very words of Jesus which He saw fit to record as Scripture.¹⁶

This typically theologically muddled statement by LBPC exemplifies the confusion at the heart of the SCCC now, as members such as LBPC openly contradict the ICCC resolutions on Matthew 24:35 and come up with nebulous and dangerous statements that cannot be tested or proven such as, “the Word of God will be providentially preserved rather than exactly preserved.” Imagine the outcry against FEBC if they taught that our salvation is not “exactly preserved.” What they really mean is that the “message” or “central concepts” have been preserved, independent from the specific words of God’s revelation. However, there are no such things as wordless concepts and repeatedly we are warned against adding to or taking away from the Words (not just concepts or ideas) of the Bible (e.g. Deut 4:2; Prov 30:5-6; Rev 22:18-19).

The very idea that God in a *laissez-faire* manner did something imperfectly either through lack of attention, desire, or power is akin to blasphemy. What passage do they base this on? What verses guide them to take this view? None! The SCCC and LBPC clearly have an unbiblical limited belief in divine providence. They claim to accept that God keeps them secure despite their sins, that God inspired Scripture despite 40-45 authors over 1,500 years, and that our Biblical Canon has been perfected providentially. Somehow the Holy Spirit could perform a miracle of providence in guiding us exactly to 66 books, but He could not do it with Words despite the fact that Scripture promises to preserve “words,” but does not say “books.”

If we are going to start eroding and working down the Words, then why not start working on the Books too? Why 66 of them? They are completely inconsistent in their application of human reasoning. They have no scriptural basis for canonicity as there is no verse in the Bible that says we would have 66 books. Certainly Paul wrote other books not in the Canon. And yet, they are not “heretical” for believing in the canonicity of 66 books for no other reason than because they are the self-appointed arbiters of truth and have made this decision. However, VPP advocates are labelled as “cultists” and “heretics” for using the same reasoning for the Words. They are truly selective in their belief in the power of providence! If the Received Text is not the preserved and inspired Words of God, then LBPC need to tell us where is the text that contains the Words that Jesus said would never pass away?

The SCCC and LBPC position is clearly that there is now no book on earth that is the final and absolute authority on what constitutes truth and what constitutes error. Indeed, Philip Tang has candidly confessed in another article that he totally rejects the ICCC position of preservation,

There is not a single verse in the Bible that says that all the physical letters of the autographa would be preserved (much less preserved in the KJV underlying texts) but rather speaks about the enduring quality of God’s Word. His Word is completely pure, perfect and is absolutely truthful (Psa 12:6; Psa 18:30, 19:7; Num 23:19). Because the Word expresses God’s will and possesses God’s authority, it has eternal validity (Psa. 119:89 ; Is. 40:8; Pro 22:12, Mar 13:31).

The fact that Biblical manuscripts are the best preserved of all ancient manuscripts does not make the Bible infallible and inerrant; it is infallible and inerrant because God is the author. The historical data *only affirms the*

truth of God's Word that it stands forever and that His *eyes* [omniscience] preserve it.

... it is clear that God's Word shall stand forever, fully preserved (Pro 22:12) and be written in the hearts of the believers. *What is preserved is not the physical letters that make up the autographa but the knowledge [of God]* as it is stated in Proverbs 22:12.¹⁷

Philip Tang does not explain to us how he determines what is biblical when God's words are hidden from him here on earth. Perhaps he has some sort of personal inspiration. Ironically, Tang in the same article contradicts himself and accepts VPP in the Old Testament Scriptures for the Masoretic apographs during the ministry of Christ,

The Pharisees knew the Scriptures very well, and *the exact number of words and letters of a particular book of Scripture*. They often focused on the minor, and often, unimportant matters of the law. They could not identify Jesus as the Messiah because they sought salvation in their knowledge of the Scriptures. *They had the complete word of God, not one word or letter was missing. Every physical word was accounted for.*¹⁸

Surely, if it is legitimate and non-heretical for Philip Tang to accept VPP of the apographs 2,000 years ago, it is not an unreasonable belief to contend for this today. The manuscripts available to our Lord were likewise copies of copies, yet He never attempted to correct them, or discuss variant readings, or speak of more accurate renditions (Matt 4:4-10, 19:3-5, 21:16, 42; Luke 4:16-17; John 5:39, 10:35 etc.). Christ did, however, correct the Pharisaical interpretations, but not the Scriptures. In doing so Christ declared that the Old Testament text in common use among the Jews during His earthly ministry was an absolutely trustworthy reproduction of the original text. Indeed, if the Bible were inspired only in the original autographs, no one in the entire history of the world has ever had an inspired Bible. The original autographs of Job and the books of Moses had disappeared more than a thousand years before the first book of the New Testament was written, so no one has ever owned a complete Bible made up of "inspired autographs." God certainly went to a lot of trouble for nothing. It is clear that Philip Tang now accepts that copies of copies can indeed be considered the infallible, inspired, inerrant preserved Words of God. Tang correctly uses the scriptural promises to come to this presupposition by faith and then paradoxically rejects it today.

This confusion should not surprise us as the SCCC itself at its Reformation Rally in 2007 openly contradicted the ICCC positions by rejecting that God had perfectly preserved all of His Words. They then retreated from the clarity of the ICCC position to a new and unbiblical formula of “continuing general, but not plenary, preservation” when they stated,

The SCCC hereby re-affirm our stand on the Word of God as above and call upon all our members and all our fellow Bible-believing brethren all over the world to re-affirm our unqualified faith in the inerrancy and infallibility of the Word of God in the original languages, and *in the continuing general, but not plenary, preservation of the “one Holy Scripture, the Bible.”*¹⁹

The SCCC deliberately did not elaborate on the conclusions of this new doctrine they are espousing for fear of letting the cat out of the bag. The truth is that the use of such double-speak in phrases like “continuing, general, but not plenary preservation” is to hide the fact that they do not believe we have all the Words of God preserved and available for us today in a settled text. If God is providentially behind the multitude of conflicting and contradictory opinions about these so-called textual variants, then it would be fair to conclude that this God is very confused about what He said or did not say, and what He meant when He said it. What SCCC truly mean is that if you have a generally but not fully preserved Bible, you will be able to get a drift of most of the message that God was originally trying to convey. However, the ICCC and the WCF, as we have seen above, are very clear that we do have *all these Words* preserved for us. Interestingly, the TBS, using the same logic of faith, also reject this nebulous and inconsistent view of the SCCC when they rejected the concept of a Majority Text,

The Trinitarian Bible Society maintains that the providentially preserved true and authentic text is to be found in the Masoretic Hebrew and the Greek Received Texts. In so doing, it follows the historic, orthodox Protestant position of acknowledging as Holy Scripture the Hebrew and Greek texts *consistently accessible to and preserved among the people of God in all ages*.

Furthermore, as no detailed collation of all surviving manuscripts has taken place, the exact majority text cannot yet be determined; and even if one day that became possible, the resultant text could only be provisional and tentative, because the discovery of further manuscripts might change minority readings to majority readings, or vice versa. *The doctrine of*

*providential preservation, however, teaches that the Church is—and always has been—in possession of the true text of Scripture.*²⁰

However, it is by faith that the child of God knows that he *already* has the Word of God at his disposal. Indeed, if we *only* used the majority concept as our standard, we would remain in constant uncertain state of flux. As Dr Floyd Nolen Jones puts it,

But we need not be concerned, for God has not left us depending upon the spade of the archaeologist to determine the true text. Neither are we awaiting his discovering a new papyri hiding in a jar somewhere. If we did so, our faith would always be wavering and we could never be confident that a dealer would not soon appear with something new from somewhere else. We would be wondering if the damming of the Nile River had destroyed some Greek text which would show us a new wonderful truth. We already possess and have had all along the actual TRUTH of Scripture! We have, by faith in God's promises to preserve His Word, an assumed premise, *a priori*, of God's providential preservation of the text. Someone may say "prove it," but this fails to comprehend the nature of *a priori* premise. As Letis has reminded us: "One does not prove a first premise. A premise by definition is something one assumes, not something he proves".... Our confidence is in God's never failing promises and in the text which has been continuously in public usage by the Church. This is why the TR is the true text, not merely because of its great statistical "superiority" or "probability."²¹

The ICCC 2000 statement then turns to discussing where the words of God have been fully preserved. They state,

Believing the O.T. has been preserved in the Masoretic text and the N.T. in the Textus Receptus, combined they gave us the *complete Word of God*. The King James Version in English has been faithfully translated from these God-preserved manuscripts.

So, it is clear that the Masoretic Text and the Textus Receptus are stated by the ICCC to give us the "complete Word of God." Lest those, like the Beacon Article authors, try and play with words, helpfully, the ICCC also define the word "complete" when they link it directly to the originals in the first paragraph as, "Believing the Holy Scriptures of the originals to be fully inspired with its words and genders and *being complete* as God's revelation to man without error." The only argument left for the new SCCC position is to argue that the definition of "Textus Receptus" can be stretched to mean the extant manuscripts of the Majority Text or Byzantine Family. However, in the 1998 ICCC resolution (as we have

seen above) clearly defines the Textus Receptus as the printed editions of the Textus Receptus in similar vein to the TBS. This is also helpfully backed up by the clear contradistinction in the ICCC 2000 statement between the Majority Text and the Textus Receptus when they stated, “God preserved *the Textus Receptus in the majority text* with 95%.” This definition of Textus Receptus is also confirmed by the writings of a leading SCCC supporter, Rev Isaac Ong of Calvary Jurong Bible-Presbyterian Church, who accepts it can only refer to the printed text as, “The phrase ‘*textus receptus*’ is derived from an introductory passage to the second edition of Greek New Testament published by the Elzevir brothers in 1633.”²²

The ICCC 2000 statement concludes by condemning the Westcott and Hort texts because they “remove or cast doubt on so many passages and words.” This is a very accurate analysis of the inevitable conclusion of the rejection of the VPP position. Indeed, LBPC has candidly admitted they are also uncertain as to the Words of God today and state, “the Word of God will be providentially preserved rather than exactly preserved.” In a definitive statement on the subject they made the following admissions,

Since preservation of the Scriptures is through providence, copyists’ errors may exist in the underlying texts of the KJV but they are so few and insignificant that they do not affect the integrity of the Bible, nor do they distort the message of God to man.

The word “closest” in our Doctrinal Positional Statement is an adjective meaning nearest. It is used to make relative comparison, i.e. among the body of manuscripts, there are those that are close, others that are closer, and the texts underlying the KJV are the closest (compared to the rest) to the original autographs.

The Reformers’ faith in the Bible remained firm because they reasoned that the sovereign God who permitted these few insignificant copyists’ errors to enter in MUST HAVE ensured that *the integrity of the Bible remains intact and completely reliable for man’s use...* Since the position of the Reformers has been accepted to be orthodox and correct even up to this day by the Reformed Community in general, *those who hold the same position* they held should not be considered to be less orthodox and biblical than them, much less be considered as attacking the Word of God.²³

Another leading anti-VPP spokesman, Rev Yap Beng Shin of Olivet Bible-Presbyterian Church, also accepts we do not have all the Words of God available to us and can only hope one day to have them,

By the use of external evidence (comparing various manuscripts and ancient translations) and internal evidence (e.g. comparing Kings and Chronicles) *we might finally arrive at the Perfect text*, but without the inspired Autograph to compare with we cannot make such a claim. *We can at best make a speculative statement*, but we have no right to condemn other texts that differ, because the content of the Autograph is in the multitude of manuscripts, not one.²⁴

Using a similar line of reasoning, Fred Moritz, the Executive Director of Baptist World Missions in a BJU Publication also admits, “the debate whether to use the Textus Receptus, the Majority Text, or the Critical Text should not be a source of bitter contention. Neither should it be a test of fellowship among brethren. This is not to demean the textual variants. The issue is worthy of continual study, and scholars *should pursue the accurate wording of the original writings in those areas where uncertainty exists*.”²⁵ Former Central Baptist Seminary professor, Edward Glenny concurs,

In our defense and propagation of the faith the key issue is not whether today we know the *precise form of the words* recorded in the autographa. To make that our focus moves us away from God to concentrate on the process ... The key issue is that God has spoken in the autographa and He has spoken with authority and without error and we are responsible to respond to Him.²⁶

However, the fallacy at the heart of the progressive revelation argument of LBPC and the Rev Yap Beng Shin is that God does not promise to simply preserve “doctrines” or “His message” in any part of Scripture but the “Words” (of course, all doctrines are based upon the Words). Their new version is, “The concepts of the Lord are perfect, converting the soul!” They need to realise that God is not seeking to leave us blindly groping in the dark awaiting a progressive revelation, “For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints” (1 Cor 14:33). Is God the Author of doubt? With respect to their ongoing search to “recover the original text” it has been well noted that no one will know when this goal has been achieved *as there are no “originals” or “autographs” to compare our “reconstructed” texts*.

If God fails to preserve His Words for us today then doctrine is affected as God would have failed to keep His promise. Implied in the doctrine of preservation is the *identification* of those preserved Words. It is useless to SCCC members to have the Bible everywhere and no where!

If *every* Word is important according to Christ in Matthew 4:4, does it not make sense that God would preserve *all* of His Words so that we might be nourished and strengthened? What father would feed his children with poisoned food or hide the best food from his children? Logically, we have only two choices: either we are unable to live the life of faith, or else God has providentially preserved the only source of authority that He ever gave to us. If we accept that the life of faith is possible, the perfect preservation of Scripture is not merely a historical fact or a theological speculation, but truly an essential doctrine.

Despite the claims of the SCCC that churches are being divided and destroyed by the VPP issue, this does not match the facts. History shows that what has destroyed churches is a rejection of the Words of God. Church members who believe in the inspiration and preservation of the Words of God do not destroy a work, they build it! Faith in the inerrant and preserved Words of God is a mark of orthodoxy and believers need to simply trust God as we are exhorted to, “Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward” (Heb 10:35). Interestingly, Satan’s strategy from the beginning was to attack God’s Words by using one of his most potent weapons—doubt. God’s Word says that His revelation to man was preserved for all time, to each and every generation, and in every single Word. You cannot read the Bible objectively without recognising the immense importance the Lord has placed on His Words. Severe punishments are promised to punish anyone who adds to His Words including a promise to remove those who would take away from His Words, from the Book of Life! The Lord Jesus Christ placed the Scripture as our highest authority for faith and life. The Scriptures were the basis of Christ’s theological arguments. He used the very Words, or even parts of words, to make His points.

Problems for the SCCC

The SCCC are now clearly in total confusion on the issue of the ICCC resolutions and VPP. They appear to be stating what they hope the ICCC resolutions had said, rather than what they actually do say. The SCCC even had the *chutzpah* to claim in a logic-deficient statement on 27 October 2007 to believe,

that the constitutional position of the SCCC and the International Council of Christian Churches (ICCC) remains as our unalterable position, namely, that “Among other equally biblical truths, we believe and maintain the

plenary Divine inspiration of the Scriptures in the original languages, their consequent inerrancy and infallibility, and as the Word, of God, the supreme and final authority in faith and life” (ICCC Constitution, Article 2a and SCCC Constitution, Article 4.1).²⁷

The obvious questions to be posed to the SCCC are that if they reject the VPP of all of the Words of God in the Textus Receptus as the complete perfect Word of God then: How can they prove the Bible is inspired? How can they prove it was once infallible in the autographs? How can they use an imperfect source as “the supreme and final authority in faith and life”? In reality, their statement is utterly meaningless.

The SCCC are trying to convince us that they believe that the Bible is inerrant and inspired, and yet the “inerrant” Bible disappeared shortly after it was inspired. One would suppose the SCCC would be raising funds to begin this immediate work of reconstructing the Bible from the Textus Receptus or the KJV they are confident has identifiable mistakes and in need of research to correct. The reality here is that the SCCC, the supposed bastion of Bible truth, are now boldly admitting that they do not believe God preserves His Words today, that their Bible has mistakes and that they do not know or care to correct these mistakes. Also, as “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom 10:17), how can the members of the SCCC “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3) if we do not have all of that faith? In light of 2 Peter 3:2 which says, “That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour” are we excused of this as we do not have all these Words? If a member of the SCCC does not have access to all the “Words of God” today, will God hold him accountable on the day of judgment for rejecting and not receiving them (John 12:48) and not keeping His commandments (Luke 16:10; Rev 22:14)?

The SCCC state that they believe the KJV “to have been faithfully translated from the God-preserved manuscripts of the Hebrew-language traditional Masoretic Text for the Old Testament and the Greek language accepted Textus Receptus for the New Testament.” The challenge for the SCCC is then to explain why we have mistakes and errors in the KJV’s underlying text if it has been “faithfully translated” from the manuscripts that God preserved. Are they going to use the same schizophrenic logic of LBPC who in one sentence say of the KJV’s underlying text that “We do

not ascribe perfection to it,” yet paradoxically maintain that “The KJV is a good, faithful and accurate translation and we have no doubt that we have the *very* Word of God, and it is *fully* reliable”?²⁸ If God has not preserved His Word perfectly, we must assume that we are preaching and teaching from a book that is not completely reliable as the “original” autographs are no longer accessible and there is wide and intense disagreement as to what “the originals” may or may not have said. What is the LBPC definition of “fully reliable”? As they say we equate the Word of God with reliability; do we now equate imperfection with reliability and the Word of God? If they had a bus schedule and were told that it is off in hundreds of places, would they call that reliable? LBPC by adopting this logic of unbelief has substituted a statement of faith for what is in reality a statement of unbelief!

Incredibly, LBPC have argued that they reject the perfection of the underlying KJV text yet when questioned as to demonstrate these mistakes/errors, that they are so confident with the SCCC that are there, piously argue, “there is no need for us to play textual critic to decide which edition is the ‘purest’ of all, or seek to improve the intangible Greek and Hebrew texts which underlie the KJV.”²⁹ In one breath LBPC and their counterparts in the SCCC hypocritically use their elected position to play the textual critic in destroying the textual foundation of the KJV and VPP, yet they do not have the courage to prove their allegations and even worse they have no scriptural foundation for making such outlandish claims! It is also sad to note that they do not feel the integrity of the text of Scripture as an issue worthy of any real investment in time. Another puerile argument LBPC use is that if VPP is correct, then we did not have the pure Word of God until 1611. *What they do not add is that they do not know where it was before 1611, or more importantly, where it is now!*

By these tactics, LBPC have altered the crucial doctrine of “preservation” to that of “restoration”—and most textual critics do not believe that such restoration is even any longer possible (as LBPC implicitly admits in refusing to play the “textual critic”). Textual critics agree such as Rendel Harris in 1908 who declared that the New Testament text was, “More than ever, and perhaps finally, unsettled.”³⁰ In 1910, Conybeare states that “the ultimate (New Testament) text, if there ever was one that deserves to be so called, is forever irrecoverable.”³¹ In 1941 Kirsopp Lake, after a lifetime spent in the study of the New

Testament text, argues, “In spite of the claims of Westcott and Hort and of von Soden, we do not know the original form of the Gospels, and it is quite likely that we never shall.”³²

LBPC are unfairly giving the impression that they know where all these Words of God are, but refuse to tell us where to find them. Logically, even the simplest mind knows that to categorically say there is something missing or added to the underlying text of the KJV must mean the person(s) making such a claim has an objective standard of truth, i.e. a perfect text to make such a bold accusation. However, on their website LBPC boast in their Doctrinal Positional Statement, “We believe in the divine, verbal and plenary inspiration of the Scriptures in the original languages, their consequent inerrancy and infallibility, and as the Word of God, the Supreme and final authority in faith and life.”³³

So, if we take their words at face value it would seem that LBPC believe that there is inerrant and infallible “Scriptures” which they say is our “Supreme and final authority in faith and life.” Could they tell us where this perfect text “in the original languages” is? The reality is that LBPC are posturing a textual position that does not exist, and they knew it did not exist when they said it. The irony in this is that they and the SCCC have the audacity to accuse FEBC of holding a false premise on which to base their conclusions. FEBC, who believe God meant what He said about preserving His Words, are repeatedly slandered as being ignorant fanatics and heretics, while those who deny we have the infallible, inerrant Words of God today are looked upon as great scholars! Paradoxically, LBPC are arguing that the fact that they do not know what the Words of God are or where they are at is actually the safe, edifying, and less dangerous position for their members!

The SCCC and LBPC view of Preservation is like saying God’s Words are preserved in the Oxford English Dictionary—“they are in there somewhere, all mixed up with thousands that are not right and all out of order and we don’t know how to find them, but they are still ‘preserved’ somewhere in there.” It is only but fair for these anti-VPP critics to accept that if the Bible contains any other words than those inspired by the Holy Spirit then what a man holds in his hands is a compilation of God’s Words and man’s words. As they will not point us to any particular text as having all of the Words of God, their target is constantly changing, and is therefore chameleonic. If their theory of preservation is correct a believer would have to have every manuscript and every version of the

Bible to have the “collective” Word of God, yet he would still be hopelessly confused about which words were the true Word of God due to the magnitude of the words he had to collect. *Preservation presupposes possession*, for without possession it is not a reality but merely a theory, a hypothesis lacking documentary evidence. These anti-VPP critics seemingly wants to have their cake and eat it too, claiming on one hand God has preserved His Words, but not wanting to produce it in any extant or tangible form.

Another leading supporter of this new SCCC view, Calvary Jurong Bible-Presbyterian Church (CJBPC) has sadly become a victim of the same semantic gymnastics. They argue in a definitive document,³⁴ citing the SCCC as support, without seeing the inherent contradiction, that the KJV translators, “have done a wonderful job in producing for us *the Word of God in its entirety*, the KJV, which is the closest to the original.” Logically speaking, since we do not have the “original” this statement of faith simply confirms a belief that they do not know to what extent the Scriptures that we have are the Word of God since it is impossible for them to see how closely they represent the original. CJBPC with this non sequitur never explain how we have all the “entire” Word of God yet argue in the same document that, “the Hebrew and Greek texts underlying the KJV are perfect has no specific scriptural support” and “there are at least some textual details in regard to which we must be content to remain uncertain.” CJBPC does not use a single verse of Scripture to prove this theory that we cannot have certainty as to the Words of God. The obvious reason is because the Bible does not teach this! God promises in Proverbs 1:23 the exact opposite, “I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.” By their own clever rationalising words, CJBPC have “logically” reasoned themselves into unbelief.

Incredibly, CJBPC after denying we have all of the Words of God preserved perfectly for us today (as the ICCC and WCF teach in respect of Matt 24:35) then state, “We want to assure our members that we can trust our English KJV because all the doctrines, miracles, prophecies, facts of history, geography and science are accurate; and all the promises of God given to men are reliable and trustworthy.”

Realising the problems of the WCF statements, CJBPC try a novel way of getting round the problem by arguing “in declaring that the Old Testament in Hebrew and the New Testament in Greek were ‘kept pure in

all ages,' these confessional statements noticeably do not here use the word 'perfect.'" This is a most dangerous and puerile argument and casts doubt on the inerrancy and inspiration of the originals. If CJBPC is correct, then the WCF is teaching that God preserved His words "pure in all ages" but in doing this keeping He was not "perfect." CJBPC should not separate the two as both inspiration and preservation are linked to the Work of God alone and in the same clause in the WCF.

This line of reasoning by CJBPC is an example of blatant bi-textualism that cannot possibly be true and must be rejected by true fundamentalists. They have clearly not grasped the logical problem of the Law of Non-Contradiction that if two statements claim two different things, both cannot be correct. However, both can be wrong but both cannot be right. Jesus promised His Words would not pass away and yet they accept dozens of His Words are still missing or we are not sure about. What they are really saying is that, whilst the words originally written down by the prophets and apostles were free from error and inspired, the Bible we have in our hands today has errors in it and so cannot be relied on completely. Now there are two possibilities and only two. One possibility is that all English versions are in error at least in part, or there really is a Bible we can get our hands on that literally fulfils the words of Jesus in Matthew 24:35. If there are errors in *all* texts and versions then we have no objective foundation. Logic dictates that two opposing statements cannot both be true (unless you accept the Hegelian Dialectic). Has the promise of Christ made about two thousand years ago stood the test of time? God is not a liar but the God of truth (John 14:6).

CJBPC concludes by piously challenging, "If the TR underlying the KJV is perfect, God will show us clearly and the Holy Spirit will guide us to this so-called truth, but this is not the case." The fact is that the Holy Spirit has done this by establishing all the Words of God in a printed edition for almost 400 years and CJBPC have publicly for its entire history endorsed this view by preaching exclusively from those Words. Notwithstanding, the inconsistency of this challenge can also be seen in that CJBPC state in this document that they believe the Holy Spirit can lead them to a perfect text, yet since their founding in 1970 they impliedly admit they have failed to seek this. Do they really believe the Holy Spirit can do this or are they implying that the Third Person in the Trinity is imperfect? Also, if there are truly "textual details" that they say are "uncertain" why do they not pray to be led to this, "all truth"?

CJBPC need to honestly tell us where in the Bible does it say that we should wholly trust a Bible that sometimes is accurate but at other times is in error? They refuse to follow the illustrious writers of the WCF who clearly believed a text identical to the original manuscripts was accessible to them. They differ from Abraham, who “staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God” (Rom 4:20). Instead, they resemble Thomas who cried, “Except I shall see ..., I will not believe” (John 20:25). It is my contention that when CJBPC believe that they can get through this age without “an absolutely infallible text” then, as one wise author wrote, “Satan is just around the corner!” Genesis 3:4 provides a great example as the devil only added one word, yet what a change it had on the “original,” and what a huge impact that one word had on the destiny of man! Founding leader of the Bible-Presbyterian Church in Singapore and Senior Pastor of the Calvary churches, Dr S H Tow presciently warns as to the inevitable consequences of rejecting VPP, “Mark these words: The present attack on the VPP will lead ultimately to a denial and betrayal of the King James Bible.”³⁵ The Bible itself warns that a little error counts a great deal despite CJBPC’s indifference as, “Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?” (1 Cor 5:6).

Conclusion

Fundamentalism is collapsing today from its historic position as a defender of the inspiration, inerrancy and preservation of the Bible. Parallel with its collapse has been the diminishing of its respect for Scriptures and Preservation. As Floyd Nolen Jones observes,

The current vogue in conservative, fundamentalist scholarship will come as a great surprise to the layman. Today, most conservative Protestant clergymen have been brainwashed as mere youths in their late teens or early twenties at the various denominational Bible colleges and seminaries concerning the doctrine of inerrancy of Scripture. As a result, when most of these pastors etc., declare that they believe in the verbal, plenary inspiration and/or inerrancy (or some other similar declaration of faith in the Scriptures) what they really mean is that only the original autographs were inerrant.

Now this is devastating, as we have no originals preserved for our use. But the situation is even worse than that, for neither do the vast majority of these men believe that the text contained in the original autographs has been preserved intact. That is, they have been taught as very young men that for

hundreds of years many original readings have been lost to the Church. They have also been taught, hence most subscribe to the teaching, that these lost readings are in the process (and have been so for the past one hundred years) of being *restored* back to their pristine original forms by the use of modern textual criticism techniques and methods. Thus, if we were to ask one of the scholars representing this school of thought whether he could show us the “infallible Word of the Living God,” he would take us to his private study—wave his hand toward between 800-1200 books on his library shelves and reply that somewhere contained within all those volumes exists the Word of God. He would inform us that the problem was very complex, but all was well as he and other brilliant scholars were working on putting the puzzle back together. Besides, he would assure us, no major doctrinal issues are in doubt in the meantime.

If we pressed these men further to better define their position, we would discover that very few believe that there exists on the earth today between two covers such that it could be held in the hand—the Bible. That is—in their view, is that which they hold in their hand having the words “Holy Bible” inscribed thereon and read from the pulpit to their flocks, the inerrant Word of God? If they were honest, regardless of the version to which they personally subscribe, the answer would be “NO”!³⁶

We should not be surprised at this attack on the Words of God as Scripture warns us that God’s true remnant people will be caught out with the end-time deception (Matt 24:24) and there will be a famine amongst some for the words of God, “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD: And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and shall not find it” (Amos 8:11-12). A major lie of the devil is that there is no final Bible, which will lead many into profound despair and bondage as they are “Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth” (2 Tim 3:7-9).

Despite the claims of the anti-VPP critics such as the SCCC, we have no historical record of Christians not believing the doctrine of perfect preservation until the 19th century. Nowhere in any formalised Confession of Faith regarding the Holy Bible will you ever see such common phrases as used by the anti-Preservationists of today like “only in the originals” or “only in the autographs.” This is a new view which appeared at the end of the 19th century from the influence of the apostate roots of higher criticism. Many reputed fundamentalists like the author of

the Beacon Article, Philip Tang, are now openly admitting that they believe there is no scriptural basis for believing God would preserve all of His Words for us today. This is a new view in Fundamentalist circles and has been popularised by leading Neo-Evangelical Dallas Theological Seminary professor, Daniel B Wallace. A prominent anti-KJV writer, William Combs, professor at Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary, admits the novelty of this new position,

In an article entitled “Inspiration, Preservation, and New Testament Textual Criticism,” by Daniel B. Wallace, we find what is apparently the first definitive, systematic denial of a doctrine of preservation of Scripture. He has been joined in his view by W. Edward Glenny. ... The position of Wallace and Glenny appears to be a rather novel one. ... They have eliminated any vestige of the preservation of Scripture as a doctrine.³⁷

Even some of the most trenchant critics of the Textus Receptus have accepted the historical fact of the VPP view as equated with that of historical orthodoxy. Kurt Aland the principal editor of the Nestle-Aland edition of *Novum Testamentum Graece* writes,

Finally it is undisputed that from the 16th to the 18th century orthodoxy’s doctrine of verbal inspiration assumed this *Textus Receptus*. It was the only Greek text they knew, and they regarded it as the “original text.”³⁸

Another critic, Merrill M Parvis states, “The *Textus Receptus* is not the ‘true’ text of the New Testament,” but concedes,

It [the TR] was the Scripture of many centuries of the Church’s life. ... The *Textus Receptus* is the text of the Church. It is that form of text which represents the sum total and the end product of all the textual decisions which were made by the Church and her Fathers over a period of more than a thousand years.³⁹

Another, E C Colwell has admitted that those who are committed to the absolute authority of preservation will ultimately reject textual criticism,

It is often assumed by the ignorant and uninformed—even on a university campus—that textual criticism of the New Testament is supported by a superstitious faith in the Bible as a book dictated in miraculous fashion by God. That is not true. Textual criticism has never existed for those whose New Testament is one of miracle, mystery, and authority. A New Testament created under those auspices would have been handed down under them and would have no need of textual criticism.⁴⁰

The SCCC may wish the ICCC resolutions had never been passed and they are at liberty to disagree with them. However, it is surely unethical and unbiblical to simply wrench the statements out of context and retreat behind new formulations such as “continuing, general, but not plenary preservation” without explaining the conclusions of it. Their novel position is basically no position, but an attack on VPP without stating a position that comes from Scripture. Like the textual critics of the mid 19th century, they have simply denied the historic doctrine of preservation. The SCCC should heed the warnings of Richard Capel, one of the Westminster divines, in undermining the preservation of Scripture when he wrote in 1658:

And to the like purpose is that observation, that the two Tables written immediately by Moses and the Prophets, and the Greek Copies immediately penned by the Apostles, and Apostolical men are all lost, or not to be made use of, except by a very few. And that we have none in Hebrew or Greek, but what are transcribed. Now transcribers are ordinary men, subject to mistake, may faile, having no unerring spirit to hold their hands in writing.

Referring to these types of statements, Capel immediately writes:

These be terrible blasts, and do little else when they meet with a weak head and heart, but open the doore to Atheisme and quite to fling off the bridle, which onely can hold them and us in the wayes of truth and piety: this is to fill the conceits of men with evil thoughts against the Purity of the Originals: And if the Fountains run not clear, the Translation cannot be clean.⁴¹

Another of the original members of the Westminster assembly, John Lightfoot, writes, “The same power and care of God, that preserves the church would preserve the Scriptures pure to it: and He that did, and could, preserve the whole could preserve every part, so that not so much as a tittle should perish.”⁴²

The SCCC clearly are embarrassed by the previous strongly KJVO stance of the ICCC and are using all kinds of rhetorical muddle and verbal gymnastics to confuse the gullible. The SCCC are left with a Bible with errors in it; a position that I am confident that the majority of their members in the pew of their churches do not accept or have not historically accepted. One unfortunate consequence of this type of reasoning has opened the door to Islamic scholars and higher critics to undermine the Bible. Leading Islamic apologist, Ahmed Deedat uses this very line of reasoning,

The question before us is: “Do you accept that the Bible is God’s Word?” The question is really in the form of a challenge. The questioner is not simply seeking enlightenment. The question is posed in the spirit of a debate. We have every right to demand in a similar vein—“Which Bible are you talking about?”, we may ask. “Why, there is only ONE Bible!” he mutters.

But what about the Authorised Version of the Bible (AV), the ‘World’s Best Seller?’ These Revisers, all good salesmen, have some very pretty things to say about it. However, their page iii, paragraph six of the PREFACE of the RSV reads;

“THE KING JAMES VERSION (alternative description of AV) HAS WITH GOOD REASON BEEN TERMED ‘**THE NOBLEST MONUMENT OF ENGLISH PROSE.**’ ITS REVISERS IN 1881 EXPRESSED ADMIRATION FOR ‘**ITS SIMPLICITY, ITS DIGNITY, ITS POWER, ITS HAPPY TURNS OF EXPRESSION ... THE MUSIC OF ITS CADENCES, AND THE FELICITIES OF ITS RHYTHM.**’ IT ENTERED, AS NO OTHER BOOK HAS, INTO THE MAKING OF THE PERSONAL CHARACTER AND THE PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS OF THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING PEOPLES. WE OWE TO IT AN INCALCULABLE DEBT.”

Can you, dear reader, imagine a more magnificent tribute being paid to the “Book of Books” than the above? I, for one, cannot. Let the believing Christian, now steel himself for the un-kindest blow of all from his own beloved Lawyers of Religion; for in the very same breath they say:

“yet the King James Version has grave defects.” And, “that these defects are so many and so serious as to call for revision.” This is straight from the horse’s mouth, i.e. the orthodox Christian scholars of “the highest eminence.” Another galaxy of Doctors of Divinity are now required to produce an encyclopaedia explaining the cause of those GRAVE AND SERIOUS DEFECTS in their Holy Writ and their reasons for eliminating them.⁴³

Other groups such as the Jehovah Witnesses have also used the same reasoning to undermine the credibility of the King James Version of the Bible,

Recently a young man purchased a King James Version Bible thinking it was without error. One day when glancing through a back issue of Look magazine he came across an article entitled “The Truth About the Bible,” which said that “as early as 1720, an English authority estimated that there were at least 20,000 errors in the two editions of the New Testament commonly read by Protestants and Catholics. Modern students say there are

probably 50,000 errors.” The young man was shocked. His faith in the Bible’s authenticity was shaken. “How can the Bible be reliable when it contains thousands of serious discrepancies and inaccuracies?” he asks.⁴⁴

A leading Roman Catholic apologist also attacks,

The reason this is so intriguing should be obvious, one of the two pillars of Protestantism is “scripture alone” yet these two bibles do not agree. If two bibles disagree, which one is wrong, are both wrong? Both claim that you cannot add to or take from the word of the Lord, yet they differ. Why? Which one is right? How much do they differ? Does it affect doctrine? Who changed it? Some of the verses are total opposites, other verses are simply not saying the same thing.⁴⁵

One of the leading anti-VPP books being promoted by SCCC members is *One Bible Only?* from Central Baptist Theological Seminary which states “the doctrine of preservation was not a doctrine of the ancient church,” and “we might have lost a few words through negligence,” and “not only is Scripture without a verse to explain how God will preserve His Word, but no statement in Scripture teaches that God did preserve perfectly the original text of Scripture.”⁴⁶ These men who deny the preservation of all of God’s Words for us today because of “history” or “textual science” and textual “uncertainties” need to be told, “Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the scriptures, neither the power of God?” (Mark 12:24). A stark warning of the dangers of compromising on the doctrine of preservation is the fact that two of the authors of this book, Edward Glenny and Larry Pettegrew, have subsequently both rejected Fundamentalism completely and now teach at openly Neo-evangelical seminaries.⁴⁷

It is well documented that the vast majority of seminarians and pastors no longer believe in the inerrancy of Scripture. Even in Fundamentalism, in a recent survey of young fundamentalists’ beliefs only 83% of the responders agreed with the statement that “the Bible is the inspired Word of God, not mistaken in its statements and teachings, and is to be taken literally, word for word.” As David Cloud observed, “More than 90% of the responders are graduates of schools that have taken a clear stand against the defense of the KJV, with the largest representation (a full 79% of the total) from Bob Jones University (29%), Maranatha Baptist Bible College (22%), Northland Baptist Bible College (21%), Piedmont Baptist College (4%), and Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary (3%).”⁴⁸ The consequence of this falling away in the pulpit is

that fewer and fewer professing Christians believe in the inerrancy of Scripture every day. This anti-VPP presupposition also affected Princeton graduate and famed textual critic, Bart Ehrman, to the point that he now confesses to being an agnostic. He pertinently observed how the problem of a Bible with errors in it affected him in a recent book *Misquoting Jesus*,

If one wants to insist that God inspired the very words of scripture, what would be the point if we don't have the very words of scripture? ... It's a bit hard to know what the words of the Bible mean if we don't even know what the words are!

This became a problem for my view of inspiration, for I came to realize that it would have been no more difficult for God to preserve the words of scripture than it would have been for him to inspire them in the first place. If he wanted his people to have his words, surely he would have given to them (and possibly even given them the words in a language they could understand, rather than Greek and Hebrew). The fact that we don't have the words surely must show, I reasoned, that he did not preserve them for us. And if he didn't perform that miracle, there seemed to be no reason to think that he performed the earlier miracle of inspiring those words.⁴⁹

One Neo-evangelical writer, Mark Roberts, accepts that we cannot have all of the Words today but tries to make a virtue out of Ehrman's difficulties,

The question Ehrman should have asked was: What does it tell us about God that He inspired the writers of Scripture but did not perfectly preserve what they wrote down? The answer, I think, is that God was looking for something beyond making sure we always had His actual words. God's primary purpose in inspiring the writers of Scripture was not so that people would have His words, but so that they would be drawn into a truthful relationship with Him. The words matter, to be sure, but only as a vehicle for a relationship of faith with the living God. Some modest uncertainty about the words might, it seems, cause one to lean more upon God and less upon the words themselves.⁵⁰

However despite the attempts of obfuscation by the SCCC and their erstwhile allies in Singapore, we believe that God has preserved all of His Words available for us today as the TBS rightly stated, "the Church *is*—and always has been—in possession of the true text of Scripture." It would be surely inconsistent if God had guided His people in regard to the New Testament canon but had withheld from them His divine assistance in the matter of the New Testament text. God promised to

preserve the very Words and Letters of the original manuscripts. He did not promise to preserve ink and paper. There is no biblical warrant for the concept that only the autographs can be true and pure Scripture. Are we to believe that God has preserved the canon of the Bible but not the text? If we are not settled on what the Words of God are on earth, will we ever be settled? If we are not settled on the Words, what is the scriptural basis to be settled on the Books? We do know that other sound orthodox books existed that are mentioned in the Old and New Testament. Where are they? Is it possible that we are not including books that should be there? Why not? So anti-VPP critics are arguing for canonised books (based on words) but not canonised words.

The factual reality is that the present-day copies of the “inspired originals” are the only evidence available to support the inspiration of those originals. A liberal theologian cleverly pointed out the implication of anti-VPP in his review of Harold Lindsell’s *The Battle for the Bible* when he argues that the only real difference between the conservative anti-VPP and liberal positions on the Bible is that the conservatives say the Bible *used to be inspired and inerrant*, whereas the liberal says it *was never inspired or inerrant*. However both positions are in agreement that the Bible is *not now inspired or inerrant*. A leading Neo-evangelical author, Tim Challies, is at least honest as to where rejecting VPP leads,

It is critical to note that, strictly speaking, inerrancy does not apply to the transmission of Scripture through the ages and its translation into other languages. We affirm that only the original autographs, or original manuscripts, are inerrant. What we enjoy today is very good translations of very accurate reconstructions of the biblical text. We do not have any of the original documents—none of Paul’s original letters and none of the actual gospels written by the hands of the Apostles have survived. Yet through the science of textual criticism we have very accurate reconstructions of those texts and through translators we have excellent translations of them. So while we do not affirm inerrancy for any particular English translation of Scripture, we do have great confidence in the best translations available to us.⁵¹

When challenged to prove inspiration the anti-VPPers usually cite 2 Timothy 3:16 (“All scripture is given by inspiration of God ...”), but this passage says nothing about the “original autographs,” it refers to “scripture.” 2 Timothy 3:15 gives us the interpretation of this word “scripture” as it tells us that Timothy “from a child hast known the holy scriptures.” No anti-VPPER would argue that Timothy (or Paul, the

Bereans, or even Christ) was in possession of the autographs, yet Paul calls the copies they possessed, “scripture” and that it was “all” inspired. It is inconceivable that in the middle of an exhortation to cling to his copies that Paul would suddenly change topic and start talking about the originals. Clearly, Paul was not an anti-VPP critic who argued that inspiration and preservation were in the “autographs only.” The context of these words is showing that God’s Words are not lost waiting to be found and *restored* to the believing remnant of the Church. These inspired Words were given by God as a deposit to the Body of Christ “that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” Therefore, for God to realise His stated purpose—it must remain accessible to His remnant! The giving of these Words to the world is by the Church (Matt 28:19-20), and this surely means that the Church must have the Words to begin with. If God cannot preserve His Words as well as He inspired them, He is not omnipotent after all. Did Christ ask the Pharisees to search an impure errant copy in John 5? Were the Bereans searching imperfect Scriptures in Acts 17? Did Philip tell the Ethiopian that his copy in Acts 8 had translation errors?

Dr Thomas Strouse gives an excellent summary of why we can be so confident of the perfect preservation of God’s Words,

For instance Christ reiterated the OT command of Dt. 8:3 by stating,

“It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Mt. 4:4).

The expression “every word” translates *panti remati*, and it specifically refers to each and every word. Where are these very words by which man is to live? Again, Christ implied the preservation of His very words as a standard of future judgment by stating,

“The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day” (Jn. 12:48).

The expression “the word” translates *ho logos* and it refers to the totality of Christ’s words (cf.v.47). Where is the totality of Christ’s words by which man will be judged some day? Based on verses such as these, the Christian has a Biblical warrant for expecting to have all of the words of Christ. These passages demand faith in the Lord’s providential preservation of His inspired *autographa*. The clearest passage on Christ’s providential preservation of Scripture and man’s responsibility in receiving it is John 17:8,

“For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.”

This passage teaches that Christ’s responsibility before the Father is to give His believers the Father’s words.⁵²

Dr Kent Brandenburg also summarises,

Isaac was the seed of promise and Ishmael of human effort. Hagar was doubt and works, and Sarai was faith and trust. The just live by faith. The baby Isaac came by a miracle of God’s providence, the Lord working out the details based upon faith in Him. In this Abraham and Sarah found approval from God. Textual criticism stands in man’s efforts. Man will give his approval (schools, circles, camps, human scholarship, etc.). Receiving the text handed down through the churches stands by faith in the grace of God.

God’s Word says that God will preserve His Word, every and all (Psalm 12:6, 7; Isaiah 40:8; 1 Peter 1:23-25; Matthew 5:18; 24:35). I believe God would preserve every One of His Words.

Scripture says that God would make His Words available to every generation of believer (Isaiah 59:21; Matthew 4:4). I believe God would make His Words generally accessible to every generation of saints.

The Bible says that God’s Word is perfect and pure (Psalm 12:6, 7; Proverbs 30:4, 5). I believe that God’s Word is perfect and pure.

God’s Word says that the Bible will be settled to the extent that someone could not add or take away from His Words (Revelation 22:18, 19; Deuteronomy 12:32). I believe that God’s Word would be settled.

The Bible says that God would lead His saints into all truth, that the Word, all of His Words, are truth (John 16:13; 17:8, 17). I believe that God would lead His children to every one of His Words.

When we see what God has taught about His Words and the preservation of them, we choose to believe what He said, despite tangible evidence. Individual hand-copies had errors. God said that men would change the Words of Scripture. He warned of it. We see that this is the strategy of Satan, to amend the Words of God. However, God promised and so we believe that He overcame the work of Satan and preserved His Words so that we would have a settled text that is perfect in fulfillment of His promises. The *textus receptus* of the NT and the Hebrew Masoretic of the OT are the only texts that could have been preserved and available. They are the only texts that believers will claim perfection.

I wasn’t there when God created the world. I believe it anyway. I wasn’t there when God inspired His Word. I believe it anyway. I wasn’t there when

Jesus died on the cross. I believe it anyway. I wasn't there when God preserved His Words. I believe it anyway. God will be pleased with your reception of the Words He preserved.⁵³

VPP advocates readily admit that we do not have all the answers as to how God preserved His Words in every generation. The truth is we do not have the original manuscripts, the first copies of the original manuscripts, and even many of the actual copies from which the KJV translators worked. The best that most textual historians can do today is essentially to speculate on what is the history of the transmission of the text. We cannot prove everything that we believe historically happened with tangible evidence, but enough to satisfy someone who is willing to believe Scripture. After all none of us have seen creation, a worldwide flood or the ark, but we accept the Genesis account of this. We simply cannot assert that this God has revealed Himself in the pages of a book without at the same time implying that such a revelation is necessary to us. As David Cloud explains,

Those who reject the doctrine of preservation mock us because we cannot answer all their questions. Let them mock. We have God's promise on these things. We have an infallible Bible we can hold in our hands. They have one in theory only in the nonexistent original autographs. In my estimation, they have far more problems with that position than I do with mine. What do we care if some think we are foolish or unlearned? Was that not the charge brought against the first Christians by their proud detractors? Dear friends, believe God and do not allow any man to shake your confidence in His perfect, preserved Word...the late Bruce Lackey, a Bible-believing scholar who studied the Greek New Testament every day but who never taught his students to question the Received Text or the King James Bible: "Faith which is based on a clear promise is stronger than objections which are raised by our lack of information. Since God has promised to preserve His Word for all generations, and since the Hebrew and Greek which is represented by the King James Version is the Bible that has been received from ancient tradition, and since God has so singularly used the truth preached from this Bible, I must follow it and reject others where they differ."⁵⁴

Pastor of Calvary Pandan Bible-Presbyterian Church, Rev Dr Quek Suan Yew, also rejects any undermining of the biblical presupposition on preservation,

To argue that one must know the process first before one can believe that the Word of God is perfectly preserved is very dangerous. This line of

argument is based upon modernistic rationalism where man's reason is supreme. If man cannot understand or explain it, then it cannot be true. Man can never understand the process of inspiration, yet it is true because God says that it is true. The final product is not the words of man but the very Word of God. Faith is to believe in what God says, period. There is no necessity to know the process first before believing.⁵⁵

Rev Dr Ian Paisley, Joint Chairman of the World Congress of Fundamentalists and Founder of the Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster, shows the necessity of believing in preservation and inspiration,

There is no such thing as verbal Revelation without verbal Inspiration and there is no such thing as verbal Inspiration without verbal Preservation. In all cases it is not partial but plenary i.e. full, complete, perfect.

The Divine Revelation, put into writing the verbally Infallible Scriptures though Divine Inspiration, must have Divine Preservation in order to be available to all generations... If there is no preserved Word of God today then the work of Divine Revelation and Divine Inspiration has perished.⁵⁶

The most damning thing in all of this is that when we read the confusing and bewildering statements issued by the SCCC, the Beacon Article and their supporters in Singapore is that nowhere do they posit a positive biblical statement on preservation. This position is ideal for arguing a straw man in misrepresenting VPP and posing inane questions such as: Where does it say God would preserve His Words in the texts of the KJV? The irony is that they themselves have no Scripture to argue that God said He would preserve it as a "work in progress" in many texts and manuscripts in a way that in 2008 we are confused, uncertain and constantly changing our minds as to the true text. They spend their time disingenuously arguing how much they disagree with VPP and criticising its foundations. However, they can only say what they are against but they have no developed biblical framework for their source of authority. If one side has clearly stated scriptural presuppositions and the other does not, save for attacking the former, that surely is suggestive. This is a dangerous approach for as Dr Martin Lloyd Jones warns, "We do not debate the truth, we declare it."

Despite copious writings and resolutions, the sad reality of the position they vehemently argue for results in a Bible text that at best can only be a never-ending work of approximation as we do not have the originals with which to make a comparison. However few the discrepancies they claim are there, we are still left with a Bible that is in

part the work of man and so is uncertain and not entirely reliable. It certainly makes redundant the test, “to the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them” (Isa. 8:20). However, from the very beginning God revealed His thoughts speaking to Adam in words. Today, God continues to speak to us in Words. God has determined what His Words are, and is man to now do his best to logically guess what they might be? Indeed, the very acknowledgement of a Bible is an admission of God’s purpose in preserving His Words for man to live by.

The SCCC claims to believe what the Bible says about its own inspiration, but virtually ignores the equally direct statements concerning preservation of these same inspired Words. We are kept by the power of God, holy men of God wrote under the power of God, and Scripture is preserved by the power of God. We should simply just receive all three by faith. Without this perfect text we have no authoritative Words—on anything! We say with C H Spurgeon,

We will never attempt to save half the truth by casting any part of it away. The sage advice which has been given us involved treason to God, and disappointment to ourselves. We will stand by all or none. We will have the whole Bible or no Bible. We are told that if we give up something the adversaries will also give up something; but we care not what they will do, for we are not the least afraid of them. ... We shall with the sword of the Spirit maintain the whole truth as ours, and shall not accept a part of it as a grant from the enemies of God. ... God being with us we shall not cease from this glorying, but will hold the whole of revealed truth, even to the end.⁵⁷

Let us determine to believe what God said He would do, “For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth” (2 Cor 13:8).

Annexure One: The ICCC Amsterdam Resolution on the Bible (1998)

WHEREAS despite the fact that there are over 150 so-called “versions” of the Bible extant around the world today, there have been no new discoveries of ancient texts to legitimize this plethora of modern “versions” pouring off the presses and being sold as the “latest” Bible, and

WHEREAS a single exception to this has been the discovery of the now-famous Dead Sea Scrolls in the 1940’s in caves on the Judean

mountain range and contained in clay jars with the texts written on leather and papyrus, and

WHEREAS fragments of all the books of the Hebrew Bible (except Esther) confirm almost to the letter the accuracy of the Authorized King James Version of the Old Testament, and

WHEREAS most of the modern versions are based upon the discredited and perverted Westcott and Hort transcription and not on the Textus Receptus (The Received Text) attested to by scholars for over 300 years, from which the Authorized King James Version was translated by the greatest theologians and textual critics of 17th Century England, who were academic experts, indeed, in Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic, and

WHEREAS self-styled theologians who reject the inerrancy and inspiration of the Scriptures have gone so far as to make a looseleaf notebook and tear out those passages they do not accept, even organizing what they designate as “Jesus Seminars” across the United States in which they declare that Jesus never did and said the things recorded in the four Gospels; and that the Gospel of John is the worst and is 90 percent fiction, and the obedient secular press quotes them from coast-to-coast, and

WHEREAS this same KING JAMES VERSION has been used around the world by an overwhelming majority of Christian Clergymen, Evangelists, Bible Teachers, Missionaries and Youth Leaders to bring millions of people to have a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ for more than three centuries,

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, that the International Council of Christian Churches, assembled in the historic English Reformed Church in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, observing its 50th Anniversary, August 11-15, 1998, urge all Bible-believing churches worldwide to use only the Authorized KING JAMES VERSION in their services and in their teaching ministry, and warn the followers of Christ against these innumerable “new” bibles which are not translations at all, but revisions conforming to the personal bias and views of those who have originated them and who are profiting by commercial sales of such.

Annexure Two: The ICCC Jerusalem Statement on the Holy Scriptures and the Bible Translations (2000)

BELIEVING the Holy Scriptures of the originals to be fully inspired with its words and genders and being complete as God's revelation to man without error;

BELIEVING that God not only inspired the Bible without errors in fact, doctrine and judgment but preserved the Scriptures in all ages for all eternity as the Westminster Confession of Faith standard says—"the O.T. in Hebrew and the N.T. in Greek ... being immediately inspired by God and by His singular care and providence kept pure in all ages are therefore kept authentical.... they are to be translated into the vulgar language of every nation unto which they come,"

BELIEVING the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, gave us a supernatural gift, and both inspired and preserved it. By inspired we mean that the Holy Spirit moved in the hearts of its human authors that they recorded the very words that God wanted written in the Bible using the personality and background of its writers but without error. "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." II Peter 1:21.

BELIEVING God safeguarded the Bible in times past and will continue to do so in the future and all eternity. He preserved one Holy Scripture, the Bible. "Heaven and earth shall pass away but my words shall not pass away;" Matthew 24:35.

BELIEVING the O.T. has been preserved in the Masoretic text and the N.T. in the Textus Receptus, combined they gave us the complete Word of God. The King James Version in English has been faithfully translated from these God-preserved manuscripts. Other good Protestants versions have been translated around the world in many languages based on the Masoretic and Textus Receptus until 1881 when Drs. Westcott and Hort used a shorter text removing many words, phrases and sections by following the eclectic watered down polluted Vaticanus and Sinaiticus manuscripts; These manuscripts differ widely among themselves and with others amount to less than 5% of the manuscript evidence. God preserved the Textus Receptus in the majority text with 95%. This is called the traditional, or majority text. It is also called Eastern Byzantine text and also the manuscripts that have the longer and fuller texts;

BELIEVING that these longer texts are corroborated by the early century versions from the Greek that were closer in the time of the original Greek manuscripts that have been lost usage in the providence of God. Some of these are the Armenian, Old Latin, the Siriac Pershita and the Latin Vulgate; these date much before or close to the Vaticanus short version and Siniaticus; Believing the letters that the early church fathers wrote to the churches and to their colleagues corroborate that the 1000's of quotes from the Scriptures they used, are from the traditional longer texts of the Textus Receptus;

BELIEVING the manuscript evidence is on the side of Textus Receptus and with the many new books that explained this better than in times past and give more documentary manuscript evidence, We the International Council of Christian Churches meeting in Jerusalem, 8-14 November 2000 strongly urge the churches in their pulpits and people at large, to continue to use the time honored and faithful longer translations and not the new shorter versions that follow in too many places the short eclectic-texts. These are very similar to the shorter Westcott and Hort texts that remove or cast doubt on so many passages and words. Furthermore we are not against new versions as such but believe all true and faithful versions must be based on the traditional longer texts that the Holy Spirit preserved through the early century versions, the early church fathers and the faithful Textus Receptus.

Notes

¹ The Beacon Article says, "The Bible Resolution appears to be ignorant of the fact that God made use of the Westcott & Hort based Chinese Bible (和合本) in bringing many millions of Chinese Christians to Christ through great evangelists like Wang Ming Dao (王明道), John Sung Shang Chieh (宋尚节) and many others." However, the Beacon Authors do not tell us do they believe God has preserved more of His Words in the text underlying the CUV or the KJV. That is the critical issue.

² Ironically, Joshua Lim decries his ability to give theological and doctrinal analyses in another article which he styles as "An Open Letter to the redeemed of the Lamb of God, even our Saviour Jesus Christ" in which he protests, "I am no theologian and I do not wish to delve with the VPP issue." <http://valiantfortruth.tripod.com/elderappeal.htm>, accessed on 8 October 2008. Philip Tang in his own limited description in the Beacon Article does not appear to be any more qualified to speak definitively on theology as his sole qualifications are that he has been a member of the Bible-Presbyterian Church since 1971.

³ Jeffrey Khoo, “Kicking Against the Pricks: The SCCC contradicts the ICCC on VPP,” *The Burning Bush* 14 (2008):71.

⁴ Bob Jones University, “Position of the Bible Department of Bob Jones University on the Scripture (mimeograph).” Office of the President, no date. Printed in Daniel L Turner, *Standing Without Apology: The History of Bob Jones University* (Greenville: Bob Jones University Press, 1997) Appendix D, 322-3.

⁵ Edward M Panosian, “What Is the Inspired Word of God?” *Faith for the Family* (February 1979): 3.

⁶ Samuel Schnaiter, *Relevancy of Textual Criticism*, cited at <http://www.wayoflife.org/fbns/preservationis.htm>, accessed on 8 October 2008.

⁷ Samuel Schnaiter and Ron Tagliapietra, *Bible Preservation and the Providence of God* (Philadelphia: Xlibris, 2002), 25-6.

⁸ “A Forgotten Reformation” at <http://www.gracebpc.org.sg/weekly/2008/Oct 2008/1210/gwb.htm>, accessed on 15 October 2008.

⁹ See <http://www.vannoylib.ibri.org/OTProphets/hm/doc003.html>, accessed on 13 October 2008.

¹⁰ The Rev Colin Wong stated in his message, “Did God Write Only One Bible?” at Life Bible-Presbyterian Church on 28 October 2007, “Since the translation of the KJV or the Authorized Version of 1611 there has been more concrete manuscript evidence that is available today, which is far superior to that which was available to the King James Version translators in 1611.”

¹¹ Trinitarian Bible Society, “Statement of Faith of Holy Scripture,” Note 3, page 6, <http://www.trinitarianbiblesociety.org/site/statement.pdf>, accessed on 8 October 2008.

¹² Philip Tang, “The New Pharisees,” <http://www.truth.sg/response/The New Pharisees1.pdf>, accessed on 8 October 2008.

¹³ Ironically, Philip Tang previously sought to accuse FEBC of doing what in effect he is guilty of when he argues that “FEBC has rejected the reformed position that revelation and miraculous gifts have ceased with the close of the apostolic age.... By so doing they are advocating post-canonical inspiration and progressive revelation” cited from Philip Tang, “VPP: Truth or Lies?,” <http://www.truth.sg/response/vpplies.htm>, accessed on 8 October 2008.

¹⁴ Life Bible-Presbyterian Church, “Our Stand on the Preservation of Scriptures,” <http://www.lifebpc.com/ourstand/godlypath.htm>, accessed on 8 October 2008.

¹⁵ Kent Brandenburg, “Criticizing Professor Wallace: Part Three,” <http://www.kentbrandenburg.blogspot.com>, accessed on 8 October 2008.

¹⁶ David H Sorenson, *Touch Not the Unclean Thing: The Text Issue and Separation* (Duluth: Northstar Baptist Ministries, 2001), 53.

¹⁷ Tang, “The New Pharisees.”

¹⁸ Tang, “The New Pharisees.”

¹⁹ “Re-affirming SCCC Stand on the Word of God,” *Far Eastern Beacon* 39 (Easter 2008): 4.

²⁰ Trinitarian Bible Society, “Statement of Faith of Holy Scripture,” Word List.

²¹ Floyd Nolen Jones, *Which Version is the Bible?*, http://bbaptist.org/pdf/which_version.pdf, accessed on 8 October 2008.

²² Isaac Ong, “A Response to ‘A Child of God Looks at the Doctrine of Verbal Plenary Preservation’,” <http://valiantfortruth.tripod.com/contentfortruth.html>, accessed on 8 October 2008.

²³ Life Bible-Presbyterian Church, “Our Stand on the Preservation of Scriptures.”

²⁴ Yap Beng Shin, “FAQ – Masoretic Text,” http://valiantfortruth.tripod.com/MT_FAQ.htm, accessed on 8 October 2008.

²⁵ Fred Moritz, *Contending for the Faith* (Greenville: Bob Jones University Press, 2000), 92.

²⁶ Edward Glenney, “The Preservation of Scripture,” in *The Bible Version Debate* (Minneapolis: Central Baptist Theological Seminary, 1997), 82.

²⁷ “Re-affirming SCCC Stand on the Word of God,” 4.

²⁸ Life Bible-Presbyterian Church, “Our Stand on the Preservation of Scriptures.”

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Rendel Harris, *Side Lights on New Testament Research* (London: Kingsgate Press, 1908), 3.

³¹ F C Conybeare, *History of New Testament Criticism* (London: Watts & Co, 1910), 129.

³² Kirsopp Lake, *Family 13, The Ferrar Group* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1941), vii.

³³ “A Doctrinal Positional Statement of Life BP Church,” <http://www.lifebpc.com/aboutlifebpc/doctrinalposition.htm>, accessed on 8 October 2008.

³⁴ Paper presented on Sunday, 6 November 2005, to the congregation of Calvary Jurong B-P Church by Rev James Chan Lay Seng, Pastor of Calvary Jurong Bible-Presbyterian Church, <http://www.truth.sg/response/caljurong.htm>, accessed on 8 October 2008.

³⁵ S H Tow, “Gospel Safeguard—VPP,” Calvary Pandan Bible-Presbyterian Church Weekly (1 January 2006).

³⁶ Floyd Nolen Jones, *Which Version is the Bible?*

³⁷ William Combs, “The Preservation of Scripture,” *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 5 (2000): 7.

³⁸ Kurt Aland, “The Text of the Church?,” *Trinity Journal* 8 (1987): 131.

³⁹ Merrill M Parvis, “The Goals of New Testament Textual Studies,” *Studia Evangelica* 6 (1973): 406.

⁴⁰ E C Colwell, *What is the Best New Testament?* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952), 8.

⁴¹ Richard Capel, *Capel's Remains* (London: np, 1658), 19-43.

⁴² John Lightfoot, *The Whole Works of Rev John Lightfoot* (London: J F Dove, 1822-5), 408.

⁴³ Ahmed Deedat, "Is the Bible the Word of God?," <http://www.jamaat.net/bible/Bible1-3.html>, accessed on 8 October 2008.

⁴⁴ *Awake* (8 September 1957).

⁴⁵ From http://www.catholicapologetics.net/apolo_84.htm, accessed on 8 October 2008.

⁴⁶ Roy E Beacham and Kevin T Bauder, eds, *One Bible Only?* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2001), 93, 95, 99.

⁴⁷ Edward Glenney is now Professor of New Testament and Greek at Northwestern College, St Paul's. Larry Pettegrew teaches now at John MacArthur's *The Master's Seminary*.

⁴⁸ A survey of "Young Fundamentalists' Beliefs and Personal Life," <http://www.wayoflife.org/fbns/survey-young-fund.html>, accessed on 8 October 2008.

⁴⁹ Bart D Ehrman, *Misquoting Jesus* (New York: HarperCollins, 2005), 11.

⁵⁰ Mark Roberts, "The Bible, the Qur'an, Bart Ehrman, and the Words of God," <http://www.markdroberts.com/htmfiles/resources/biblequran.htm#jan2006>, accessed on 8 October 2008.

⁵¹ Tim Challies, "What Does 'Inerrant' Mean?," <http://www.challies.com/archives/articles/scripture/what-does-inerrant-mean.php>, accessed on 8 October 2008.

⁵² Thomas Strouse, "The Biblical Defense for the Verbal Plenary Preservation of God's Word," http://www.graceway.com/articles/article_007.html, accessed on 8 October 2008.

⁵³ Kent Brandenburg, "The Way of Approval," <http://kentbrandenburg.blogspot.com/feeds/posts/default?start-index=26>, accessed on 8 October 2008.

⁵⁴ David Cloud, "The problems of Bible preservation/Can you answer all the questions?," <http://www.wayoflife.org/fbns/problemswith.htm>, accessed on 8 October 2008.

⁵⁵ Quek Suan Yew, "Jesus on the Perfect Preservation of the Bible" *Bible Witness* (March-April 2005): 6.

⁵⁶ Ian R K Paisley, *My Plea for the Old Sword: the English Authorised Version (KJV)* (Belfast: Ambassador, 1997), 102-3.

⁵⁷ C H Spurgeon, *The Greatest Fight in the World* (Pasadena: Pilgrim Publications, 1990 reprint), 33-4.

TRINITARIAN BIBLE SOCIETY, VERBAL PLENARY PRESERVATION, AND THE TEXTS UNDERLYING THE AUTHORISED VERSION

Paul Ferguson

Life BPC¹ and others² have been arguing, in a most misleading manner, that the Trinitarian Bible Society (TBS) position is in contradistinction/opposed to the position of VPP of FEBC. Notwithstanding, that the TBS has issued no public statement to this effect, let us compare the TBS official position with both Life BPC and FEBC. All of the following quotations have been drawn from “The Statement of Doctrine of Holy Scripture”³ issued by “all the Members of the General Committee, the Vice-Presidents and the General Secretary” in 2005. The TBS state very clearly that:

In conformity to God’s purpose, promise, and command, faithful and accurate copies were made (Deuteronomy 17:18; Proverbs 25:1) and, through God’s special providential care, His Word has been preserved **in all generations** (Psalm 119:152; Matthew 5:18; 24:35; Luke 16:17; 1 Peter 1:25).⁴

The TBS also state in the *Preface* that they hold to,

The Reformation Confessions such as the Westminster (1647), the Savoy (1658), and the London Baptist (1689), state regarding Scripture that, ‘The Old Testament in Hebrew, (which was the native language of the people of God of old,) and the New Testament in Greek, (which at the time of the writing of it, was most generally known to the nations,) being immediately inspired by God, and, by **his singular care and providence, kept pure in all ages**, are therefore authentical... (WCF 1:8).

So we can conclude from these statements that the TBS believe all the Words of God have been providentially preserved “pure” and “in all ages.” Also, the preserving of these Words has been done by God and not man so we cannot believe that this would be done carelessly or by accident. We cannot play semantics and say that “pure” only means really 99.9% as it can only rationally mean 100% and perfect as the WCF state

that it was done by God, who cannot err as any impurity as “a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.” The question now is: where does the TBS state the “pure Words of God are?” They say,

The Lord Jesus Christ and His Apostles received the preserved and standard Hebrew text of the Old Testament as *Scripture* (Luke 4:16-19, 21; 2 Timothy 3:16). This serves as our pattern for accepting the historically received text of the New Testament also as *Scripture* (1 Timothy 5:18 cf. Luke 10:7; 2 Peter 3:15-16)... These texts of Scripture reflect the qualities of God-breathed Scripture, including being authentic, holy, pure, true, infallible, trustworthy, excellent, self-authenticating, necessary, sufficient, perspicuous, self-interpreting, authoritative and inerrant (Psalm 19:7-9, Psalm 119). They are consequently to be received as the Word of God (Ezra 7:14; Nehemiah 8:8; Daniel 9:2; 2 Peter 1:19) and the correct reading **at any point** is to be sought **within these texts**.⁵

So, these “texts” are to be received the same way Christ and the apostles received them i.e. as the perfectly preserved and inspired Scripture (2 Tim 3:16), as they are “pure, true, infallible, trustworthy, excellent, self-authenticating, necessary, sufficient, perspicuous, self-interpreting, authoritative and inerrant.” Therefore, we can safely conclude that the TBS believe that these “texts” can be said to be the perfect 100% inspired Words of God. Now, which “texts” are they referring to? The TBS state,

The Trinitarian Bible Society maintains that the providentially preserved true and authentic text is to be found in the Masoretic Hebrew and the Greek Received Texts. In so doing, it follows the historic, orthodox Protestant position of acknowledging as Holy Scripture the Hebrew and Greek texts **consistently accessible to and preserved among the people of God in all ages**. These texts had remained in common use in different parts of the world for more than fifteen centuries and they faithfully represent the texts used in New Testament times.⁶

So, the TBS state very clearly that the “true and authentic text” is “found in the Masoretic and Received Texts,” but only those from the Received text family. It adds a further limb of proof here which is important as it must only be in those texts that are “consistently accessible to and preserved among the people of God in all ages.” This would appear to expressly rule out any such concept of a “Majority Text” position that “preservation is throughout the ages in all the extant manuscripts, versions and the citations by the Church fathers.” However, how does the TBS define as the, “Masoretic Hebrew and the Greek Received Texts?”

The Society accepts as the best edition of the Hebrew Masoretic text the one prepared in 1524-25 by Jacob ben Chayyim and known, after David Bomberg the publisher, as the Bomberg text. The Greek Received Text is the name given to a group of **printed texts, the first of which was published by Desiderius Erasmus in 1516.** The Society uses for the purposes of translation the text reconstructed by F.H.A. Scrivener in 1894.⁷

It should be noted carefully that the “Greek Received Text” is defined by the TBS as “the name given to a group of printed texts, the first of which was published by Desiderius Erasmus in 1516.” This clearly does not include any other so-called “Majority Text” from any other Byzantine Family manuscripts that are extant today that differ from any of the “printed texts.” We can only logically conclude that the TBS only accept these “printed texts” as having the “true and authentic text” of the “pure” Providentially Preserved Word of God.

Life BPC have tried to argue that the TBS statement does not mean this and that the TBS allow latitude of interpretation in that they believe all of the “Words of God” are preserved somewhere in the extant manuscripts within the “Byzantine Text” family. However, the TBS clearly state they only view the “printed texts” not the extant manuscripts as the “Greek Received Text,” which they also state is “definitive and the final point of reference in all the Society’s work.” However, in a final and surely decisive blow to the Life BPC position, the TBS also, in their definition of the “Majority Text,” expressly and definitively rule out any such view as Biblically valid,

Majority Text: A text based on the majority of manuscript witnesses. *The Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text*, edited by Zane C. Hodges and Arthur L. Farstad (1982), is a modern example of the Majority Text. Although close to the Received Text, there are a number of differences and some of these are significant (e.g. John 7:53-8:11; Acts 8:36,37). Furthermore, as no detailed collation of all surviving manuscripts has taken place, the exact majority text cannot yet be determined; and **even if one day that became possible, the resultant text could only be provisional and tentative, because the discovery of further manuscripts might change minority readings to majority readings, or vice versa. The doctrine of providential preservation, however, teaches that the Church is—and always has been—in possession of the true text of Scripture.**⁸

In other words, the TBS have adopted a *faith-based* test for determining the exact words of Holy Scripture which is “the doctrine of

providential preservation, however, teaches that the Church *is*—and always has been—in possession of the true text of Scripture.” What the TBS are stating here is that there is no further examination needed of extant texts within any of the textual families as we already have the exact words of the autographs in the “printed texts” of the “Greek Received Text.” In simple terms, it is crystal clear to anyone who reads with an open mind, that the TBS believe in VPP in the various editions of the printed Greek Texts of the *Textus Receptus*! This is very different from the Life BPC position that only holds to a nebulous and undefined view that “God has fully preserved His Word in the body of manuscripts (or texts or copies) after the original autographs were lost.”⁹

By contrast, FEBC state that:

The infallible and inerrant words of Scripture are found in the faithfully preserved Traditional/Majority manuscripts and fully represented in the Printed and Received Text...that underlies the Reformation Bibles best represented by the KJV.¹⁰

The TBS position, from the deductive and logical analysis above can only differ from FEBC in one marginal aspect; that they would change this statement to “fully represented in the Printed and Received Texts,” as they state “the scope of the Society’s Constitution does not extend to considering the minor variations between the printed editions of the *Textus Receptus*.” It would also seem logical that the TBS would probably lean more to the view of FEBC as no doubt it makes more sense to assume that the KJV translators made the right choices with the greater evidence before them in determining the true text when comparing what the TBS say are “variations” that are “not of great significance and rarely affect the sense”¹¹ in the various printed editions of the Received Text.¹²

Despite Life BPC accusations that FEBC is “divisive” on this issue, the reality is that FEBC readily embraces the TBS position as a legitimate interpretation and state,

FEBC concedes that others can differ with them “over the absolute certainty as regards the underlying texts or words” but as long as other VPP and KJV defenders “...maintain VPP in the lineage of Byzantine/Majority manuscripts and the *Textus Receptus*...” and deny the Westcott-Hort Text and also deny the existence of scribal errors, “...slight differences of opinion over the verbally preserved texts/words among KJV defenders should remain as non issues....”¹³

Life BPC claim that the conviction of VPP, “is not held by the majority of fundamental, Bible-believing institutions, churches and writers.” Notwithstanding, that their distinctives of Reformed Premillennial Presbyterianism is in a relative minority in these categories and they do not consider that a problem, a quick survey around the “Fundamentalist world” will show how worthless such an observation is. For instance, in the USA, it is reckoned that the number of independent Baptist churches is roughly 10,000 and most of these are pro-KJV and VPP. We will list just a few examples:

(1) Crown College of the Bible and Temple Baptist Church is an Independent Fundamental Baptist Bible College and Seminary in Powell, Tennessee with more than 1,000 students. The founder and President, Dr Clarence Sexton has spoken at many Free Presbyterian Churches in Northern Ireland and is a close friend of Dr Ian Paisley and have exchanged pulpits many times.¹⁴ The Reformers’ portraits line the halls of Temple Baptist Church. In 2007, Dr Sexton gave the opening address to the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship International (FBFI) Annual Fellowship.¹⁵ His Church, Bible College and Seminary use the KJV exclusively and clearly state in their “Statement of Faith” on the Scriptures that,

We believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Bible, “as it is in truth, the Word of God...” (I Thessalonians 2:13). We believe in verbal, plenary inspiration in the original writings, and God’s preservation of His pure words to every generation (II Timothy 3:16, Psalms 12:6-8). The Masoretic Text of the Old Testament and the Received Text of the New Testament (Textus Receptus) are those texts of the original languages we accept and use; the King James Version of the Bible is the only English version we accept and use.¹⁶

(2) Pensacola Christian College has 4,500 undergraduate students and has recently appointed Dr Lloyd Streeter as co-pastor of the Campus Church¹⁷ who has published a book fully endorsing VPP in which he says,

We have no original language manuscripts for the book of Job except those copied in A.D. 900 by Massorite scribes. That is a gap of approximately 3000 years. Actually, we do not even know the language in which Job was originally written. Think of it, dear reader – 3,000 years with no manuscripts? How would you know that Job is God’s Word if you had to depend on ‘early manuscripts’? There is ONE way to know and that is by faith. God said He would preserve His Word and He kept His promise. ...

So it means absolutely nothing that there is a “scarcity” of Greek manuscript evidence in the first several centuries of church history. Our confidence is in the God of the Bible Who said that He would not allow His words to fall by the wayside never to be known to man again. Early copies were worn out and destroyed (especially the best ones!) but the Word of God is indestructible and unalterable. God always saw to it that the best copies were copied. The Holy Spirit taught God’s people to know and keep the words of God. ... Furthermore, ... trustworthiness of the King James Bible should be looked upon as a winnowing or refining process extending from Tyndale through 1769. God used such men as Erasmus, Beza, Stephanus, Tyndale, the translators of the English versions which preceded the KJV, the translators of the KJV itself, and those who corrected printing and spelling errors between 1611 and 1769.¹⁸

(3) David Cloud runs the *Way of Life* website ministry which has the largest list of subscribers and viewers of any Fundamentalist ministry. Cloud receives 2,500 and more personal letters and e-mails each month. Hundreds of Independent Baptist Churches are associated with him and listed in his Directory of Churches.

(4) Singapore has a number of Independent Baptist Churches, listed in David Cloud’s Directory that are clearly VPP.¹⁹ For instance, Shalom Baptist Church states, “We believe that God preserved His Word in the Traditional Masoretic and Traditional Greek Text (the Textus Receptus) and we hold the King James Version which is based on these texts as the best English translation of the Bible.”²⁰

(5) The Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland clearly embrace the TBS’ position that all the “Words of God” have been preserved in the Received Text of the Textus Receptus editions. Speaking of the WCF, they disagree with the Life BPC interpretation and state,

Note how the Confession emphasises “in all ages.” The claim of biblical criticism is that manuscripts discovered over the past 150 years which were not used or available to the Church in the preceding 1500 years are more authentic than the standard text (often called the Received Text) which form the vast majority of available manuscripts which the Westminster Assembly spoke of as having been kept pure in all ages. This text is witnessed to by the general consensus of the Church in each generation. God has preserved the Scriptures down through the ages for the salvation of men and the edification and comfort of His church, not buried away secretly but *publicly in the usage of His Church*. It is significant that Isaiah 59:21 speaks of the Church’s continuous possession of the Word, this verse is, as John Owen, put it, “the great charter of the Church’s preservation of truth.” *Any close*

consideration of the following verses will show that the providential preservation taught in relation to the Word of God extends beyond its doctrines to all of its words. Every word of the Scriptures as originally given was fully inspired of God and in the same way every word preserved by God is also fully inspired (See Matt. 5:18; Matt. 24:35; Matt 28:20; Mark 13:31; Luke 16:17; Luke 21:33; 1 Cor 11:23; 1 Pet 1:25; Rev 22:18-19).

Any Church that holds fully to the teaching of the Westminster Confession must recognise that the Bible teaches the full providential preservation of the text of Scripture. Not least because various parts of the wording and teaching of the Westminster Standards depend on verses that are *only in the Received Text* and have therefore been omitted in most modern versions (e.g. Matt. 6:13, 1 John 5:7). ²¹

(6) Dr Ian Paisley is the Joint Chairman of the World Congress of Fundamentalists and Founder of the Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster. The Rev Dr Ian Paisley MP, in his book *My Plea for the Old Sword (KJV)*, wrote:

*Divine Revelation plus Divine Inspiration plus Divine Preservation equals the Divine Bible. These all, without exception, cover the whole field of every Word of God. There is no such thing as verbal Revelation without verbal Inspiration and there is no such thing as verbal Inspiration without verbal Preservation. In all cases it is **not partial but plenary i.e. full, complete, perfect.** ...*

The Divine Revelation, put into writing the verbally Infallible Scriptures through Divine Inspiration, must have Divine Preservation in order to be available to all generations. The verbal Inspiration of the Scriptures demands the verbal Preservation of the Scriptures. Those who would deny the need for verbal Preservation cannot be accepted as being really committed to verbal Inspiration. If there is no preserved Word of God today then the work of Divine Revelation and Divine Inspiration has perished.

In such a case any Bible is as good as any other. Hence the multiplication and continuing changes of perverted English versions of the Bible on the market today.

Those who believe in a partial preservation are not much better. To say that God has preserved most of the Original Scriptures but not them all, robs us of every Word of God. Therefore we cannot live [by His every word, Matt 4:4]. This is but another way to pen-knife God's every Word.

Those who do not believe that God preserved His Word are really going down the path of final rejection of that Book of which the Lord Jesus Christ

said, 'The Word of God cannot be broken.' Thank God, no potency can disintegrate this Rock.²²

Dr Paisley went on to defend the VPP of Scripture in the original languages and the KJV from Psalm 12:6-7:

Surely here we have the Doctrine of Divine Preservation divinely revealed. The preserved Scriptures cannot be lost or caused in any way to perish. As of the God who uttered them, so we can say, 'Thou remainest!'

It is interesting to note that the new Bibles vary the words of Psalm 12:6-7 and so eliminate the testimony of that verse to the Divine Preservation of the Scriptures. They insist that the 'them' of verse seven is not a reference to God's words but to God's people ... and destroy the text's testimony to the Preservation of God's Word.

God's providential preservation of His own Word ensured that the true Scriptures were not hidden away in the library of the Antichrist nor in a monastery of 'Greek Catholic' idolatry at the time when Tyndale prepared his Bible. Faithful and true copies of the originals were at hand for the Divine Bombshell (Tyndale's translation of God's Holy Word into English) which would smash the Roman Antichrist. He translated into English the Preserved Word of God, not the Perverted Word of God.

A return to the Apostolic Gospel comes as a result of Tyndale's work. A return to the Apostate Gospel comes as a result of the translation of Rome's long hidden, perverted text and other such perverted texts in the Modern Perversions of the Scriptures.

The Authorised Version translated into English the Preserved Word of God and so preserved for the English speaking peoples of the World, the Word of the Living God, the only infallible Rule of Faith and Practice.²³

It is clear from these quotes that Dr Ian Paisley believes that the "true Scriptures" were only preserved in a "full, complete, perfect" manner in the "true copies of the originals ... at hand" which gave us Tyndale's Version and eventually the Authorised Version. Will Life BPC denounce now the Joint Chairman of the World Congress of Fundamentalists, Dr Ian Paisley as a "heretic?" Will they do this also for the TBS, Crown College, Dr Clarence Sexton, Way of Life, hundreds (if not thousands) of KJV-defending churches across the world, and Dr Lloyd Streeter, co-pastor of the Campus Church at Pensacola Christian College? Will they issue a statement banning all of these groups from the premises of Life BPC for their "heresy?" In accordance with Titus 3:10 and their claim to practise in their Constitution "Ecclesiastical separation from all churches or groups of churches who are doctrinally impure," will

Life BPC “reject” and separate from the TBS, Dr Ian Paisley, the Free Presbyterians of Ulster and Scotland, Crown College, Pensacola Christian College, and the World Congress of Fundamentalists for promoting “heresy” and allowing “heretics” into leadership?

It is axiomatic, from all of the evidence presented above, that a “new formulation” of an historic doctrine is not necessarily characteristic of “heresy.” It is also clear that Life BPC have not even carried out the basic steps of collating the evidence properly and analysing it objectively. This was the very evidence that they used to act in a discriminatory, inconsistent and unbiblical manner in their inflammatory and unjust action. Unless they retract we can only conclude that they are simply willing to tolerate any view on preservation, save that of FEBC.

In light of the above evidence, we can only plead that Life BPC formally retract their visceral and clearly unfounded and unbiblical accusations against their founding pastor, Dr Timothy Tow and the Board of Directors of FEBC. Further delays will only compound the great wrong of these terrible slurs and slanders, which as they themselves stated, “brings no glory to God, and will only discredit the Church of God”²⁴ for the infallible and perfect Scripture warns, “For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again” (Matt 7:2).

Questions for Life BPC

These questions which I have modified for the Life BPC context are based partly on some suggestions raised by Independent Baptist author, Kent Brandenburg.²⁵

(1) Do you believe **it is possible** that the underlying text of the KJV in Hebrew and Greek is an exact 100% copy of the autographs? If not, do you have a Scriptural framework and any objective textual critical framework for rejecting so that we all can “test” your bold assertions?

(2) How can you add or take away from something that isn’t settled? In other words, what difference does Revelation 22:18, 19 make?

(3) How is the Bible considered perfect if there are errors in it? If the errors aren’t related to the words, then what difference does verbal inspiration make? What is the Scriptural basis for errors in the Bible?

(4) Where does the Bible say there would be sixty-six books? If it doesn’t say, then how do we know there are not more or less? What are

the reasons that Christianity rejected the Apocrypha and accepted the book of Revelation?

(5) What is the pre-19th century historic basis for the doctrine of the errancy of Scripture, that is, the history of assuming that we don't know what the Words are or that there are errors in Scripture?

(6) What is the historic position on the preservation of Scripture?

(7) What is your developed Scriptural position on the doctrine of preservation that you have believed and believed before you began examining textual criticism?

(8) What was Paul telling Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:16, 17 that was profitable for doctrine, correction, etc.? If every Word and all of them was necessary for thoroughly furnishing us to every good work, then how could we do that without all of them?

(9) When Jesus told us that man shall live by every Word in Matthew 4:4, should we assume that He meant that we would not have every Word?

(10) When something passes away like heaven and earth will pass away, does that mean that it will disappear? If God's Words are not going to pass away or jots and tittles are not going to pass away, does that mean that we are still going to possess them?

(11) Was the Critical Text available for believers from c.1525-1825? If someone, like BJU believes that this "new" text is closer to the autographs are they believing in "heresy" as their view is also "infectious" and "divisive?"

(12) Does Scripture teach anywhere that man was responsible for restoring a lost text?

(13) Can you show me physical, tangible evidence that the Ben Chayyim Hebrew Masoretic and the Scrivener TR are not the same words as the original manuscripts?

(14) How can a member of Life BPC be confident that prophecies are being fulfilled literally today, if he does not have all the words of the Bible available to him?

(15) Where does Scripture say that a miracle is a greater and more thorough act of God than providence? Is something that God does providentially less God than it is when God does something miraculously?

(16) Can you prove that all the words of the autographs were not available to the translators of the KJV as they were consolidated into a printed edition?

(17) In light of *Matthew 5:18*, can you provide any evidence that prior to Erasmus there was no agreement among the true remnant church as to the “preserved text” to the degree of “jots and tittles” having been preserved? Can you prove that all of the period of time before 1611 all of the “words” were not in one place at one time?

(18) Which of the following positions reflect your view?

(i) Every Word of God was inspired and has been preserved and is available today.

(ii) Every Word of God was inspired, but we’re not sure that every Word has been preserved.

(iii) Every Word of God was inspired and has been perfectly preserved, but we’re not sure that every Word is available.

(iv) We don’t have every Word of God today, and we may never have had it.

(19) What fundamental doctrine of Scripture and what dangers to the Church is there from the consequences of believing that God has perfectly preserved His Words today? Do you believe that doubt in a perfect Bible is the less dangerous position? How would you prove to a cult member or a non-believer that you have an infallible, inerrant Bible?

(20) In light of *Isaiah 59:21*, “As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed’s seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever,” what words have departed from the mouth of believers in 2008? When did “for ever” end? Do you agree with John Owen who said on his commentary on this passage that it means the “Words” of God, “shall always continue with the church and her spiritual seed, such as are born in her, and brought up by her, throughout all successive ages, and to the end of time; and it may be observed, that after the conversion of the Jews, to which this prophecy has a special regard, they shall no more apostatise?” Do you agree with *The Pulpit Commentary* edited by H D M Spence and Joseph S Exell whose exposition on this section says, “The Spirit will be accompanied

with certain “words” which will be put into the Church’s mouth; and these words will remain unchanged and pass on from mouth to mouth, age after age, for ever. The “words” intended are probably those of the entire Bible—“all God’s revelations” (Cheyne)—which the Church will maintain as inspired truth through all ages.”

(21) Where are all the extant manuscripts of the New Testament? How does one look at every single one of them? Has Life BPC elders ever studied any of them – if so, how many?

(22) Do you agree with Dr Martin Lloyd-Jones’ book, *God the Father, God the Son*, when he says that miracles are a sub-category of providence?

(23) Do Life BPC agree with Rev Tan Eng Boo of Grace Bible-Presbyterian Church that “We have in our hands the perfect Word of God.... We believe we have the perfect Bible, but not the perfect version!”²⁶ If so, can they state where this “perfect Bible” is?

(24) Do Life BPC believe God would providentially lead Samuel to “let none of his words fall to the ground” (1 Sam 3:19), yet He did today as we cannot find some of these Words? Does any Bible version tell us that God would preserve His words “out there somewhere” among thousands of variant readings and that it is up to the scholars, who never agree with each other and keep changing their minds every few years, to tell us where the true words of God might be found?

(25) If a member of Life BPC does not have access to all the “Words of God” today, will God hold him accountable on the day of judgment for rejecting and not receiving them (John 12:48) and not keeping His commandments (Luke 16:10; Rev 22:14)?

(26) Who is preserving the Words of God today – God or man?

(27) Can Life BPC identify absolutely all the Words of God today? Could they explain how they could do this? Rev Charles Seet said at Life BPC sanctuary in a sermon²⁷ that “The correct reading can be easily determined by comparing scripture with scripture” so this should be a straightforward task.

(28) In light of 2 Peter 3:2 which say, “That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour” are we excused of this as we do not have all these words?

(29) As “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom 10:17), how can the members of Life BPC “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3) if we do not have all of that faith?

(30) Life BPC stated²⁸ in respect of Matthew 24:35 that “The words of Jesus will continue to be certain, valid and trustworthy even after the universe ceases to exist.” Can a member of Life BPC know today that all the Words of Jesus are “certain, valid and trustworthy” if they do not have them all?

(31) Life BPC stated²⁹ in respect of the words “kept pure in all ages” in the Westminster Confession, “If they had truly written it with the intention of proving perfect preservation of Scripture, more would have been written about it.” Can they show us any evidence from the writings of any of the Westminster Divines to prove that the basis of their interpretation of this is correct?

(32) In light of the following quote in 1893 for *The Evangelist* by E D Morris,³⁰ expert on the Westminster divines, who contributed to Philip Schaff’s *History of the Christian Church*, do you believe that the one-Bible-belief started in the 1970s or the mid-twentieth century?

As a Professor in a Theological Seminary, it has been my duty to make a special study of the Westminster Confession of Faith, as have I done for twenty years; and I venture to affirm that no one who is qualified to give an opinion on the subject, would dare to risk his reputation on the statement that **the Westminster divines ever thought the original manuscripts of the Bible were distinct from the copies in their possession.**

(33) In light of the following quote by Samuel Rutherford, in *A Free Disputation Against Pretended Liberty of Conscience*, in 1649, do you believe that we can separate the teaching of Scripture from the actual Words?

Though the Letter of the Scripture be not the Word alone, yet the Letter with the true sense and meaning of it, is the Word.... So if ye destroy the Letter of the Scripture, you do destroy the Scripture; and if you do deny the Letter, how is it possible that you should attain to the true sense thereof, when the Sense lies wrapped up in the Letters, and the words thereof?

We must say, we have not the clear and infallible word of God, because the Scripture comes to our hand, by fallible means, which is a great inconsequence, for through Scribes, Translators, Grammarians, Printers, may all err, **it followeth not that an [un]-erring providence of him that**

hath seven eyes, hath not delivered to the Church, the Scriptures containing the infallible truth of God.

(34) In light of the following quote by Richard Capel, one of the divines, when he writes (*Capel's Remains*, London, 1658, pp 19-43), do you agree that God by His providence hath preserved all the words “uncorrupt?”

[W]e have the Copies in both languages [Hebrew and Greek], which Copies vary not from Primitive writings in any matter which may stumble any. This concerns only the learned, and they know that by consent of all parties, the most learned on all sides among Christians do shake hands in this, that God by his providence hath preserved them uncorrupt.... As God committed the Hebrew text of the Old Testament to the Jews, and did and doth move their hearts to keep it untainted to this day: So I dare lay it on the same God, that he in his providence is so with the Church of the Gentiles, that they have and do preserve the Greek Text uncorrupt, and clear: As for some scrapes by Transcribers, that comes to no more, than to censure a book to be corrupt, because of some scrapes in the printing, and ‘tis certain, that *what mistake is in one print, is corrected in another.*

Notes

¹ <http://www.lifebpc.com/ourstand/godlypath.htm>. So desperate are Life BPC to buttress their misrepresentation of the TBS view that they have resorted to citing A J Brown, former editorial secretary of the Trinitarian Bible Society (TBS) in a 24-year-old document, “*Faith and Textual Scholarship*”, TBS *Quarterly Record* (Oct-Dec 1984). They have acted, at best, carelessly in failing to study the clear statements of the latest “Statement of Doctrine of Holy Scripture” by the TBS. This error is compounded when the TBS has rejected the validity of the statements of A J Brown, as Mr David Larlham, the Assistant General Secretary of TBS, recently wrote to Dr Jeffrey Khoo of FEBC, “we would suggest that neither you nor the Rev Wong should place any such reliance upon the comments of Mr Andrew Brown going back around 20 years.” David Cloud lists correspondence from Mr Brown (www.wayoflife.org/articles/majoritytext.htm) clearly endorsing the “Majority Text” position in the 1980s, but he states that Mr Andrew Brown was “dismissed from the Trinitarian Bible Society in 1991.”

² <http://www.truth.sg/tbsnonvpp.htm>.

³ <http://www.trinitarianbiblesociety.org/site/statement.pdf>.

⁴ Preface, Section 4.

⁵ Section 6.

⁶ Note 1, page 6.

⁷ Note 3, page 6.

⁸ See definition of “Majority Text” in *Word List*, 9.

⁹ <http://www.lifebpc.com/ourstand/stmtfaith.htm>.

¹⁰ Editorial, *The Burning Bush 12* (2006): 2.

¹¹ “A Brief Look at the Textus Receptus” in Appendix 3.

¹² Indeed, the TBS state in Appendix 2, (footnote 4) that “the Society believes that the latest and best edition is the text reconstructed by F H A Scrivener in 1894.”

¹³ *The Burning Bush 12* (2006): 80.

¹⁴ <http://www.wbir.com/news/local/story.aspx?storyid=31306>.

¹⁵ <http://www.fbf.org/content/view/61/29>.

¹⁶ <http://thecrowncollege.com/whatwebelieve/>.

¹⁷ <http://www.pcci.edu/CampusChurch/PastorBios.html>.

¹⁸ Lloyd Streeter, *Seventy-five Problems with Central Baptist Theological Seminary's Book "The Bible Version Debate"* (LaSalle: First Baptist Church, 2001), 98, 99, 104.

¹⁹ <http://www.wayoflife.org/fbns/churchdir/!churches.htm>.

²⁰ <http://www.shalom-baptist.com>.

²¹ <http://www.fpchurch.org.uk/Beliefs/AuthorisedVersion.php>.

²² Ian R K Paisley, *My Plea for the Old Sword: the English Authorised Version (KJV)* (Belfast: Ambassador, 1997), 102-3.

²³ *Ibid*, 106.

²⁴ <http://www.lifebpc.com/ourstand/godlypath.htm>.

²⁵ <http://www.kentbrandenburg.blogspot.com>.

²⁶ <http://www.truth.sg/response/pborpv.htm>.

²⁷ Rev Charles Seet, “The Word that Endures Forever,” preached at Life Bible-Presbyterian Church on October 28, 2007.

²⁸ <http://www.lifebpc.com/ourstand/godlypath.htm>.

²⁹ *Ibid*.

³⁰ Prof E D Morris for decades taught the Westminster Confession at Lane Theological Seminary in Cincinnati, Ohio.

A BRIEF HISTORY, PURPOSES, AND GOALS OF THE DEAN BURGON SOCIETY

D A Waite

The Beginning of the Dean Burgon Society (DBS)

The Burden for the King James Bible (KJB)

In 1977 and 1978, I could see the need to have a group of people in the United States of America (USA) who would stand strongly both for the KJB and for the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Words that underlie it.

Trying to Work with the Trinitarian Bible Society (TBS)

At first, a few of us tried to work with the TBS in England by beginning a branch in the USA with their permission. Soon, we found out that we could not be free to carry on this work on our own, as the Lord might lead us, but had to have everything first approved by TBS in England before we could speak or write it. We understood that, after a few months of attempting to work in this way, it was not the way we should proceed. We finally disassociated ourselves from the TBS and sought to work on our own in this country.

A Beginning Committee of Three

Early in 1978, as I recall, three of us met together to seek to form an independent group in the USA. Dr David Otis Fuller of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Pastor E L Bynum of Lubbock, Texas, and I of Collingswood, New Jersey, met together in a central place. At that meeting, it was decided to form an organization in the USA which would defend the KJB and its underlying Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Words.

Composing the First Draft of the Articles of Faith

I volunteered to compose a first draft of the “Articles of Faith, Operation & Organization” of the DBS. Since I was familiar with the TBS, I used it as the basis for our “Articles of Faith, Operation & Organization”, changing it as needed to meet our needs.

The Theological Doctrine of the DBS

Though it is without any particular specified church denomination, the DBS has a strong conservative biblical base. Speaking of the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Words of the Bible, the preface of the twelve divisions of the Articles of Faith states: “Acknowledging the Bible to be the inerrant, infallible, plenary and verbally inspired Word of God, among other equally biblical truths, we believe and maintain the following: ...”. This allows for DBS leaders and members to hold different beliefs in some areas, yet they must hold to the DBS doctrinal statement as written.

The Name of the Society

Although different names were mentioned, we chose “The Dean Burgon Society” because of the stand taken by Dean John William Burgon in his battle against the scandalously corrupt Greek Text of Bishop Westcott and Professor Hort that came out in 1881. We did not choose this name because Dean Burgon was a member of the Church of England or because we held to all of his theological doctrines. We chose it for the following reason which we have placed in the issues of our *Dean Burgon News*: “**The Dean Burgon Society Inc.**, proudly takes its name in honor of John William Burgon (1813-1888), the Dean of Chichester in England, whose tireless and accurate scholarship and contribution in the area of New Testament Textual Criticism; whose defense of the Traditional Greek New Testament Text against its many enemies; and whose firm belief in the verbal inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible; we believe, have all been unsurpassed either before or since his time.”

Amending the “Articles of Faith, Operation & Organization”

On Friday and Saturday, November 3 and 4, 1978, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, the DBS was organized. Fifteen pastors and five laymen were present at the meeting. The first draft of the “Articles of Faith, Operation & Organization” was taken up in detail and amended as needed. This 16-page pamphlet is available upon request by writing the DBS at P O Box 354, Collingswood, New Jersey 08108, or you can E-mail DBS@DeanBurgonSociety.org. The specific internet link for these “Articles” is as follows: http://www.deanburgonsociety.org/DBS_Society/articles.htm.

The Dean Burgon Society

Of the 20 men present at this organizing meeting, I am the only one still with the DBS after 32 years. Some of these organizers have left the DBS for various reasons and some have died. New men have taken their place in the leadership of the DBS.

The Dean Burgon News

At the organizing meeting of the DBS on November 3-4, 1978, plans were laid for *The Dean Burgon News*. This newsletter was to further all thirteen stated purposes of the DBS (“Articles of Faith, Operation & Organization”, pp 6-9).

In the first years of the DBS, *The Dean Burgon News* (DBSN) was printed monthly by Pastor E L Bynum of Lubbock, Texas. When he retired from the DBS, the DBSN was published less frequently, sometimes only once or twice a year. Beginning with issue #82 in August 2008 to the present, the DBSN has been published in electronic format as the *DBS eNEWS*. This is sent all over the world on the computer rather than through the mail. One of our DBS Vice Presidents, Dr H D Williams, is the Managing Editor of the *DBS eNEWS*. He has done an excellent job in producing this with color and attractiveness. It is now back to a monthly frequency letting its readers know of the position, purposes, and plans of our DBS today. You can get a free subscription to the *DBS eNEWS* by writing DBS@DeanBurgonSociety.org.

Annual Meetings of the DBS

Past Annual Meetings

The DBS presently holds one annual meeting for two days each year, on a Wednesday and Thursday, usually in July. The location of the meeting varies from year to year, based on who invites us. An Executive Committee meeting is held on Wednesday morning. At the same time, the DBS Women meet. Wednesday afternoon and evening and all day Thursday, DBS speakers present their messages. There are usually 15 to 18 speakers, speaking for either 25 or 40 minutes. The speakers are usually either from the DBS Executive Committee or the DBS Advisory Council, but on occasion, there are other speakers. The main object of these messages is **“In Defense of the Traditional Bible Texts.”** In recent years, the meetings have been live-streamed around the world by connecting to BibleForToday.org at the time of the meetings. Ample time

is reserved for questions and answers. Usually, we receive many E-mails from those listening from the USA and some foreign countries.

The KJB's 400th Anniversary Special Annual Meeting in 2011

On July 27-28, 2011, the DBS commemorated the 400th anniversary of the publication of the KJB in 1611 AD. All of the messages were specifically related to some aspect of the KJB. It was held at the Bible Presbyterian Church in Collingswood, New Jersey, where DBS Advisory Council Member, Dr Christian Spencer, is pastor. The meeting was sponsored by the Bible For Today Baptist Church in Collingswood, New Jersey, where DBS President, Dr D A Waite, is pastor.

The Position of the DBS on the Bible

It is important to know that there is a specific doctrinal position strongly held by the DBS. There are 12 doctrinal topics that are specified in our “Articles of Faith, Operation & Organization.” The 12 doctrinal topics of the DBS are: (1) The Bible, (2) The Trinity, (3) The Person of Christ, (4) The Birth of Christ, (5) The Death of Christ, (6) The Resurrection of Christ, (7) Salvation, (8) Heaven and Hell, (9) Spiritual Unity, (10) Purity of the Church, (11) Separation, and (12) Creation. These 12 topics are recorded in full on our DBS website at http://www.deanburgonsociety.org/DBS_Society/articles.htm.

Our special emphasis is our position on the Bible. For 32 years now, the following statement, in just four paragraphs, has been the position of the DBS on the Bible. Read it over carefully.

We believe in the plenary, verbal, Divine inspiration of the sixty-six canonical books of the Old and the New Testaments (from Genesis to Revelation) in the original languages, and in their consequent infallibility and inerrancy in all matters of which they speak (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 Thessalonians 2:13). The books known as the Apocrypha, however, are not the inspired Word of God in any sense whatsoever. As the Bible uses it, the term “inspiration” refers to the **writings**, not the **writers** (2 Timothy 3:16-17); the **writers** are spoken of as being “holy men of God” who were “moved,” “carried” or “borne” along by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21) in such a definite way that their **writings** were supernaturally, plenary, and verbally inspired, free from any error, infallible, and inerrant, as no other **writings** have ever been or ever will be inspired.

We believe that the Texts which are the closest to the original autographs of the Bible are the Traditional Masoretic Hebrew Text for the Old Testament,

and the Traditional Greek Text for the New Testament underlying the King James Version (as found in “The Greek Text Underlying The English Authorized Version of 1611”).

We believe that the King James Version (or Authorized Version) of the English Bible is a true, faithful, and accurate translation of these two providentially preserved Texts, which in our time has no equal among all of the other English Translations. The translators did such a fine job in their translation task that we can without apology hold up the Authorized Version of 1611 and say “This is the WORD OF GOD!” while at the same time realizing that, in some verses, we must go back to the underlying original language Texts for complete clarity, and also compare Scripture with Scripture.

We believe that all the verses in the King James Version belong in the Old and the New Testaments because they represent words we believe were in the original texts, although there might be other renderings from the original languages which could also be acceptable to us today. For an exhaustive study of any of the words or verses in the Bible, we urge the student to return directly to the Traditional Masoretic Hebrew Text and the Traditional Received Greek Text rather than to any other translation for help.

Permit me to make some observations on it:

Observation #1: Divine Inspiration Defined. The “plenary, verbal, Divine inspiration of the sixty-six canonical books of the Old and the New Testaments” is restricted to the “original languages” of Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. It does not apply to translations made from those “original languages” into other languages.

Observation #2: Infallibility And Inerrancy Defined. The technical terms, “infallibility and inerrancy” must be restricted to the “original languages.” These “original language” Words and only such Words can be accurately described as 100% perfect and pure. As such, these two descriptive nouns can apply only to God Himself and to His Words. These terms do not refer to translations made from those “original languages” into other languages.

Observation #3: The Application of the Terms “Infallibility and Inerrancy.” The terms of “infallibility and inerrancy” of the Bible are reserved for the “original languages.” The “infallibility and inerrancy” of the Scriptures extends to “all matters of which they speak.”

Observation #4: The Apocrypha Not “Inspired.” These books are “not the inspired Word of God in any sense whatsoever.” I believe it was

a mistake for the Authorized Version to have included the Apocrypha in their 1611 first edition. I wish they had not done this.

Observation #5: To What Does “Inspiration” Refer? “‘Inspiration’ refers to the writings, not the writers.” Some have misapplied this term to refer to the “writers.” The DBS Articles are very clear on this subject.

Observation #6: The Process of Inspiration Ceased with the Bible’s Original Writings. “Their writings were supernaturally, plenary, and verbally inspired, free from any error, infallible, and inerrant, as no other writings have ever been or ever will be inspired.” We have the “product” of that “process” of once-for-all inspiration in the accurate copies of those inspired Words. The use of “given by inspiration of God,” “God-breathed,” “inspired of God,” “verbally inspired,” or “inspired” when referring to the KJB or other translations has caused untold confusion in understanding.

Observation #7: The Verbal Plenary Preservation of the Original Words. The verbal, plenary, preserved Words which are “closest to the original autographs” are “the Traditional Masoretic Hebrew Text for the Old Testament, and the Traditional Greek Text for the New Testament underlying the King James Version.” These two texts have been “providentially preserved.”

Observation #8: The Description of the KJB. The “King James Version (or Authorized Version) of the English Bible” is called “a true, faithful, and accurate translation of these two providentially preserved Texts, which in our time has no equal among all of the other English Translations.” Because “the translators did such a fine job in their translation task,” we can say “This is the WORD OF GOD” in English.

Observation #9: The Value of the Underlying Original Language Texts. Rather than discarding, or failing to use the “underlying original language Texts” of Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek, as some are teaching, we believe in using these Texts “for complete clarity” as well as to “compare Scripture with Scripture.”

Observation #10: All the Verses Belong in the KJB. The verses belong because “they represent words we believe were in the original texts” of Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. No verses should be left out as the modern versions have done.

Observation #11: Other Renderings Could Be Acceptable. Without changing the words of the KJB in any way, “there might be other

renderings from the original languages which could also be acceptable to us today.” Honesty demands such a position since there are three, four, five or more possible meanings for each Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Word in the Bible. The KJB translators selected at least one of those meanings, but there are others they could have selected as well.

Observation #12: For Exhaustive Study, Go to the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Words Rather Than to Other Translations. In view of many practices today either to consult other translations or to turn people away from consulting the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Words, “We urge the student to return directly to the Traditional Masoretic Hebrew Text and the Traditional Received Greek Text rather than to any other translation for help.”

Various Attacks against the Proper Bible Position

The DBS is in our 33rd year of existence. In these 33 years, we have seen many changes in this Bible battle. It is important to keep in mind at least three different groups that hold erroneous positions either on the KJB, on its underlying Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Words, or on Bible translations generally. In effect, all three of these groups pose an attack on the proper understanding of the Bible taken by the DBS’s position and on other groups who take a similar position.

The Gnostic Critical Text Position

This position accepts the Gnostic Critical Greek Text of the New Testament by whatever name it might be called: (1) The Westcott and Hort Text, (2) the Nestle/Aland Text (NA), (3) the United Bible Societies Text (UBS) or (4) the Vatican (B) and Sinai (Aleph) manuscripts Text.

These New Testament texts differ from the Words underlying the KJB’s New Testament in over 8,000 places. These places are enumerated in Dr Jack Moorman’s book, *8,000 Differences Between the Critical Greek Text and the Textus Receptus Greek Text* (BFT #3084)

Although many of these differences are minor and though some do not even affect the English translation, there are at least 356 doctrinal passages where there are serious differences. These passages are listed in Dr Jack Moorman’s book, *Early Manuscripts, Church Fathers, and the Authorized Version* (BFT #3230).

This view of the underlying Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Words sanctions the use of modern versions which are based on these faulty

foundations, including the ASV, the RSV, the NRSV, the NASV, the NIV, the TEV, and many, many others. This position uses as many as 19 different Old Testament sources to “correct” the Hebrew Words underlying the KJB, none of which should be accepted.

The modernists in this group deny the Verbal Plenary Inspiration (VPI) of the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Words of the Autographs. All of them deny the Verbal Plenary Preservation (VPP) of the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Words of the Apographs underlying the KJB. This textual and translational position has many other serious errors and should be rejected. The DBS strongly disagrees with this position.

The So-Called “Majority Text” Position

This position changes the New Testament Words underlying the KJB in anywhere from 1,500 to 1,800 places. This text is based on the faulty research of a Gnostic Critical Greek Text advocate, Herman Von Soden. He referred to only approximately 414 Greek manuscripts. It is difficult to see how it could be called a “majority” Greek text since in 1967 there were 5,255 Greek manuscripts. Presently there are over 5,500 Greek manuscripts. 414 is not a “majority” of either number.

This position has been refuted soundly by Dr Jack Moorman in his book *Hodges and Farstad’s Majority Text Refuted* (BFT #1617). There is a second so-called “majority” text which is called the Robinson and Pierpont Greek Text. It changes the New Testament Words underlying the KJB in about as many places as the Hodges and Farstad edition.

The evangelicals in this group affirm the Verbal Plenary Inspiration (VPI) of the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Words of the Autographs. However, most deny the Verbal Plenary Preservation (VPP) of the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Words of the Apographs underlying the KJB. This textual position is more moderate than the previous position, but has serious shortcomings and should be avoided.

The Extreme “Inspired KJB” Position

The chief proponents of this position are Gail Riplinger and Peter Ruckman.

Mrs Gail Ludwig Latessa Kaleda Riplinger uses, defends, and recommends the KJB but believes several erroneous things concerning it. She teaches an extremist, overstated, perverted, and false view of the KJB that should not be followed. She boasts of 25,000 on her mailing

list. Though she has a large following, her position should be condemned by everyone in the world.

(1) *Her Belief in the Verbal Inspiration of the KJB.* She wrongly believes the KJB was given by the inspiration of God the Holy Spirit in the same manner as the process whereby He gave the original Words of Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek to the writers in the Old and New Testaments.

(2) *Her Belief in the Verbal Inspiration of Other Bibles Since Acts 2.* She wrongly believes there were many “*inspired*” Bibles produced by the Holy Spirit after the Day of Pentecost. There is no authority for this to be found anywhere in the Bible. It is her own false teaching.

(3) *Her Belief in the Disuse of All Hebrew and Greek Lexicons.* In her 1,200-page book, *Hazardous Materials*, she wrongly concludes that nobody should use any Hebrew or Greek lexicon or dictionary in studying the Bible. She alleges various failures in the writers of these lexicons rather than assessing their ability and understanding of the languages they are defining.

(4) *Her Belief in the Inferiority of the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Words Underlying the KJB.* She wrongly exalts man’s English words in the translation of the KJB above God’s original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Words. As a result, she wrongly throws out the study of the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Words underlying the KJB. This is blasphemy against the God of the Bible! She has reported that some Christian colleges are now suspending the teaching of the Greek language used in the New Testament. Her view against the Greek New Testament and replacing it with the English KJB is in agreement with such suspension.

Peter Ruckman uses, defends, and recommends the KJB but believes several erroneous things concerning it. He teaches an extremist, overstated, perverted, and false view of the KJB that should not be followed.

(1) *His Belief in the Verbal Inspiration of the KJB.* He wrongly believes the KJB was given by the inspiration of God the Holy Spirit in the same manner as the process whereby He gave the original Words of Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek to the writers in the Old and New Testaments.

(2) *His Belief in the Superiority of the KJB over the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Words Underlying the KJB.* I know he calls many parts of the KJB to be “*advanced revelation*.” In effect, he teaches that, since the KJB was a special revelation, he really believes it is superior to the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek from which it comes. He sides with Gail Riplinger on this point, though I do not know if he believes in totally doing away with the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Words as she does. It would not surprise me if he followed the erroneous position of Gail Riplinger on this point, though he has in the past ordered books from us by Dean Burgon.

There are those who believe in the inspiration of the KJB and other translations in some sense. Though some of these people might deny they are followers either of Peter Ruckman or Gail Riplinger, there are many pastors, Christian leaders, and Christians generally who use, defend, and recommend the KJB but refer to it as being “inspired” or “inspired of God.” Do they mean *theopneustos* (“God-breathed”) as the original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Words were given (2 Tim 3:16)? Or are they using it in some lesser sense than either Gail Riplinger or Peter Ruckman use it? In any event, it is very confusing to use the same term for two different positions. It appears to make these two positions equal to each other. This is an unscriptural position on the use of “inspired” or “inspired of God” and should be avoided.

There is no indication that any of those in this lesser position want to reject the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Words underlying the KJB or that they forbid people to check the Hebrew or Greek lexicons and grammars for more details. If this is true, it is an important difference between these people and those who follow the positions either of Gail Riplinger or of Peter Ruckman.

The DBS Leaders’ Position on the KJB and Other Translations

At the beginning of the DBS, we sought to rally around us those who stood for and defended the KJB as opposed to the modern versions. It seemed to us that this was the main battle in the 1970’s. However, in the intervening years to the present, important divisions and distinctions have arisen among those who stand for and defend the KJB. For this reason, the DBS leaders formulated and signed their adherence to a clear-cut policy that would distinguish them from all others who also use,

defend, and hold to the KJB. Though our position is misunderstood by some, and even despised by others, we believe it to be sound and biblical.

Because of the confusion of understanding caused by using the same terms of “inspire,” “inspired,” or “inspiration” for both the original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Words and for translations such as the KJB, as of 2010, all of the DBS leaders on both the Executive Committee and the Advisory Council decided to make a clear position on this subject. In our Annual DBS Questionnaire, all of the Executive Committee members and all of the Advisory Council members state in writing that they will use the following five terms: “given by inspiration of God,” “God-breathed,” “inspired of God,” “verbally inspired,” or “inspired,” *exclusively* for the original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Words and the verbal, plenary, preserved Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Words that underlie the KJB.

Each of our DBS leaders has affirmed that they “will *not* use any of these preceding five terms to anyone, at any time, in any way, at any place to refer to the words of the KJB or any other translation, because they are in full agreement that to do so is not biblical. They believe this position is consistent with our DBS Articles and other DBS documents.” As I have said above, these words are part of the “DBS Annual Questionnaire” that all of the DBS leaders must sign each year.

The present officers of the DBS are as follows: Dr D A Waite (President), Dr Robert J Barnett (Vice President), Dr H D Williams (Vice President), Dr Kirk DiVietro (Secretary), Mr Daniel S Waite (Treasurer).

The members of the DBS Executive Committee are as follows: Dr Robert J Barnett, Dr David C Bennett, Dr Clinton Branine, Dr David Brown, Dr Edwin E DeWitt, Dr Kirk DiVietro, Dr Bob Doom, Pastor Denis Gibson, Mr Ted Grasser, Pastor J David Hollowood, Dr Michael Monte, Dr Jack A Moorman, Mr Douglas O Nielsen, Mr Mark T Reno, Mr Paul Ramnarine, Mr Daniel Waite, Dr D A Waite, Dr H D Williams.

The members of the DBS Advisory Council are as follows: Col Jose Pedro Almeida, Pastor Ralph W Brown, Mr James Grumblatt, Mr Stephen Hollowood, Dr Don Jasmin, Dr Jeffrey Khoo, Missionary Shane Rice, Dr Edward R Smith, Dr Phil Stringer, Pastor Kenneth Rainey, Mr Rob Winograd, Dr Stephen Zeinner.

The Important Role of the DBS in Future Days

With God's help, direction, and blessings, the DBS will seek to continue in its 33rd year in an even better manner than it has done in its previous 32 years. Because of its firm position on the KJB and the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Words that underlie it, and its position on Bible translations generally, I am certain that it will continue to be attacked by those who differ with us in these areas.

It is also true that many who are uninformed about these areas and who have open minds as to the truth will change their minds from what they have been wrongly taught and join us in our biblical position in these important matters that concern the Bible. Here are some of the ways that the DBS can get out its message in the present and future.

Future Role of the DBS's Many Books That Are Available

I am one of those who was wrongly taught, as a student for five years at the Dallas Theological Seminary, to follow the false Gnostic Critical Greek Text of Westcott and Hort. I held that position for 20 years because I knew none other position. I finally changed this false position based on the facts that I read in various books. For the last 40 years, I have stood for the KJB and the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Words that underlie it. One of the reasons why I came to the truth about the Bible was the reading of some of Dean Burgon's books. I went to the Princeton University library in Princeton, New Jersey, took out copies of all five of Dean Burgon's books mentioned below. I then copied each of them. After that, the DBS has been able to publish these books and make them available for all to read.

The DBS has published five books by Dean John William Burgon: (1) *The Revision Revised* (BFT #611), (2) *The Last Twelve Verses of Mark* (BFT #1139), (3) *The Traditional Text* (BFT #1159), (4) *The Causes of Corruption* (BFT #1160), (5) *Inspiration and Interpretation* (BFT #1220).

There are more than 1,000 other titles available in defense of the KJB and its underlying Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Words. These titles are available upon request by writing to the DBS through its website at DeanBurgonSociety.org.

Future Role of the DBS's Monthly *DBS eNEWS*

This monthly tool is being greatly used by the Lord. It is sent through the E-mail around the world. It is prepared each month by the skilled Managing Editor, Dr H D Williams, one of our DBS Vice Presidents. If you believe in our cause and want to help us spread these truths, please send us an E-mail with your E-mail address and regular address and tell us that you would like to receive this *DBS eNEWS* every time it is published. We must get our message out all around the world, and this excellent *DBS eNEWS* is one of the best ways of doing this.

Future Role of the DBS's Internet Audio and Video Outreach

Through the skill and help of Daniel Waite, our DBS treasurer, we have been able to video record, stream, and post many of our audio and video messages on the Internet for others to hear and see. This phase of the DBS outreach is growing rapidly. The messages are put on SermonAudio.com which is heard all over the world. Though this is just a rather recent program, for example, for the month of July 2010, the DBS had the following statistics: (1) Audio Messages: As of July, 2010, there were 1,089 MP3 messages downloaded. There have been a total of 45,036 MP3 messages downloaded in all. (2) Video Messages: As of July, 2010, there were 2,780 videos downloaded. There have been a total of 27,395 videos downloaded in all. (3) Internet Messages. As of July, 2010, there were a total of 411 different messages on the Internet that can be listened to 24 hours a day and seven days a week.

Future Role and Outreach of the DBS Ministry in the USA and Around the World

During July 2010, at least one of our messages was downloaded in all 50 states of the United States. In the same month, at least one of our messages was downloaded in a total of 47 foreign countries. Please continue to pray for God's leading in the entire ministry of the DBS around the world!

PART VI

Homilia

WHY ONLY KJV?

Jeffrey Khoo

Introduction

The Lord has not only inspired His Holy Word—absolutely perfect and completely without error—through His prophets and apostles during biblical times, He has also preserved it for His people down through the ages. There is no single time in history that the church did not have the Word of God. Although originally written in Hebrew and Greek, the Lord has raised faithful men to translate His Word into English so that we may know Him and make Him known.

Now in terms of English Bibles, there are at least half a dozen English versions of the Bible to choose from—besides the KJV, you have the NKJV, NASB, NIV, RSV, TEV, TLB, NEB, CEV etc. Can all these versions without exception be regarded as the Word of God? Imprinted on the front cover in all these versions are the words “Holy Bible.” Now the question we want to ask is: With so many modern versions available to us, why do we only use the KJV? Some of you may not be using the KJV. For non-KJV users you must ask yourself: Is the English version I am using the Word of God? How can I know whether my English Bible is God’s Word? Ask these 2 questions and put your version to the test: (1) Does it faithfully and accurately translate the original Hebrew and Greek Bible? and (2) Does it promote or demote our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ?

For our discussion, let us put 3 modern versions to the test, comparing them with the KJV. We will see how these popular versions (1) are unreliable translations of the Bible, and (2) have demoted the person and work of Christ. We will also see how the KJV is reliable and accurate in its translation of God’s Word.

The TEV or GNB and the Blood of Christ

How may a sinner be cleansed of sin? Only by the blood of Jesus Christ shed for us on the cross. For without the shedding of blood “there is no remission” (Heb 9:22). We are redeemed by “the precious blood of Christ” (1 Pet 1:19).

Yet the TEV (or Good News Bible) replaced the word “blood” with “death,” or “sacrifice.” This has occurred in these 10 places in the NT (Acts 20:28; Rom 3:25, 5:9; Eph 1:7, 2:13; Col 1:14, 20; 1 Pet 1:19; Rev 1:5, 5:9).

What is the problem with this? (1) **The TEV has changed the Word of God.** The word for “blood” found in all the above occurrences with reference to the blood of Christ is the Greek *haima* (*English: haemo—“blood”*). The word for death is a totally different word in the Greek—*thanatos* (*English: euthanasia—literally “good death;” or mercy killing*). By rendering the word *haima* as “death” instead of its actual meaning “blood,” the TEV has changed the Word of God. A translation must be a translation. You cannot in translating change the meaning of the original word. When you read your English Bible, you want to be sure that you are reading in English what the original Greek and Hebrew say. But the TEV prevents you from doing that. (2) **The TEV has twisted the doctrine of the atoning work of Christ.** It is important for us to understand that we are not simply saved by the death of Christ, but the death of Christ which involves the shedding of His precious blood. If Jesus were to die by drowning or had gone to the gallows (death by being hung on a rope or noose) without shedding of blood, His death would not have saved us. For without the shedding of blood is no remission. The blood is very important. “There is a fountain filled with blood, drawn from Immanuel’s veins, and sinner plunged beneath that flood, lose all their guilty stains.” There is power in the blood of Jesus Christ. So by mistranslating the word blood, the TEV has robbed us of the significance of the blood of Christ for our salvation.

The NIV and the Eternal Generation of Christ

The eternal generation of the second person of the Holy Trinity (i.e. Jesus is the eternally begotten Son of God) is an important doctrine of the Christian Faith. The 4th century Athanasian and Nicene Creeds state that Jesus is both Son and God “*only-begotten*, . . . of the Father before all the

ages.” The Westminster Confession of Faith likewise followed the ancient creeds in describing the relationship that exists within the Godhead: “In the unity of the Godhead, there be three persons, of one substance, power and eternity; God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. The Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is *eternally begotten* of the Father; the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son” (II.3).

All 3 ancient creeds describe Christ as only begotten, or eternally begotten. Now you know that every doctrine must be based on the Bible. Where in the Bible do we find Jesus being described as only begotten Son of God? If you have the KJV you will find it in John 1:14, and 3:16. But if you are using the NIV, you will have a hard time finding this doctrine in the Bible. The term “only begotten” with reference to Christ has been conveniently removed by the NIV. It mistranslates the Greek *monogenes* as “one and only.” Problem is *monogenes* does not just mean “one and only.” The Greek *monogenes* comes from 2 words: *monos* meaning “only” and *gennao* meaning “to beget” or “to generate.” The KJV translates it literally and accurately as “only begotten.”

Do you now see why we as Bible-Presbyterians cannot use the NIV? The WCF teaches according to the Scriptures that Jesus “the Son is eternally begotten of the Father.” Now if I were to teach a class on the WCF, we come to this point on the eternal generation of the Son, and one of you were to ask me this very good question: “In which verse of the Bible is Jesus described as the only begotten Son of God?” If I have the NIV as my Bible, I will no Biblical proof. The NIV has removed this important doctrine of the person of Christ from the Scriptures. It has subtracted from God’s Word; a very dangerous thing to do (Rev 22:19). That is why we cannot trust the NIV. Why? Because instead of telling us what God says, it tells us what man thinks God is saying. The NIV becomes an interpretation, and not translation of the Bible.

The RSV and the Virgin Birth of Christ

The precious prophecy of the Virgin Birth of Christ is found in Isa 7:14. The incarnation demands an extraordinary birth. This is indicated by the word “sign” in v14. The virgin birth was to be a miraculous sign.

But the RSV renders the Hebrew *’almah* as “young woman.” This does violence to the text. How can it be a “sign” when it is a “young

woman” who conceives? It is a God-given miracle only if a virgin conceives. Moreover, the angel Gabriel quoting Isa 7:14 in Matt 1:23 translates the Hebrew word *'almah* with the Greek *parthenos* which in no uncertain terms means “virgin.” So, multiple choice question: Which translator would you trust: (a) RSV or (b) Gabriel? If you answer (a) you get a big zero, if you choose (b) A+. Matt 1:18, and 25 tell us very clearly and emphatically that Mary was a virgin from the time she conceived Jesus till the time she gave birth to Him—a virgin conception and a virgin birth. The RSV has not only (1) corrupted the Word of God by making the prophecy of Isa 7:14 non-miraculous, it has also (2) attacked the virgin birth of Christ.

Rabbi Israel Bettan, professor of Hebrew Union College, was asked of his opinion of the RSV. He said, “The Revised Standard Version *is not a faithful translation*, and in some places the revisers do violence to the original Hebrew. It is a good book on the Bible, but *it is not the Bible*.” When asked to compare the King James Version with various translations, the rabbi said that of the English versions mentioned “*the King James Version was, in his opinion, the most faithful to the original.*”

Conclusion

The KJV is accurate in its translation of the Holy Scriptures, and faithful in exalting the Lord Jesus Christ. We cannot say the same for the TEV, NIV, and RSV. At various points they have corrupted the Word of God, and attacked the person of Jesus Christ. How can we use and promote these modernistic versions?

We thank the Lord for the good old version—the KJV. Let us stick to it, for we have full confidence that when we read it, we are reading the Word of God. And it is only when we read the Word of God in its purity and accuracy, not a diluted or corrupted version, that God will bless and stir our hearts to greater heights of spirituality and service.

NO PERFECTLY PRESERVED WORD OF GOD TODAY?

Tan Kian Sing

In Ephesians 4:14, the Apostle Paul warns believers, “That we *henceforth* be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.”

J C Ryle wrote, “False doctrine does not meet men face to face, and proclaim that it is false. It does not blow a trumpet before it, and endeavour openly to turn us away from the truth as it is in Jesus. It does not come before men in broad daylight and summon them to surrender. It approaches us secretly, quietly, insidiously, plausibly, and in such a way as to disarm man’s suspicion, and throw him off his guard. It is the wolf in sheep’s clothing, and Satan in the garb of an angel of light, who have always proved the most dangerous foes of the Church” (J C Ryle, *Warnings to the Churches*, 56).

In the gospel according to Matthew Chapter 24, the Lord Jesus taught the disciples how to look out for the signs of His coming, and of the end of the world. And one very common warning given by the Lord is to watch out for deception. In Matthew 24:4-5, the Lord warns, “Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.” Again in Matthew 24:11, the Lord warns, “And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.” And then in Matthew 24:24, He warns, “For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if *it were* possible, they shall deceive the very elect.”

Let us take heed of the warnings of the Lord and of the Apostle concerning the deception of the last days. Paul says, “Be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.” Children are very gullible. They are easily tricked into

believing lies. Are we like spiritual children and therefore easily deceived and carried away by every wind of doctrine?

To avoid being easily tossed to and fro by the trickery of men, we need to build ourselves up in the faith. We need to study the Word of God diligently, faithfully and prayerfully that we will not yield to the cunning craftiness of the father of lies.

Dear Reader, do you search the Scriptures daily and receive the truth with all readiness of mind (Acts 17:11)? Do you humbly and obediently respond to God's commandments with "Yes, Lord" (Mk 7:28), or do you challenge cunningly, like the serpent, "Yea, hath God said" (Gen 3:1)? Do you treasure the inspired, inerrant and infallible Word?

Consider the statement on the infallibility and inerrancy of Holy Scriptures by Dean Burgon of Oxford: "The Bible is none other than the voice of Him that sitteth upon the throne. Every book of it, every chapter of it, every verse of it, every word of it, every syllable of it, every letter of it, is the direct utterance of the Most High. The Bible is none other than the Word of God, not some part of it more, some part of it less, but all alike the utterance of Him that sitteth upon the throne, faultless, unerring, supreme." How do you regard the Word of God? Do you believe that God is exceedingly powerful and able to perfectly preserve His inspired Word all intact in every age? Do we not believe in the literal six-day creation, the world-wide flood in the days of Noah, the virgin birth of Christ, His bodily resurrection and ascension, the rapture of believers when Christ comes again? It is with this same simple faith that we believe in the perfect preservation of the Holy Scripture till today!

You must read "A Child of God Looks at the Doctrine of Verbal Plenary Preservation" by Miss Carol Lee (*Lecturer in Christian Education at the FEBC*) in the July 2005 issue of *The Burning Bush*. Sister Carol writes: "Just as I believe by faith that God created out of nothing and that He created over a literal six-day period because the Word of God says so (no matter what the scientists or the science text books say!), I believe by faith that God can and has preserved His words for us because the Word of God says so (no matter what the textual critics, scholarly linguists, commentators, etc may say!)."

"Just as much have been written against the six-day creation (and the other miracles in the Bible), much have also been (and will continue to be) written against the verbal, plenary preservation of the Word of God."

“But, finally, it is not what the ‘experts’ or ‘godly men’ say but what God’s Word says. It is not what I can see with my eyes and touch with my hands, it is what is revealed to me (and you) in God’s Word.”

The Word of God is truth. But in the last days, let us be aware of cunning men who change the truth of God into a lie inasmuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. But God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar (Rom 3:4).

God is perfect, and He has preserved His truth providentially down through the ages in the copies of the writings perfectly so that we today still have the perfect Word of God which converts our soul. If we reject the doctrine of perfect preservation, then we do not have the inspired, infallible and inerrant Word of God intact. So, beware of certain deception today which proclaims that we cannot accept with simple faith that we still have the Word of God that is perfect, infallible and inerrant. The psalmist says in Psalm 19 that the Word of God is perfect, sure, right, pure, clean, and true. Do we say “Amen, Amen and Amen”?

Yes, the Word of God is perfect. The Word of God is truth. It is therefore the power unto perfect salvation in a perfect God. It is the perfect Word of God that converts our souls unto salvation in Jesus Christ. And so let us be bold to speak the perfect word of truth. Paul tells us this is what we are to do in Ephesians 4:15, “speaking the truth in love.” Are we doing our part in the ministry by speaking the gospel of truth in love?

What is the gospel of truth? It is the gospel which tells us of the love of God for sinners like you and me. The Bible tells us that “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” God loves us and wants us to be with Him forever and ever. But because of sin in us, we cannot be with God. But God has His way. His way is to wash away our sins with the blood of His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. And so if you believe that you are a sinner, and you need to be washed in the blood of Jesus Christ, His blood washes you clean so that you can be with God forever in eternity. Do you recognise that you are a sinner? Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ that He is the Son of God who died by shedding His blood to wash away your sins? “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.”

THE UNFINISHED COMMISSION (MATT 28:18-20)

Timothy Tow

“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen” (Matt 28:18–20).

When Sun Yat-Sen, Father of the Chinese Republic, toppled the Manchu regime in 1911 and became its president, he called on his followers: “The Revolution is not yet finished. Let comrades struggle on” (革命尚未成功，同志仍须努力。). The Great Commission, which our Lord gave to the Church 2,000 years ago, is an Unfinished Commission. There remains much land to be conquered, and untold millions have yet to hear the Gospel. With the Return of our Saviour looming nearer each day, this Unfinished Commission must be accelerated. This is mandated to us in the Olivet discourse, *“And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come”* (Matt 24:14). What have you and I done to speed this Unfinished Task? We must confess we have done very little. *“Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent”* (Rev 2:5). If we do not repent from our Laodicean lukewarmness to serve the Lord fervently, God will give our candlestick to another that will fulfil His purpose. And has not our Lord given it to the Korean Church that has sent thousands of her sons and daughters to 120 countries in the world? And if it is true there is a Chinese restaurant wherever you go in the world, it is also true wherever you go in the world there is a Korean church.

Despite our cold-heartedness, He Himself will bring it to fruition. And though the Great Commission is unfinished, His power over heaven

and earth and His presence with His devout disciples will finish it. We believe in a sovereign God.

Now, the Unfinished Commission is a full-four Commission. Many works in the Name of the Lord by para-church organisations stress one or two points, but it is a full-four Commission. It is:

- (1) Go! This is the **Missions** emphasis.
- (2) Teach (*matheteusate*), ie, to make disciples. This is the **Evangelistic** emphasis.
- (3) Baptise. This is the **Church Planting** emphasis.
- (4) Teach (*didaskontes*). This is the **Indoctrination** emphasis.

When we diligently carry out these four points of the Unfinished Commission, we will be attended with divine power and blessed with His holy presence. “*All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. . . . and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.*” How often the Great Commission is misquoted, leaving out the all-pervasive power of God in us, around us and behind us to thrust us forward. No wonder the little headway we make in our own strength.

I

The Unfinished Commission begins with Go. Notice these are the first two letters that spell Gospel. The Gospel must be on the Go. Missions is the First Commandment to the Church. This is clearly exemplified in the Acts of the Apostles. And what the Apostles did for the early Church becomes our infallible pattern. Paul says, “*Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ*” (1 Cor 11:1).

Let us learn a lesson from the earliest churches. The church in Jerusalem was the first to be founded. It began in AD 33 with Pentecost, Though it continued for a full year in the Apostles’ doctrine it was not until a great persecution came upon it and scattered it abroad, that the disciples went everywhere preaching the Word (Acts 8:4).

Some of those scattered abroad travelled as far as Antioch. They preached to the Jews but others to Grecians and a great multitude believed. This Antioch Church drew the attention of Jerusalem which sent Barnabas to exhort them. To add more power to the Church, Barnabas departed to Tarsus to bring Saul in. Now, as the leaders of Antioch prayed, the Holy Ghost said, “*Separate me Barnabas and Saul*

for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away” (Acts 13:2-3). Thus was opened officially the Door of Foreign Missions. The pattern for us to follow between Jerusalem and Antioch is the latter one. Go with the Gospel is indeed the First Commandment to the Church.

Now, I come as one representing the mission field. My roots run deep to the year 1859 when my great-grandfather was converted in Swatow, South China. He was saved after William Chalmer Burns, Scots missionary sent by the English Presbyterian Mission. My great-grandfather became the first Swatow pastor in 1882. He gave his daughter to my grandfather because he also was a pastor. My father who became a doctor trained by the English Presbyterian Mission Hospital, was an elder. And now, me, whom the Lord has graciously accepted from my mother’s womb that I should follow in their steps.

My theological roots also reach back to China. I studied under Dr Chia Yu-Ming, ICCC Vice-president for China and Dr A B Dodd, missionary of the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions. From China, the Lord transplanted me to Faith Seminary, Wilmington, Delaware. After I graduated in 1950, I was ordained by the hands of the Philadelphia Presbytery at the Second Congress of the ICCC in Geneva. I returned to Singapore where I was called by my Mother Church to start an English Service.

In order to separate from our Mother Church which was linked to the National Council and the World Council of Churches, we established the Life Bible-Presbyterian Church. Rev Dr K C Quek, then an elder, stood firmly with me.

Now, in the matter of missions, we did not have a Mission Board to guide us. Our young, inexperienced Church, was our Mission Board. The four walls of our little church, with a congregation of 50, could not contain us. We went everywhere preaching the Gospel, especially to next door Malaysia. In four years we founded a station in South Malaysia, and in seven years we established two branch churches in Singapore. By God’s grace, Life Church has grown today to 48 churches and institutions (such as Far Eastern Bible College) all over Southeast Asia, with a dozen missionaries. This does not include the branch churches’ extended churches.

We have no overall mission board. Each B-P Church is its own mission board. The B-P Churches of Singapore, though now each on its own after our split in 1988, has become a missionary movement that has encircled the earth: in Southeast Asia, Burma, India, Pakistan, East and West Africa, England, Canada, Saipan, China, Australia. This is the Lord's doing. Without a mission board each church handles its own accounts, so the cost of running missions is nil.

As to financial support there is not the leniency of the American government which allows deduction for Income Tax. Ours is pure giving, after paying all the taxes. A good number pay their tithes and some much more above the sacred tenth. And when others outside our church are touched by the good reports of our missionaries, they channel their gifts to us. I say all this as a testimony to the Lord's blessing on our home grown missionary movement.

But the pastor himself must be the ever outgoing one. Like the Israeli commanders, the generals and colonels must be prepared to lead at the forefront.

Furthermore, we encourage the formation of laymen's missionary societies, so that young people are attracted to mission trips on their own. Out of these trips have gathered smaller groups who go out at regular intervals to speak at children's and youth meetings, and sometimes at church services. This quickens the growth of young churches in the mission fields. Insofar as Life Church is concerned, our Missions Fellowship publishes its own literature and runs its own accounts.

II

The second point in the Unfinished Commission is the need to make disciples, to evangelise. This the pastor must emphasise and apply in his weekly sermon. The pastor must be a soul winner. He must make every effort to hold evangelistic meetings. The dissemination of Gospel tracts is a silent auxiliary to evangelism. Some of these from his own pen add a personal touch. The Sunday School and children's ministry must also be geared to the saving of souls. The members added to the church by baptism each year is a barometer of its growth.

Soul-saving is also the main task of our missionaries. The failure of missionaries is their lack in winning souls. Hence the quick resignations from the fields, or if they hang on, it's a chore and a job, not a joy.

Missionaries of this calibre are quick to assert their rights but slow to perform their duty.

We have a most outstanding example of a missionary. A graduate of Far Eastern Bible College, he is sent by my brother's church, Calvary B-P Church, to the island of Saipan, former Japanese territory in the South Pacific now under American mandate. For six years he has had a most illustrious ministry to the garment sewers, mostly women from mainland China. With a vigorous emphasis on repentance from sin and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, he has baptised 600 in six years. His converts are born again in tears of repentance. Though we do not expect every missionary to measure up to him, he has set the pace for others to follow, to the glory of God.

A collateral in the advancing of missions is the support of nationals. These are chosen from foreign graduates of Far Eastern Bible College. For example, Rev Robert Thawn Luai, graduate from an Indian Bible College, came for a semester's refresher course at FEBC. Having proven his worth as leader of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Burma, we supported his work by building a four-storey Bible College, costing half a million. Nearly a hundred have graduated from this College since 1987. Many of the graduates have become pastors who have added to the growth of his denomination, from 22 to 55 churches.

We have supported several other national leaders and are pleased with their steady progress, not only in Burma but also in Indonesia and Malaysia. With their natural fluency in the vernacular they have instant access to the hearts of their own people. This method of missionary work is most cost-effective.

III

The third point in the Unfinished Commission is baptism, which is missed out by para-church organisations. Calvin defines a Church to be one that preaches the Word regularly on the Lord's Day and that administers baptism and the Lord's Supper. This is the foundation of the local church.

It is important for believers to be baptised and be joined to the local church. And it is this sacrament and the Lord's Supper that builds it up to be a branch of the universal Church. Being baptised as a member, he has obligations to fulfil. He not only attends church regularly according to

Hebrews 10:25, but also gives of his substance to support the work of the Church. The tithe is the test.

When Life Church was branching out to build a new church, we did not rely on man's method of raising funds by jumble sales, garage sales, fun fairs, concerts, etc. We preached tithing and free-will offerings. One weapon, very effective, is interest-free loans.

Baptism is normally given to the catechumens who attend catechism classes for an extended period. To those who receive Christ on sick beds, it must not be delayed. Once baptised the family which often is non-Christian, will submit to the Lord. The power of baptism over heathens is to be experienced by western pastors.

Evangelism and baptism is the only way to solid church growth. Not by the display of charismatic gifts, the slaying of spirits, and speaking in tongues. Nor social programmes catering to the flesh. But by the slow but steady process of winning them to the Lord, one by one.

IV

The fourth point of the Unfinished Commission is "*Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.*" This is where full indoctrination comes in. Although the Sunday School is a powerful auxiliary to imparting Scripture knowledge to members, we need the Bible College or Seminary to train pastors, teachers, and missionaries. The secret of growth of the Bible-Presbyterian Church in Singapore is the Far Eastern Bible College, founded 1962. Over 350 have come out of its classrooms and many scores have been ordained who are now serving in many parts of the world.

Our students have also to be trained to contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. Being in the 20th century Reformation Movement, we have taken a stand against the many "isms" that try to undermine the Church: liberalism, modernism, neo-evangelicalism, charismatism, ECTism (Evangelicals and Catholics Together), the total denial of the 16th century Reformation.

There is now a concerted attack also on the Bible. The hundred versions of the English Bible, beginning with the Revised Version of 1881, have swarmed out of the Westcott and Hort Pandora Box, so that our vision of Truth is blurred. For a century a conspiracy of silence on the evil character of the two masquerading angels of light in textual criticism

have prevailed. Faith Seminary and Dallas Seminary, for example, had sheepishly bowed to their dictates. In Faith Seminary, I was taught all that Westcott and Hort had revised of the beloved King James Bible was Gospel Truth. Ten thousand alterations and deletions were accepted by us students, such as the passage of Jesus pardoning the woman taken in adultery, the last 12 verses of Mark, and the Johannine *comma*—1 John 5:7-8. These were declared later interpolations. As much as the equivalent of 1 and 2 Peter were scissored.

But now the true colours of these so-called Greek experts are revealed, the best part of it all, by the sons of Westcott and Hort. Do you know that Westcott and Hort were liberals and modernists of the deepest dye? They detested the doctrine of the infallibility and inerrancy of the Scriptures, denied the Virgin Birth of Christ, His Blood atonement and resurrection. They derisively declared the Creation, Temptation and Fall to be myths. They were secret worshippers of Mary. They were friends of Darwin, Freud (called a Fraud by *The Straits Times*) and Carl Jung, all enemies of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Westcott founded the Hermes Club at Cambridge, which was reputed to be a homosexual club. He branched into the Ghost Club with Hort and others. Scoffers called it the Bogey Club. Bogey means Devil. They practised necromancy, ie, communicating with the dead, which is abominable to the Lord (Deut 18:11,12).

They were the architects of revision of the KJB, but where is the Revised Version of 1881 now? It died a diseased death. *“Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire”* (Matt 7:19). Now, the hundred new versions that have swarmed out of Westcott and Hort are emanations from their corrupt text, in one way or another.

“When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him” (Isa 59:19). While God has used Dr Carl McIntire to raise the ICCC Standard, there was a fellow student of his in the early days of the founding of Westminster. He was McIntire’s friend and his name is Edward F Hills (ThD, Harvard). He took a brave stand against Westcott and Hort. Before him was David Otis Fuller. At one of the ICCC Congresses I heard Dr Fuller’s impassioned appeal to stand up for the KJB. Then arose Dr D A Waite (ThD, PhD), president of the Dean Burgon Society, who testifies how when a student at Dallas he was as much taken in as when I was in Faith Seminary. Following him is

raised up another, David W Cloud, with his *O Timothy* monthly. Though G A Riplinger has been questioned for accuracy here or there in the exposure of Westcott and Hort in her book *New Age Versions*, she has done yeoman service in ripping off the masks of Westcott and Hort (Riplinger's book has sold 100,000 copies). Last but not least is my brother, Dr S H Tow, whose latest defence of the King James Bible, *Beyond Versions*, is just off the press and to him is added the full weight of FEBC's faculty. (Last but not least is the Resolution on the Bible by the International Council of Christian Churches at her 50th Anniversary Meeting in Amsterdam, August 11-15, 1998, supporting the KJB against the hundred versions.)

Conclusion

The Unfinished Commission is encumbered with so many wiles of the Devil, especially in Satan's last attack on His Holy Word. *"Yea, truth faileth; and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey: and the LORD saw it, and it displeased him that there was no judgment. And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him"* (Isa 59:15,16). Truth must prevail! *"For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth"* (2 Cor 13:8).

The words of Sun Yat-Sen, Father of the Chinese Republic, that the Revolution he led to topple the Manchus was unfinished, and comrades must continue to struggle on reminds us that the Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ is also far from finished. Let us go forward to carry out its fourfold programme of Missions, Evangelism, Church planting, and full theological indoctrination with increasing acceleration until our Lord comes again. Even so, Come Lord Jesus.

We are in the closing chapter of the 20th century Reformation. In no time we will enter the new millennium, and will there be a 21st century Reformation?

WILL OUR B-P SONS DEFEND THE FAITH?

Jeffrey Khoo

Will Our Sons Defend the Faith? was the title of a good book the Rev Dan Ebert III wrote and published by the Far Eastern Bible College in 1999. There is a real need today for Protestant sons to know the Historic Christian Faith, not just doctrinally but also polemically, in the spirit of Jude 3, “*Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.*”

How we thank God for the 16th Century Protestant Reformation! How we thank God for the brave and godly servants like Luther and Calvin whom the Lord had raised up to defend the Faith. Without the Light of the Reformation, we today would still be in Roman Catholic darkness and bondage.

Reformation is unending and ever continuing. We remember the 20th Century Reformation Movement under Dr Carl McIntire. The Bible-Presbyterian (B-P) Church and all faithful fundamentalists fought hard and well against modernism, ecumenism, and neo-evangelicalism. It was a battle for the Bible, and the battle was fought and won. The doctrine of Verbal Plenary Inspiration (VPI) has become the orthodox expression of our belief in a totally inerrant and infallible Scripture.

The battle for the Bible continues into the 21st century. Now the battle concerns not just the doctrine of VPI, but also Verbal Plenary Preservation (VPP) of the Holy Scriptures. So-called “evangelicals” and “fundamentalists” today are denying that the Church has in her possession a perfect Bible. They claim that the Bible was only infallible and inerrant in the past when it was first given, but no longer infallible and inerrant today. God has inspired His words perfectly, but did not preserve His words likewise. They teach that Christians do not have all of God’s words today, and even if they do, they cannot be absolutely sure

where the inspired words are. There is no tangible Word of God that is infallible and inerrant in every way today. Every Hebrew text is impure, every Greek text is impure, every translation is impure. There is simply no such thing as a perfect Bible, no such thing as a perfect Written Standard today. If that be the case, how can we be sure that Christianity is true? If the Bible today contains mistakes, how can we know for certain that our faith is sure? “*Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God*” (Rom 10:17). But they insist that the Word of God is impure and imperfect today because God did not preserve His words infallibly by special providence. If we do not have an infallible and inerrant Scripture today, then is not our faith vain? Are we still not in our sins? Christians are a most miserable lot for sure (Ps 11:3)!

But our Protestant Confessions of Faith since the days of the Reformation affirm that our Scriptures have been “kept pure in all ages” (*Westminster Confession*, I:VIII). We have a perfect Bible today, and on the basis of the doctrine of the *special* providential preservation of God’s words in the original languages, Christians by the *logic of faith* can know for sure where the inspired words today are found or located, available and accessible (Heb 11:3, 6).

Despite the sure teaching of Scripture (Ps 12:6-7, Matt 5:18, 24:35), and the clear testimony of the Protestant and Reformed Confessions concerning the jot-and-tittle preservation of the Holy Scriptures, many who call themselves “Protestant” and “Reformed” say that the VPP of the Holy Scriptures is a “new doctrine.” They say that God did not promise He will preserve His words infallibly to the last letter and syllable. Those who teach the 100% perfection of the Bible today are branded as “heretics.” They accuse those who teach that the Bible is 100% perfect and without any mistakes as being “ungodly” and “unscholarly.” The godly and scholarly man today is the one who agrees with the so-called “facts” and “evidences” that the Bible today is only 85% or 90% or 99.9% for it contains some “insignificant mistakes,” and has “built-in redundancies.” If asked about whether the Bible today has mistakes or not, the best that Christians can say today is, “There are no mistakes in the Bible that should cause us any worry.” According to deniers of the VPP of the Holy Scriptures, claiming “the Bible today has no mistakes whatsoever” is extreme and untenable.

“If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do” (Ps 11:3)? Our foundations are not destroyed and can never be. May we—as Bible-Presbyterians—remember our Roots, our Book, our Lord, our Work, our Hope:

(1) Our Roots: The B-P Faith is rooted in the Protestant Reformation and in Biblical Fundamentalism. Our roots tell us that we need to keep on *“earnestly contending for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints”* (Jude 3). Calvin in the 16th century and McIntire in the 20th century had their own spiritual and doctrinal battles to fight, and we have ours. In the 21st century, it is for the perfect preservation of the Holy Scriptures. The 16th and 20th century Reformation cry of *Sola Scriptura* (Scriptures Alone) must ring true even today as we seek to defend ...

(2) Our Book: The B-P Faith is anchored solely on the divinely inspired and supernaturally preserved Word of God. The Bible in our hands today is not only 100% inspired but also 100% preserved (Ps 12:6-7, Matt 5:18, 2 Tim 3:16, 1 Pet 1:23-25). The Bible today is in the 100% inspired and 100% preserved Hebrew and Greek Scriptures on which the Authorised KJV is based, and not in the corrupt Westcott and Hort text underlying the inferior modern English versions. There is only one Bible today (the inspired and preserved original language Bible), because we have only one Lord.

(3) Our Lord: The B-P Faith believes in a Saviour who is 100% God and 100% Man in one Person—Jesus Christ—the only living and true God and Saviour of the world. Our Lord and Saviour who is all-powerful and all-knowing surely could not have allowed any of His inspired words (not just the doctrines) to be lost for He had promised to preserve them to the last iota (Matt 5:18). Our Lord can only tell the truth; He cannot lie (Rom 3:4). His promises are true and He has kept His words. If this be the case, then what is our duty?

(4) Our Work: The B-P Faith is a militant faith which separates from all forms of unbelief and apostasy. It is the duty of every Christian to believe the Bible and defend the Bible wholeheartedly and courageously against the insidious attacks on the Scriptures by neo-evangelicalism which says the Bible is *imperfectly inspired* (no perfect Bible in the past), and the neo-deism which says the Bible is *imperfectly preserved* (no perfect Bible in the present). Confusion arises when no

clear stand is taken, when lines are blurred. There is a vital need to take a separatist stand and a declared position “*for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ*” (Rev 1:9 cf 2 Cor 6:14-7:1, 2 Thess 3:16-14). We seek God’s approval, not man’s. The compromiser is the one who seeks the popular vote. But one with God is majority! It is no surprise that neo-fundamentalists today are prepared to abandon the good name of “Biblical fundamentalism” in favour of “paleo-evangelicalism” which is actually the old “neo-evangelicalism.”

(5) Our Hope: The B-P Faith believes in the glorious promise that once a Christian is saved, he is always saved. The God of the Christian Bible who has promised to preserve every one of His inspired Hebrew and Greek words has also promised to preserve every one of His saints who have been redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ (John 10:27-29, Rom 8:28-39). We reject the mistaken Arminian view that a Christian can fall into and out of grace—saved at one moment, and unsaved the next. The Lord will never disown His children even when they are sometimes disobedient, “*For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth*” (Heb 12:6). Every Christian will surely get to heaven. The Holy Spirit who indwells every believer guarantees it (Eph 1:13-14).

We are confident that the foundations of our faith are sure and secure. Our foundations are none other than (1) the Living Word—our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ who is “*the same yesterday, today and for ever,*” and (2) the Written Word—the 100% inspired and 100% preserved Hebrew and Greek words of the Reformation Text that are incorruptible, unchangeable, and forever infallible and inerrant, that form the basis of all faithful translations of the Protestant Reformation.

As Bible-Presbyterians, we are **BIBLE first**, then Presbyterians. But certain pastors and presbyters today override the Bible and criticise the Bible they hold in their hands. The question and challenge of the hour remains: Will history repeat itself? Will our sons deny the faith, or will they defend the Faith? O Lord, save us from the apostasy to come!

PART VII

Testimonia

A HISTORY OF MY DEFENCE OF THE KING JAMES VERSION

Edward F Hills

New Testament Textual Criticism at Westminster 1935-8

I have been interested in the problem of New Testament textual criticism since my high school days in the 1920's. At that time I began to read the commentaries of Charles Hodge, books that were part of my Presbyterian heritage. I noticed that Hodge would sometimes mention variant readings, most however, just to show that he was knowledgeable, for he rarely departed from "the common text" (*textus receptus*) and "our English version" (King James). Even so, my curiosity was aroused, so that in 1931, when I was a sophomore at Yale University I took down C R Gregory's *Canon and Text of the New Testament* from a library shelf and began to read. I was dismayed at the large number of verses that, according to Gregory and his teachers Westcott and Hort, must be rejected from the Word of God. Nor was I much comforted by Gregory's assurance that the necessary damage had been done and the rest of the text had been placed on an unassailable basis. How could I be sure of this? It seemed to me that the only way to gain assurance on this point was to go to Westminster Seminary and study the subject under the tutelage of Dr Machen, who preached in New Haven rather frequently in those days, talking to Yale students at least twice.

Dr B B Warfield and the Providential Preservation of the New Testament

When I began to study New Testament textual criticism at Westminster (under Dr Stonehouse) I found that the first day or so was mainly devoted to praising Dr B B Warfield. He was lauded for being among the first to recognise the "epoch making" importance of the theory of Westcott and Hort and for establishing the Westcott and Hort tradition at Princeton Seminary, a tradition which was now being faithfully

perpetuated at Westminster Seminary. To me, however, all this was very puzzling. Dr Warfield was a renowned defender of the Reformed faith and of the Westminster Confession, yet in the department of New Testament textual criticism he agreed entirely with liberals such as Westcott, Hort and C R Gregory. He professed to agree with the statement of the Westminster Confession that the Scriptures by God's "singular care and providence" had been "kept pure in all ages," but it was obvious that this providential preservation of the Scriptures was of no importance to Dr Warfield when he actually began to deal with the problems of the New Testament. When he engaged in New Testament textual criticism, Dr Warfield ignored the providential preservation of the Scriptures and treated the text of the New Testament as he would the text of any book or writing. "It matters not whether the writing before us be a letter from a friend, or an inscription from Carchemish, or a copy of a morning newspaper, or Shakespeare, or Homer, or the Bible."

I may be reading into my student days some of my later thinking, but it seems to me that even at that time I could see that the logic of Warfield's naturalistic New Testament textual criticism led steadily downward toward modernism and unbelief. For if the providential preservation of the Scriptures was not important for the study of the New Testament text, then it could not have been important for the history of the New Testament text. And if it had not been important for the history of the New Testament, then it must have been non-existent. It could not have been a fact. And if the providential preservation of the Scriptures was not a fact, why should the infallible inspiration of the Scriptures be regarded as a fact? Why would God infallibly inspire a book and then decline to preserve it providentially? For example, why would God infallibly inspire the Gospel of Mark and then permit (as Warfield thought possible) the ending of it (describing the resurrection appearances of Christ) to be lost?

Why Dr Warfield was so Inconsistent: His Scholastic Heritage

Why was Dr Warfield so inconsistent in the realm of New Testament textual criticism? Dr Van Til's course in apologetics enabled me to supply the answer to this question. Dr Warfield's inconsistency was part of his scholastic inheritance, an error which had been handed down to him from the middle-ages. Let me explain.

During the middle-ages the schoolmen tried to reconcile the philosophy of Aristotle with the dogmas of the Roman Catholic Church by separating faith from reason, and praying from thinking. While dealing with dogma, faith and prayer were appropriate, but the study of philosophy was reason's province. So the medieval schoolmen contended, and soon this doctrine of the separation of faith from reason became generally accepted throughout the medieval Roman Catholic Church.

The Protestant Reformers were fully occupied with other matters. Hence they spent but little time combating this medieval Roman Catholic error of the separation of faith and reason. Hence this false scholastic doctrine survived the Reformation and soon became embedded in the thinking of conservative Protestants everywhere. In the 18th century, Butler and Paley built their apologetic systems on this false principle of the separation of faith and reason, and in the 19th century, at Princeton and other conservative theological seminaries, this scholastic principle even governed the curriculum and the way in which several subjects were taught. Systematic theology, practical theology and homiletics were placed in one box labeled FAITH. All the other subjects, including New Testament textual criticism, biblical introduction, apologetics and philosophy, were placed in another box labeled REASON.

We see now why Dr Warfield was so inconsistent. We see why he felt himself at liberty to adopt the naturalistic theories of Westcott and Hort, and did not perceive that in so doing he was contradicting the Westminster Confession and even his own teaching in the realm of systematic theology. The reason was that Dr Warfield kept these subjects in separate boxes. Like an authentic, medieval scholastic, he kept his systematic theology and the Westminster Confession in his FAITH box and his New Testament textual criticism in his REASON box. Since he never tried to mingle the contents of these two boxes, he was never fully aware of the discrepancies in his thinking.

Dean Burgon: His Emphasis on the Providential Preservation of Scripture

When I began to study New Testament textual criticism at Westminster in 1935, I noticed another thing. Almost as much time was spent in disparaging Dean Burgon as in praising Dr Warfield. This again aroused my curiosity. Who was this Dean Burgon? Upon investigation, I

found that he had been a British scholar that had not fitted into the usual scholastic mold. He had not kept his theology and his New Testament textual criticism in two separate boxes, but had actually dared to make his theology the guiding principle of his New Testament textual criticism. For this he was pronounced “unscholarly.” Actually, he was merely following the logic of faith. He believed that the New Testament was the infallibly inspired Word of God. Hence it had been preserved down through the ages by God’s special providence, not secretly in holes and caves and on forgotten library shelves but publicly in the usage of God’s Church. Hence the text found in the vast majority of the New Testament manuscripts is the true text because this is the text that has been used by God’s Church. As soon as I began to read Burgon’s works, I was impressed by this logic of faith and also by the learned arguments by which Burgon refuted the contention of Tischendorf, Tregelles, Westcott, Hort, etc. Finally after some years of hesitation, I definitely committed myself to his view in 1952.

But there are problems connected with Burgon’s view. Burgon was a high Anglican who emphasised the role of bishops in the history of the Church. He believed that the New Testament text had been preserved mainly by the bishops of the ancient and medieval Church. Hence he defended the text found in the majority of the New Testament manuscripts, but he would not defend the printed *Textus Receptus* because it had not been produced by bishops. He would, however, defend the King James Version because this had been produced by bishops. Here he was inconsistent because the King James Version is a translation of the *Textus Receptus*.

We solve this problem by substituting the biblical doctrine of the universal priesthood of believers for Burgon’s high Anglicanism. Just as the Old Testament text was preserved by the Old Testament priests, so the New Testament text was preserved by the universal priesthood of believers, that is by true believers in every walk of life. And this providential preservation did not cease with the invention of printing. Hence the true text is found not only in the text of the majority of the New Testament manuscripts but more especially in the *Textus Receptus* and in faithful translations of the *Textus Receptus*, such as the King James Version. In short, the *Textus Receptus* represents the God-guided revision of the majority text.

Burgon mingled his faith with his New Testament textual criticism, urging the providential preservation of the Scriptures as the chief argument in favour of the traditional (majority) New Testament text. It was for this breach of etiquette that he was regarded as not truly scholarly. But isn't it possible to escape this stigma and still do a good job of defending the majority text? Isn't it possible to drop Burgon's emphasis on the special, providential preservation of Scripture and rely solely on more accurate arguments? Hodges, Pickering and Van Bruggen seem to think this is possible, but in so thinking they are badly mistaken. The same thing must be said of them that has just been said of Dr Warfield. In spite of their good intentions, their thinking is pointed toward modernism and unbelief. For if the providential preservation of the holy Scriptures is unimportant for the defence of the New Testament text, then it must be unimportant for the history of the New Testament text and hence non-existent and not a fact. And if the providential preservation of the Scriptures is not a fact, why should we suppose that the infallible inspiration of the Scriptures is a fact? For inspiration and preservation go together.

Hodges and Pickering try to substitute their theory of statistical probability for Burgon's doctrine of the special providential preservation of the Scriptures. According to these two scholars, statistical probability shows that whenever the transmission of an ancient book has been normal, the best text is found in the majority of the manuscripts. The transmission of the New Testament text has been normal. Hence the text found in the majority of the New Testament manuscripts is the best New Testament text.

In advancing this argument, however, Hodges and Pickering contradict themselves. For they both claim to believe in the providential preservation of the Scriptures, and if this providential preservation is a fact, then something is true of the New Testament which is not true of the transmission of other ancient books. Hence the transmission of the New Testament cannot have been normal. And even from a naturalistic point of view their argument is faulty. For the New Testament is a religious book, and the transmission of a religious book is never normal because it is transmitted mainly by believers who do not regard it as a normal book.

Scholasticism Versus the Logic of Faith

Conservative theological seminaries organised on the scholastic model, separating faith and reason, inevitably become modernistic and unbelieving. The area allotted to reason is steadily enlarged and that remaining for faith correspondingly decreased. The box labeled FAITH is emptied, while REASON'S box is crammed full. This process of deterioration cannot be avoided because as soon as we give reason an equal place with faith in our thinking we have no true faith at all. God is the Supreme Reality, the source of all things real, and therefore, we must believe on Him as such. We must allow nothing else to be as real as God. If we found even a part of our thinking on a set of rational principles which are independent of God, then we are no longer believing but doubting.

We see, therefore, that if Westminster Seminary is to preserve itself from modernism, it must purge itself from all remnants of scholasticism. It must rid itself completely from every tendency to separate reason from faith. And especially must it do this in the department of New Testament textual criticism. In this area particularly it must put away the naturalistic theories of Westcott and Hort and others like them and follow the logic of faith which runs like this: *Because the Gospel is true and necessary for the salvation of souls, the Bible which contains this Gospel was infallibly inspired and has been preserved by God's special providence, not secretly in holes and caves, but publicly in the usage of God's Church.*

Moreover, this special providence did not cease with the invention of printing. Therefore, the true New Testament text is found today in the majority of the Greek New Testament manuscripts, in the *Textus Receptus*, and in the King James Version and other faithful translations of the *Textus Receptus*. And therefore also this same preserving providence is operating today through the agency of all true believers, however humble, who retain and defend the King James Version.

FROM THE Gnostic CRITICAL GREEK TEXT TO THE TRADITIONAL RECEIVED NEW TESTAMENT TEXT

D A Waite

My First Experience with Greek at the University of Michigan

The first time I had anything to do with the Greek language was at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan. At that university, I majored for my Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree in Classical Greek and Latin. I had begun as a pre-medical major, but when the Lord called me to His service, I changed my major to Classical Greek and Latin. The reason for this was that I intended to attend Dallas Theological Seminary in Dallas, Texas, in order to prepare for the Lord's work. That school required 8 semester hours of Greek as a pre-admission requirement. Since I had to take 8 semester hours of Greek, I decided to major in it at the University of Michigan from 1945 through 1948.

My Language Studies Totals at Both the University of Michigan and Dallas Theological Seminary

From 1948 through 1953, I was a resident student at Dallas Theological Seminary, Dallas, Texas. While there, I decided to major for my Master of Theology (ThM) degree in New Testament Literature and Exegesis. I took a total of 66 semester hours of Greek either at the University of Michigan or at the Dallas Theological Seminary. In addition to this, I took 25 semester hours of Hebrew, 11 semester hours of Spanish, 8 semester hours of Latin, and 8 semester hours of French. This is a total of 118 semester hours of languages from both these schools. For my Doctor of Theology (ThD) degree, I majored in Bible Exposition, but still was uninformed about what Greek text our King James Bible was based upon.

The New Testament Greek Text Used at Dallas Theological Seminary

The Greek text used during all five years in residence at Dallas Theological Seminary (DTS) was that of Bishop Westcott and Professor Hort. In fact, their very text was sold to us students at the DTS bookstore. During my five years there at DTS, in both the required and the elective courses that I took, there was never any mention that there were two different basic Greek texts, the Gnostic Critical Greek Text which we used and the Traditional Textus Receptus Greek Text. I was indoctrinated as to their Greek Text, but not educated as to the other Greek Text.

My First Knowledge of the Traditional Received Greek Text

For the next 20 years, I remained in ignorance of the Traditional Textus Receptus or Received Greek Text. I found out about this Received Greek Text one day from one of my students at Shelton College, Cape May, New Jersey where I was professor of Greek and Public Speaking. The student's name was Sandra Philips. She raised her hand in Greek class one day and asked, "*Dr Waite, did you know there is a book in our library that defends both the Traditional Greek Text and the King James Bible?*" I replied honestly, "*No, Sandy, I am not aware of that book.*" The book she was referring to was *The Revision Revised* by Dean John William Burgon. Soon after that, I went to the Princeton University Library in Princeton, New Jersey, read that book, and eventually put it back into print along with four of Dean Burgon's other books on this subject. All five of these books have been published and are available from the Dean Burgon Society. I have been the president of this group for 33 years now.

My Present Position on the New Testament Greek Text

For the last 40 years or more, I have been writing about, speaking about, debating about, and defending the King James Bible and its underlying Traditional Hebrew Masoretic Old Testament Words and its underlying Traditional Textus Receptus Greek Words. At the same time, I have been writing against, speaking against, debating against, and refuting the modern Bible versions and the Gnostic Critical Greek Text on which they are based. I would encourage every student, every pastor, and every church member in all the churches of the world to follow the

same course of action that I followed when confronted with the truth of the Traditional Received Greek Text: (1) accept it and defend completely and (2) reject and refute completely the Gnostic Greek Text that has been taught and continues to be taught in the churches, colleges, universities, graduate schools, and seminaries all around the world.

FROM RSV TO KJV

Jeffrey Khoo

My first Bible was the RSV presented to me when I was baptised in a Lutheran Church in 1974. Later I was given the Good News Bible for Modern Man or TEV. Although I used the Good News Bible, my main Bible was the RSV until I backslided from the Lord a couple of years later.

By the grace of God, I was brought back to the Lord in 1979-80. The independent, Brethren church that I attended allowed the use of any version. I enjoyed studying the Bible through the excellent Sunday School programme this church offered, and grew in my Christian faith. Someone gave me the NASB. I read the whole NASB from cover to cover, marking it heavily. I had no knowledge about the Bible Version issue in those days, and did not realise that the NASB had omitted certain parts of God's Word. Now I know the NASB, though a literal translation, is based on the mutilated text of Westcott and Hort and hence unreliable.

When I was in Junior College (1981-2), I was introduced to the NIV. Although I referred to it occasionally I never got used to the NIV, preferring the NASB.

When I signed up for the Cambridge "A" Level Divinity course in junior college, my teacher, an Anglican, recommended the RSV. I refused to follow. This teacher also taught the liberal view that Isaiah was not written by Isaiah himself, but by two or more Isaiahs. I refused to follow, and argued strongly against those Deutero- and Trito-Isaianic views. My teacher warned me that I would not do well in my Cambridge exams if I persisted in taking a strictly conservative view of just one Isaiah. He consistently gave me low grades. When the final Cambridge examinations came, I purposed in my heart to honour the Lord with my answers. I believe in God's promise that He would honour those who honour Him. When the results finally came, I scored a distinction in Divinity, and my overall results were good enough to earn a place at the National University.

It was during my National Service days, during my Basic Military Training stint, that I used an old pocket-sized KJV that belonged to my mother. It was small enough for me to put it into my ammunition pouch whenever I went out for field training. I would read my Bible whenever I had free time. Indeed, the Bible was my spiritual ammunition during those trying army days. I found the KJV so easy to remember and to memorise.

I began to use the KJV seriously only in my Bible College days. After receiving God's call to full-time Christian service, I decided to train for the ministry at the Far Eastern Bible College which uses the KJV. This was in 1985. The principal—Rev Dr Timothy Tow—was using a Scofield KJV. I got myself a New Scofield KJV, and used it with great delight throughout my four years of theological training.

It was in FEBC that I learned to love the KJV. In my study of Biblical Greek and Hebrew, I discovered that the KJV was an extremely literal and accurate translation of the original language texts. Also the many corruptions and mistranslations of the modern versions like the RSV and NIV were thoroughly exposed and refuted by Rev Tow. Rev Tow proved to us students how the RSV and NIV attacked the virgin birth of Christ in Isa 7:14, the former by replacing “virgin” with “young woman,” and the latter by suggesting that the virgin birth was not unique since it was fulfilled not just by Christ but also by the son of the prophet's second wife. Rev Tow also soundly refuted the NIV's twisting of the Hebrew text in Isa 49:12 to read Aswan (Egypt) instead of Sinim (China).

Although FEBC during my student days took a strong stand for the KJV, the faculty seemed to be ignorant of the textual problem that surrounded the modern versions. In our Intermediate and Advanced Greek classes we used the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament. I did not know that this Greek text did not square with the KJV, neither did my lecturers tell me. It was not until I studied New Testament Introduction in 1987 that I was exposed to Westcott and Hort and to textual criticism. In that course, the lecturer taught the so-called “eclectic” method of textual criticism which followed basically the Westcott-Hort paradigm. Bruce Metzger's book *The Text of the New Testament* was required reading. (I still have a copy of the textual critical assignment that I had to complete which seemed a futile exercise to me then.) I was really unhappy about the so-called “science” of textual

criticism. This was because textual criticism required me to judge the Bible. I found the textual critical rules to be extremely subjective.

After I graduated from FEBC, the Lord opened a door for me to further my studies in the United States. I went first to Grace Theological Seminary where I worked for my MDiv. At Grace, I was taught again the “eclectic method,” this time by Dr Homer Kent. Dr Kent was one of the NIV translators. He spent significantly more time on Westcott and Hort and their method than on Dean Burgon. He recommended J Harold Greenlee’s *Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism* which I made it a point to buy, but did not mention any of E F Hills’s books in defence of the *Textus Receptus*.

After I completed my studies at Grace, I went to Biblical Theological Seminary for my STM. There I read an anti-KJV tract written by Dr Allan MacRae (founder of Biblical Seminary) and his student Dr Robert Newman. Biblical was and still is a pro-Westcott/Hort seminary.

Thankfully, Trinity Theological Seminary where I earned my PhD used the KJV. It was a separatist school. My dissertation, “The Four Gospels in Unison: A Synthetic Harmony of the Four Gospels in the King James Version with Exegetical Harmonisation and Exposition of Select Parallel and Difficult Texts,” was approved and well received by the seminary, and part of my dissertation was published in the seminary bulletin.

When I returned from the States, I was assigned to teach Greek Reading at Far Eastern Bible College. Since I had studied Greek using the UBSGNT from 1985-1992, I continued to use it in my Greek classes. In December 1992, Calvary B-P Church invited Dr D A Waite to speak on the KJV issue. It was the first time I had heard of this man, and his book *Defending the King James Bible*. Dr Waite who earned a ThD from Dallas Theological Seminary and a PhD from Purdue University wrote a 320-page scholarly defence of the KJV which I read with delight. I took a greater interest in the textual issue, and read Edward F Hills’s *The King James Version Defended*. Through Hills’s book I discovered the sorely neglected doctrine of biblical preservation. It was a doctrine affirmed in the Westminster Confession of Faith. As a Bible-Presbyterian, I was flabbergasted that I did not know this doctrine. I was never taught it. I knew well the doctrine of biblical inspiration, but had never heard of

From RSV to KJV

biblical preservation. This doctrine is clearly taught in Ps 12:6-7, Matt 5:18, 24:35. I felt like the parabolic man who had found the pearl of great price. What a precious doctrine! Away with the UBSGNT, I now use the *Textus Receptus*—the preserved NT text that underlies the KJV—as my Greek Text.

Singapore, July 1, 2003

TEXTUAL RECEPTION OR TEXTUAL CRITICISM?

Testimonies from Students Who Took the DVBC Course on “The Bible Stands” at FEBC from April 28 to May 3, 2008

I am thankful to God for being gracious to me for I, being a young believer and without proper guidance on the doctrine of Verbal Plenary Preservation, was stumbled by the vast differences modern Bible versions share, and disturbed by the disharmony between different versions on the same Bible passage and the many instances whereby scission of God’s Word was done, and was left with the question on which truly is the Word of God, and how would one know. By the grace of God, He brought me out of confusion and vexation when He led me to learn of the source of the problem which lies in the types of manuscripts used for the translation of the different Bible versions.

Reviewing the course, I am filled with awe and gratitude to my Almighty God who not only has inspired His words in the original autographs but has also by His singular care and providence kept them pure in all ages in the faithfully copied apographs. I am, at the same time, also filled with great indignation for Westcott and Hort and the editors of the Critical Text, who have taken God’s Word lightly and without due reverence, and in employing their humanistic textual criticism to God’s sacred Word, like they would for any other literature, giving rise to the modern versions based on corrupt Alexandrian manuscripts that seek to cast doubt on God’s Word, scissor out God’s Word and attack the vital doctrines of the Christian Faith. LCH

Having gone through the course, I am even more convinced of the VPP stand, without which a floodgate of unthinkable errors would just swarm over us. No one can stop such a deluge without the perfect Word of God. The logic of faith based upon the Word of God is the best safeguard against such a catastrophe. It is a tragic thing that anti-VPP

Christians just choose to ignore what is clearly taught in the Bible concerning the perfect preservation of God's Word (Matt 5:18). They rather follow human reason to deal with the issue of preservation and end up with lots of loopholes for the enemy to attack. What an embarrassing and pathetic situation! I am very happy that VPP advocates do not isolate themselves but are able to accept others who do not think that the Bible has any errors. It is also important for us to distance ourselves from Westcott and Hort and to reject textual criticism which basically puts man above God in determining the words of God. WCL

I count it a great blessing to have this opportunity to spend this week on the in-depth study of the Bible issue, with a focus on the examination of the fallacious practice of textual criticism, against the God-honouring method of textual reception. Much literature continues to be written in attack of VPP by both leaders and lay-persons, articulating their ire at the apparent 'trouble' that VPP has caused and how seemingly 'heretical' it is. Such continual onslaught can be wearisome, discouraging and frustrating. It is therefore with much joy that I sat through the lectures and reviewed once again the various arguments and perspectives of the whole textual debate. I particularly enjoyed the interaction with the various authors of varying perspectives, like that of Dan Wallace, Bart Ehrman, Edward Hills and others. *Fundamentalism's Folly* by Peter Van Kleeck was also a rather refreshing read, for he brought to light many authors and theologians of old who in the past also spoke clearly of the doctrine of Bible preservation, clearly proving that it is not a new doctrine, but one held dearly to by fundamentalists in the past as well. Of much instructional value and encouragement (and also entertainment!) was Dr Dell Johnson's clear and passionate defence of the KJV and preservation. KKL

When I was exposed to the Bible issue and debate, I thought it was something minor and there was nothing to worry about. This is because from the beginning I took for granted with a childlike faith that nobody would dare to criticise the Bible. As time went on I came to realise that it was no small matter. I came to realise that those who hold on to a conservative, fundamentalist understanding of the Bible would one day deny the perfection of the Bible. Not only that but I have witnessed through this course how academic scholarship and pride may turn one's simple faith of believing on the Bible to a complicated and unattainable approach of trying to ascertain the words of God by what is called

“textual criticism.” This was well exemplified by Bart Ehrman who once professed to be a believer, but ended up being “agnostic.” This is a warning to me how I ought to submit to the authority of the Bible and not the ideas of men. JPK

Ehrman’s testimony is a frightening one. How one man is able to fall from a conservative evangelical background into the dark pits of agnosticism, is morbidly fascinating. It is almost a classic case of how someone from even a rather sound, evangelical background, from Moody Bible Institute, can fall into the depths of such despair. One lesson learnt is to preach the true gospel. Apparently in his case, it does not seem that he has been saved, and perhaps, this “born again” experience that he barely defines, seems to be more of an experience, then actual conversion within. The human tendency to use our corrupted logic can only result in a downward spiral if it is not saved by faith and the guidance of the Spirit. JT

It is enlightening to read and study the testimony of Bart D Ehrman as he testifies with all honesty how a weak foundation in the biblical doctrines of inspiration and preservation can lead one to deny the faith. I thank the Lord for the 8 principles of identifying the preserved text of Scripture. I thank the Lord for the video on Dr Dell Johnson’s defence of the KJV and the Traditional Text. Also, the quotation of Francis Turretin’s Systematic Theology was most enlightening, showing that before Warfield’s time, conservative Christians held to the view of the infallibility and inerrancy of the apographs and not autographs which we do not have today. The statement by the Trinitarian Bible Society was also important, “Therefore these texts [i.e. Hebrew Masoretic Text and Greek Textus Receptus] are definitive and the final point of reference in all the Society’s work.” It is the same approach that I learned in FEBC Greek classes in reading and exegesis. LAW

One must have the correct presuppositions as regards the Bible and in the study of the Bible or else the outcome can be disastrous. Having accepted the Biblical doctrine of the Verbal Plenary Preservation of the Scriptures, I can now study the Word of God without ever having to question whether a certain passage is correct or not or whether it contains mistakes or not. This doctrine of VPP really gives the believer the full confidence to study, teach and preach the Word of God with all authority. DC

Frankly, I was really shocked in this course by a phrase “Autographs in Apographs” because I never thought about the autographs when I was thinking about the inspiration and preservation of the Bible. Yes, it is very simple, but wonderful. I was focusing always on the materials, not words. By the grace of God, in the Holy Spirit, through the logic of faith, I have recognised the most important matter of the Verbal Plenary Preservation of the Bible is the **words**, not materials in which the words have been written. PSK

One precious lesson I learned is that anything that exalts and pleases God is right, and anything that takes away the glory of God must be false. God’s Word is always true and God’s truth always stands. God makes no mistakes and we can never blame God. Man may change but God never changes. The key to knowing and finding God is faith. I learnt that the modernist scholars have a very low view of God and His Word and is wise in their own conceits. AK

I have gained a more in-depth understanding of the whole issue surrounding the preservation of God’s Word. I never knew that there are so many people out there in other parts of the world who are fighting for this fundamental doctrine, who take the same stand as us. I am also impressed by Burgon, Hills, Waite and many others who spared no effort in fighting this battle. The books and articles they had written on this subject displayed such strong evidences against anti-preservationists, and clearly proved that God had kept His promise in preserving His words to the very jot and tittle. Yet, the very Bible we hold in our very hands today, the text in the original languages underlying the KJV, and the testimony of the Holy Spirit in our hearts, are the strongest proof of them all.

The Bible is the strongest proponent of its own preservation, with no other authority above it. It is sad to see men like Metzger, Warfield, Ehrman choose their own naturalistic and sinful thinking over faith in God’s promise. But apostasy is indeed what the Bible has warned of. I also learnt it is very dangerous to doubt God’s word and practise textual criticism, for it may ultimately lead one to atheism and a denial of God. One other thing I learnt is the importance of being consistent in one’s arguments. And I thank God that ours is a faithful and consistent position, with God as our starting point, by the logic of faith, leading us to His preserved words. HXW

This course is a balanced presentation of both camps wherein each stand was given the opportunity to defend its position. I thank God for raising up faithful men to critique the popular but ungodly works of Westcott and Hort. I believe without doubt that the KJV is the most faithful translation using the Textus Receptus which is in harmony with the words of the Autographs, supported by the promise of God in the Bible, tested by time, received by the early Christians, coming finally to us by men providentially moved and guided by God in copying the Scriptures which are superior in doctrine and theology because they declare and point only to the glory of the Almighty God. DDC

Recommended Sources

RECOMMENDED SOURCES

“Half the knowledge is to know where to find it.”

- Anderson G W, and D E Anderson. *A Textual Key to the New Testament: A List of Omissions and Changes*. London: Trinitarian Bible Society, 1993.
- _____. *Why 1 John 5:7-8 Is in the Bible*. London: Trinitarian Bible Society, 1993.
- Barnett, Robert J. *The Word of God on Trial*. Asheville: Revival Literature, 1981.
- Brandenburg, Kent. Editor. *Thou Shalt Keep Them: A Biblical Theology of the Perfect Preservation of Scripture*. El Sobrante: Pillar and Ground Publishing, 2003.
- Bruggen, Jacob van. *The Ancient Text of the New Testament*. Winnipeg: Premier Publishing, 1976.
- Burgon, John William. *The Causes of Corruption of the Traditional Text of the Holy Gospels*. Collingswood: Dean Burgon Society Press, 1998 reprint.
- _____. *Inspiration and Interpretation*. Collingswood: Dean Burgon Society Press, 1999 reprint.
- _____. *The Last Twelve Verses of Mark: Vindicated against Recent Critical Objectors and Established*. Collingswood: Dean Burgon Society Press, nd reprint.
- _____. *The Revision Revised*. Collingswood: Dean Burgon Society Press, 2000 reprint.
- _____. *The Traditional Text of the Holy Gospels Vindicated and Established*. Collingswood: Dean Burgon Society Press, 1998 reprint.
- Clark, Gordon H. *Logical Criticisms of Textual Criticism*. 2d edition. Jefferson: The Trinity Foundation, 1990.
- Cloud, David W. *The Bible Version Question/Answer Database*. Port Huron: Way of Life Literature, 2005.
- _____. *Faith vs the Modern Bible Versions*. Port Huron: Way of Life Literature, 2005.
- _____. *For Love of the Bible: The Battle for the King James Version and the Received Text from 1800 to Present*. Oak Habor: Way of Life Literature, 1995.
- _____. *The Modern Bible Version Hall of Shame*. Port Huron: Way of Life Literature, 2005.

Recommended Sources

- _____. *Myths about Modern Bible Versions*. Oak Harbor: Way of Life Literature, 1999.
- _____. *Things Hard to be Understood*. 3d edition. Port Huron: Way of Life Literature, 2001.
- Coston Sr, Stephen A. *King James the VI of Scotland and the I of England: Unjustly Accused?* St Petersburg: KonigsWort, 1996.
- DeVietro, Kirk. *Cleaning-Up Hazardous Materials: A Refutation of Gail Riplinger's Hazardous Materials*. Collingswood: Dean Burgon Society, 2010.
- James, Kevin. *The Corruption of the Word: The Failure of Modern New Testament Scholarship*. Williamsburg: Micro-Load Press, 1990.
- Khoo Jeffrey. *Kept Pure in All Ages: Recapturing the Authorised Version and the Doctrine of Providential Preservation*. Singapore: Far Eastern Bible College Press, 2001.
- _____. *KJV Questions and Answers*. Singapore: Bible Witness Literature Ministry, 2003.
- Fuller, David Otis. Editor. *Counterfeit or Genuine? Mark 16? John 8?* Grand Rapids: Institute for Biblical Textual Studies, nd.
- _____. Editor. *True or False? The Westcott-Hort Textual Theory Examined*. Grand Rapids: Grand Rapids International Publications, 1983.
- _____. Editor. *Which Bible?* Grand Rapids: Institute for Biblical Textual Studies, 1970.
- Grudem, Wayne. *What's Wrong with Gender-Neutral Bible Translations?* Libertyville: Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, 1997.
- Hills, Edward F. *Believing Bible Study*. 2d edition. Des Moines: The Christian Research Press, 1977.
- _____. *The King James Version Defended*. Des Moines: The Christian Research Press, 1984.
- Holland, Thomas. *Crowned with Glory: The Bible from Ancient Text to Authorized Version*. Lincoln: Writers Club Press, 2000.
- Johnson, Dell. *The Bible Preserved from Satan's Attack*. Produced by Pensacola Christian College. 1996. DVD.
- _____. *The Bible: The Text Is the Issue*. Produced by Pensacola Christian College. 2006. DVD.
- _____. *The Leaven in Fundamentalism: A History of the Bible Text Issue in Fundamentalism*. Produced by Pensacola Christian College. 2006. DVD.
- _____. *PCC's Response to Coalition Critics: A History of the Bible Text Issue in Fundamentalism*. Produced by Pensacola Christian College. 2006. DVD.
- Kleeck, Peter W van. *Fundamentalism's Folly? A Bible Version Debate Case Study*. Grand Rapids: Institute for Biblical Textual Studies, 1998.

- Kulus, Chester. *One Tittle Shall in No Wise Pass: Destroying the Scholarly Myth that God Did Not Inspire the Vowels of the Old Testament*. Cleveland: The Old Paths Publications, 2009.
- _____. *Those So-Called Errors: Debunking the Liberal, New Evangelical, and Fundamentalist Myth That You Should Not Hear, Receive, and Believe All the Numbers of Scripture*. Newington: Emmanuel Baptist Theological Press, 2003.
- Kwok Dennis, and the Faculty of Far Eastern Bible College. *VPP of the Bible: A Course on the Doctrine of Verbal Plenary Preservation*. Cleveland: The Old Paths Publications, 2008.
- Letis, Theodore P. *The Ecclesiastical Text*. 2d edition. Philadelphia: The Institute for Renaissance and Reformation Biblical Studies, 2000.
- _____. *Edward Freer Hills's Contribution to the Revival of the Ecclesiastical Text*. Philadelphia: The Institute for Renaissance and Reformation Biblical Studies, 1987.
- _____. Editor. *The Majority Text*. Philadelphia: The Institute for Renaissance and Reformation Biblical Studies, 1987.
- _____. *A New Hearing for the Authorized Version*. 2d edition. Philadelphia: The Institute for Renaissance and Reformation Biblical Studies, 1997.
- Macgregor, Alan J. *Three Modern Versions: A Critical Assessment of the NIV, ESV and NKJV*. Wiltshire: The Bible League, 2004.
- McClure, Alexander. *The Translators Revived: A Biographical Memoir of the Authors of the English Version of the Holy Bible*. Mobile: R E Publications, nd.
- McGrath, Alister. *In the Beginning: The Story of the King James Bible and How It Changed a Nation, a Language and a Culture*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 2001.
- Maynard, Michael. *A History of the Debate over 1 John 5:7-8: A Tracing of the Longevity of the Comma Johanneum , with Evaluations of Arguments against Its Authenticity*. Tempe: Comma Publications, 1995.
- Miller, Edward. *A Guide to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*. Collingswood: Dean Burgon Society Press, 2003 reprint.
- Moorman, Jack. *8,000 Differences between the NT Greek Words of the King James Bible and the Modern Versions: A Scholarly Research Document*. Collingswood: Bible for Today and Dean Burgon Society, 2006.
- _____. *Modern Bibles: The Dark Secret*. Los Osos: Fundamental Evangelistic Association, nd.
- _____. *Early Manuscripts, Church Fathers and the Authorized Version*. Collingswood: The Bible for Today Press, 2005.
- _____. *Forever Settled: A Survey of the Documents and History of the Bible*. Collingswood: Dean Burgon Society, 1999.

Recommended Sources

- _____. *When the KJV Departs from the "Majority" Text*. Collingswood: The Bible for Today Press, 1988.
- Muller, Richard A. *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms Drawn Principally from Protestant Scholastic Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1985.
- _____. *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*. 2d edition. Volume Two: *Holy Scripture*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003.
- Norton, David. *A Textual History of the King James Bible*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Owen, John. *Biblical Theology*. Grand Rapids: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 1994.
- Paisley, Ian. *My Plea for the Old Sword: The English Authorised Version (KJV)*. Greenville: Ambassador Publications, 1997.
- Punch, John David. "The Pericope Adulterae: Theories of Insertion and Omission." Doctor of Theology dissertation. Radboud University Nijmegen, 2010.
- Radmacher, Earl, and Zane C Hodges. *The NIV Reconsidered*. Dallas: Redencion Viva, 1990.
- Raper, Christopher. *"It Is Written": Greek Perfect Tense of *Gegraptai* Supports Preservation of Scripture*. Pensacola: Pensacola Theological Seminary, 2002.
- Ray, James Jasper. *God Wrote Only One Bible*. Junction City: The Eye Opener Publishers, 1980.
- Ryken, Leland. *The Word of God in English: Criteria for Excellence in Bible Translation*. Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2002.
- Skariah, George. "The Biblical Doctrine of the Perfect Preservation of the Holy Scriptures." Doctor of Theology dissertation. Far Eastern Bible College, Singapore, 2005.
- Sorenson, David H. *God's Perfect Book: The Inspiration, Preservation and Alteration of the Bible*. Duluth: Northstar Baptist Ministries, 2009.
- _____. *Touch Not the Unclean Thing: The Text Issue and Separation*. Duluth: Northstar Baptist Ministries, 2001.
- Spence, O Talmadge. *The King James Version Case*. Dunn: Foundations Bible College, 1999.
- Streeter, Lloyd L. *Seventy-Five Problems with Central Baptist Seminary's Book The Bible Version Debate*. LaSalle: First Baptist Church of LaSalle, 2001.
- Stringer, Phil. *The Real Story of King James I*. Ft Pierce: Faith Baptist Church Publications, 2000.
- _____. *The Scripture Cannot Be Broken: The Verbal Preservation of Scripture*. Ft Pierce: Faith Baptist Church Publications, 2000.
- Strouse, Thomas, and Jeffrey Khoo. *Reviews of the Book From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man*. Pensacola: Pensacola Theological Seminary, 2001.

- Sturz, Harry A. *The Byzantine Text-Type and New Testament Textual Criticism*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1984.
- Surrett, Charles L. *Which Greek Text? The Debate among Fundamentalists*. Np, nd.
- Tow, S H. *Beyond Versions: A Biblical Perspective of Modern English Bibles*. Singapore: King James Productions, 1998.
- Tow, Timothy and Jeffrey Khoo. *Theology for Every Christian: A Systematic Theology in the Reformed and Premillennial Tradition of J Oliver Buswell*. Singapore: Far Eastern Bible College Press, 2007.
- Turretin, Francis. *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*. Translated by George Musgrave Giger. Edited by James T Dennison Jr. Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1992.
- Waite, D A. *Burton's Warnings on Revision of the Textus Receptus and the King James Bible*. Collingswood: The Bible for Today Press, 1998.
- _____. *The Case for the King James Bible*. Collingswood: The Bible for Today Press, 1998.
- _____. *Central Seminary Refuted on Bible Versions*. Collingswood: The Bible for Today Press, 1999.
- _____. *A Critical Answer to James Price's King James Onlyism: 225 of Price's Statements Analyzed Carefully for Errors, Misrepresentations, and Serious Falsehoods*. Collingswood: The Bible for Today Press, 2009.
- _____. *A Critical Answer to Michael Sproul's God's Word Preserved: 275 of Sproul's Statements Analyzed Carefully for Errors, Misrepresentations, and Serious Falsehoods*. Collingswood: The Bible for Today Press, 2008.
- _____. *Dean Burdon Society Deserves Its Name: Ten Reasons Why*. Collingswood: The Dean Burdon Society Press, 2001.
- _____. *Defending the King James Bible: A Fourfold Superiority*. 3d edition. Collingswood: The Bible for Today Press, 2006.
- _____. General Editor. *The Defined King James Bible*. Collingswood: The Bible for Today Press, 2000.
- _____. *Foes of the King James Bible Refuted*. Collingswood: The Bible for Today Press, 1997.
- _____. *Fundamentalist Deception on Bible Preservation*. Collingswood: The Bible for Today Press, 2005.
- _____. *Fundamentalist Misinformation on Bible Versions*. Collingswood: The Bible for Today Press, 2000.
- _____. *Heresies of Westcott and Hort*. Collingswood: The Bible for Today Press, 1979.
- _____. *The New King James Version Compared to the King James Version and the Underlying Hebrew and Greek Texts*. Collingswood: The Bible for Today Press, 1990.

Recommended Sources

- _____. *Westcott and Hort's Greek Text and Theory Refuted*. Collingswood: The Bible for Today Press, 1996.
- Waite Jr, D A. *The Comparative Readability of the Authorized Version*. Collingswood: The Bible for Today Press, 1996.
- _____. *The "Doctored" New Testament*. Collingswood: The Bible for Today Press, 2003.
- Watts, Malcolm H. *The Lord Gave the Word: A Study in the History of the Biblical Text*. London: Trinitarian Bible Society, 1998.
- _____. *The New King James Version: A Critique*. London: Trinitarian Bible Society, 2008.
- Whitaker, William. *Disputations on Holy Scripture*. Orlando: Soli Deo Publications, nd.
- Williams, H D. *The Attack on the Canon of Scripture: A Polemic against Modern Gnostics*. Cleveland: The Old Paths Publications, 2008.
- _____. *Hearing the Voice of God: Related to Revelation, Conscience, Inspiration, Illumination, and Postmodernism*. Cleveland: The Old Paths Publications, 2008.
- _____. *The Lie That Changed the Modern World: A Refutation of the Modernist Cry "Poly-Scripturae"*. Collingswood: The Bible for Today Press, 2004.
- _____. *The Pure Words of God: Where to Find God's Words Which We Are Commanded to Receive and Keep*. Cleveland: The Old Paths Publications, 2008.
- _____. *Word-For-Word Translating of the Received Texts: Verbal Plenary Translating*. Collingswood: The Bible For Today Press, 2007.
- _____. *Wycliffe Controversies*. Cleveland: The Old Paths Publications, 2008.