

HERESIES ANCIENT AND MODERN

by

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1a. **INTRODUCTION**

1b. Where is “Heresy” in the Bible?

The word “heresy” comes from the word *haireomai* (“to choose”), and it occurs 10 times in the Bible in these two nominal forms:

1c. *Hairesis* (Acts 5:17, 15:5, 24:5, 14, 26:5, 28:22, 1 Cor 11:19, Gal 5:20, 2 Pet 2:1)

1d. It is sometimes translated “sect” in the KJV especially in Acts, referring to the different religious groups like the Sadducees, Pharisees, and Nazarenes. Here it appears to be generally used in the way we use the word “denominations” in describing different Christian groups.

2d. At other times it is translated “heresy” (1 Cor 11:19, Gal 5:20, 2 Pet 2:1). Here it refers to false teachings or doctrines or any denial of any of the fundamentals of the Christian Faith.

2c. *Hairetikos* (only in Tit 3:10): “A man that is a heretick after the first and second admonition reject.”

2b. What is a Heresy?

Biblically speaking, a heresy is any doctrine that is contrary to the fundamental truths of the Christian faith, which seeks to tear believers away from their Lord and Saviour by undermining their confidence in His person, work and words.

3b. Who is a Heretic?

1c. We ought not be trigger-happy in calling a person a heretic. Consider the infallible example of our Lord. 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. Read Matthew 23. The Lord cursed them with woes, and called 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” (see also Jas 3:1). Thus, when I think of heretics, I think of a religious leader who teaches a doctrine that tears God’s people away from

Jesus Christ their all-powerful Lord and all-sufficient Saviour, and from His totally inspired and entirely preserved infallible and inerrant Word.

2c. It is significant to note that Jesus was very kind, gentle, and patient with the common folk, the ordinary member of the pew, His lambs and sheep. He did not excuse them when they erred in doctrine, word or deed, but chided them gently, and patiently instructed them on the right way. Jesus made a distinction between the shepherd and the sheep. He dealt with both differently. We should follow Jesus in this regard. I have no sympathy for liberal or modernistic pastors and teachers; but to the ordinary member of the pew, God's lambs and sheep, we must take care not only to feed them with the whole counsel of God, but also protect them from the wolves, and wolves in sheep's clothing, namely, the heretical teachers who seek to devour and tear people away from our Saviour and His Truth.

3c. In the pastoral ministry, I feel that it is very important that we be very sensitive and careful not to undermine the believers' confidence in God and His Word. Jesus' 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).

4c. It must be qualified that in these lecture notes, I am not in any way passing any absolute judgement on the salvation or non-salvation of anyone. At any rate, whether a person teaching a false doctrine is doing so ignorantly or knowingly, and whether a person is truly born again or not despite believing in error are questions only the Lord can answer. Salvation is of the Lord, and only He knows the hearts of men. If judgement is to be made, it must be of the righteous and truthful sort that is based solely on God's infallible and inerrant Word. Certain things are clear in the light of God's Word, like heretics and apostates who preach and believe in "another gospel" of salvation by works, or teach "another Jesus" by diminishing His deity or humanity or both. But some matters are not so clear, especially those found within evangelical or fundamental circles, and with such brethren (whether true or false) there is a need to exercise caution lest we fall into the danger of playing God. In such cases, it is best to say, "God knows, I don't" (study John 10:14-27 to see if you can find any wisdom from there).

2a. **ANCIENT HERESIES**

1b. **Hetero-Evangelism**

1c. Definition of Heresy

1e. Hetero-evangelism (a term coined by me) refers to the false gospel ("another gospel") of works that the Judaizers preached in the 1st century (see Gal 1:8-9).

2e. The word "another" *heteros* as distinguished from *allos* refers to something completely different; it is "another" not of the same kind but of a different kind—a heterodox gospel.

2c. History and Proponents of Heresy

1d. In the days of the Apostles (1st century), heretical Jews or Judaizers (2 Cor 11:22) from Jerusalem (2 Cor 11:5), similar to the certain ones from James (Gal 2:12) preached a totally different type of gospel that sought to bind believers back to the works of the law—a salvation by works.

2d. In the Corinthian church, they called themselves “super-apostles” (2 Cor 11:5). They employed worldly wisdom in their preaching and teaching (2 Cor 1:12) and peddle the Word of God for profit (2 Cor 2:17).

3c. Heretical Doctrines

1d. These Judaizers teach that faith plus works equals salvation.

2d. The Apostle Paul said: (1) Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ; (2) at that moment you are saved; and (3) immediately proceed to keep the law of God. These Judaizers said: (1) Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and (2) keep the law of God the best you can; and then (3) you are saved.

4c. Opponents of Heresy

The Apostle Paul wrote against them in his epistles to the Romans (4:1-13) and the Galatians (1:6-9), and his second epistle to the Corinthians (3:1-18).

5c. Biblical Doctrine of Salvation

1d. Grace alone

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast” (Eph 2:8-9).

2d. Faith alone

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God” (Rom 5:1-2).

3d. Christ alone

1e. “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Tim 2:5).

2e. “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

2b. **Docetism**

1c. Definition of Heresy

1d. “Docetism” comes from the Greek word *dokeo*, “to appear.”

- 2d. It is a very early heresy (perhaps the first) claiming that our blessed Lord had a body like ours only *in appearance but not in reality*.
- 2c. History of Heresy
- 1d. This heresy arose in the late 1st century, in the days of the Apostle John. Docetism had appeared very early among the churches.
- 2d. It originated from pre-Christian Gnosticism. Harold O J Brown says: “The gnostic movement as a whole and even church-related Gnosticism are really too big and too foreign to the New Testament to be called heresies; they really represent an alternative religion. In producing docetism, Gnosticism presented us with the first heresy that can be clearly lodged ‘within’ Christianity Gnosticism was not a Christian movement, properly speaking, because apart from a limited number of shared ideas, its interests were quite different from those of biblical religion. The doctrine of Christ was a shared interest, however. Gnosticism produced docetism because it considered it intolerable to think that a pure spiritual being, Christ, could suffer as a man. Hence he must have been human in appearance only” (*Heresies*, 52).
- 3c. Heretical Doctrines
- 1d. According to incipient Gnosticism, the flesh is inherently evil. As such it is thought impossible for Christ to be truly in the flesh since that would make Christ evil.
- 2d. If Christ was not evil, then it would mean He was not in the flesh. Christ was truly God but not truly man—He only *appeared or seemed* to be a man.
- 3d. It was taught that the Saviour was without birth and without body; that He was actually a ghost and change Himself into different forms; that He appeared on earth in a human figure but did not suffer; that it was Simon of Cyrene who was crucified and not Jesus, while Jesus Himself, in the form of Simon standing by, laughed at His persecutors, and then, incapable of being held by them, ascended up to heaven, invisible to them all.
- 4c. Proponents of Heresy
- 1d. Justinus
- 1e. Justinus was a Gnostic writer and author of several books.
- 2e. In one of his books called *The Book of Baruch*, he wrote that the world originated from three underived principles, two males, and one female. The first male principle is the Good Being and perfect in knowledge and far removed from the created world. The second male principle is Elohim, the Father of Creation, but has imperfect knowledge. The third principle is female and she is identified as Earth (aka, Eden and Israel). She is totally destitute of knowledge. Elohim had intercourse with

Earth and produced 24 angels—12 to do the will of the father, and 12 to do the will of the mother. Baruch, the third among the father’s angels became the chief minister of good, and the third angel of the mother’s group was Naas (the serpent), the chief author of evil.

2d. Basilides

1e. Basilides was the founder of one of the pseudo-Christian sects that believed in Gnosticism. He claimed to be taught by a certain man called Glaucias who was allegedly an “interpreter” of the Apostle Peter. Basilides based his ministry in Alexandria which was a hotbed for many of the ancient heresies about Christ. He wrote 24 books, and had the audacity to entitle one of them “The Gospel According to Basilides.”

2e. What kind of Gospel did Basilides teach? According to Basilides, all things begin with the Unbegotten, the Only Father. From Him was born or put forth Nus, and Nus *Logos*, from *Logos* Phronesis, from Phronesis Sophia and Dynamis, from Sophia and Dynamis principalities, powers, and angels. This first set of angels first made the first heaven, and then gave birth to a second set of angels who made a second heaven, and so on till 365 heavens had been made by 365 generations of angels, each heaven being apparently ruled by an Archon to whom a name was given, and these names being used in magic arts. The angels of the lowest or visible heaven made the earth and man. They were the authors of the prophecies; and the Law in particular was given by their Archon, the God of the Jews. He being more petulant and willful than the other angels, in his desire to secure an empire for his people, provoked the rebellion of the other angels and their respective peoples. Then the Unbegotten and Innominable Father, seeing what discord prevailed among men and among angels, and how the Jews were perishing, sent His First-born Nus, Who is Christ, to deliver those who believed on Him from the power of the makers of the world. “He,” the Basilidians said, “is our salvation, even He Who came and revealed to us alone this truth.” He accordingly appeared on earth and performed mighty works; but *His appearance was only in outward show*, and He did not really take flesh. It was Simon of Cyrene that was crucified; for Jesus exchanged forms with him on the way, and then, standing unseen opposite in Simon’s form, mocked those who did the deed. But He Himself ascended into heaven, passing through all the powers, till He was restored to the presence of His own Father” (*A Dictionary of Christian Biography*, s.v. “Basilides”).

3d. Valentinus

1e. Valentinus was a founder of a Gnostic sect in the first half of the second century. According to tradition, he studied under Theodas who claimed to be a disciple of the Apostle

Paul. It does appear that the Gnostics were fond of tracing their secret doctrines back to the Apostles or so-called disciples of the Apostles.

2e. Valentinus thought of Christ as having a pneumatic body which cannot be corrupted by food (i.e. it did not undergo the natural process of digestion) because He was not subject to corruption.

5c. Opponents of Heresy

1d. Apostle John

The Apostle John refuted Docetism comprehensively especially in his first epistle where he clearly argued the corporeality and tangibility of the Lord Jesus Christ.

1e. John 1:1, 14, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God ... And the Word *became flesh*, and dwelt among us.”

2e. 1 John 1:1-2, “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and *our hands have handled*, of the Word of life. For the life was manifested and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.”

3e. 1 John 4:1-3, “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come *in the flesh* is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.”

4e. 2 John 7, “For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come *in the flesh*. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.”

2d. Ignatius

1e. Ignatius of Antioch was an early post-New Testament writer who vigorously opposed Docetism. He was martyred in AD 107.

2e. He died defending the truth of Christ’s full humanity. He often used the word “truly” (ἀληθῶς) to describe the human acts of Christ ἐν σαρκι, “in the flesh.” Christ did and experienced all that the New Testament ascribes to him—

coming in the flesh, dying on the cross, and rising bodily from the grave.

3d. Docetism was condemned as a heresy at the Council of Chalcedon in 451.

6c. **Biblical Proof of Christ's True Humanity**

1d. Jesus had to go through the process of birth and physical growth (Luke 2:41-52).

2d. His body consisted of real human flesh, blood and bones (Heb 2:14, Luke 24:39).

3d. His body was subjected to the infirmities of the natural body like hunger (Matt 4:2), thirst (John 19:28), and tiredness (John 4:6, Matt 8:24).

4d. He was "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb 4:15).

5d. Jesus the Eternal *Logos* became a true human being (John 1:14, 1 John 1:1-2).

3b. **Ebionism**

1c. **Definition of Heresy**

1d. Ebionism was one of the early heresies in the church which attacked the person of Christ especially with regard to His divine nature. They taught that Jesus of Nazareth was a good teacher and prophet, but that he was in no way divine.

2d. The name comes from a Hebrew root *ebion* which means "poor" or "oppressed." Since Jesus spoke much about poverty, the Ebionites thought their own poverty to be a seal of true discipleship.

2c. **History and Proponents of Heresy**

1d. It was thought that this heresy was started by a certain *Ebion* or *Hebion*, but there is no proof that such a person existed.

2d. What is known is that Ebionism was a heresy started by so-called Christians who were Jews. It is likely that they adopted the Hebrew word, *ebion*, calling themselves Ebionites, "the poor ones," from the first Beatitude (Matt 5:3).

3d. They lived an ascetic life of poverty and strictly adhered to the law of circumcision. They were like the Judaizers that Paul wrote against in some of his epistles.

4d. Although they had a high regard for the OT patriarchs, they rejected the Pentateuch. They used the Gospel of Matthew which was

written mainly to Jews, but rejected its genealogy. They rejected the epistles of Paul but favoured the Epistle of James.

5d. They wrote their own Scripture viz, “The Gospel according to the Hebrews,” “The Ascension of Isaiah,” and “The Odes of Solomon.”

6d. They also insisted on keeping the Sabbath on the 7th day (i.e. Saturday). They could be considered the forerunners of the Seventh-day Adventists.

7d. The heresy ceased to exist by the 5th century.

3c. Heretical Doctrines

1d. The Ebionites denied the deity of Christ. They did not believe in His preexistence, virgin birth and conception. They thought of the heavenly Christ to be 96 miles high and 24 broad, and that the Holy Spirit to be a female of similar size, only invisible. In their false gospel, they made Jesus to say, “My mother, the Holy Ghost, took me by one of my hairs and bore me to the great mountain Tabor.”

2d. The Ebionites believed that salvation is by means of keeping the law, especially that of circumcision. They preferred the Apostle Peter whom they called the “Apostle to the Circumcision” over against the Apostle Paul who preached freedom from the law.

4c. Opponent of Heresy

Epiphanius wrote prolifically against Ebionism and was quick to identify it as a heresy when it first appeared.

5c. Refutation of Heresy

1d. For the Biblical doctrine of salvation, see under “Hetero-evangelism.”

2d. For the Biblical doctrine of the deity of Christ, see under “Arianism.”

4b. **Gnosticism**

1c. Definition of Heresy

1d. “Gnosticism” comes from the Greek *ginosko*, “to know.”

2d. Gnosticism is a syncretistic religion of rites and myths from a variety of religious traditions, a hodgepodge of Occultism, Oriental Mysticism, astrology, magic, esoteric Judaism, pseudo-Christianity, and Plato’s doctrine that man is not at home in the bodily realm.

3d. Today, Gnosticism is seen in New Age Mysticism.

2c. History of Heresy

1d. Gnosticism flourished in the 2nd and 3rd centuries.

2d. During the 2nd century, Gnosticism grew in Alexandria and the Mediterranean area, and developed into different strains mostly

affecting Christianity which led to various heretical views of Christ and the cosmos. A twisted Christianity resulted through Valentinus and another strong Gnostic leader, Marcion.

3d. During the 3rd century, when Mani came into leadership, Gnosticism became a world religion when he founded his alternative Christian Church. Mani, the Jewish-Christian raised in a Baptist community, started Manicheanism.

4d. After the 3rd century, Gnosticism practically disappeared. There was some attempt to revive it during the Middle Ages, but this was nearly impossible because any documents or material about Gnostics had been buried in the desert.

5d. The recent Gnostic revival was due to the discovery of the Nag Hammadi codices in 1945, revealing the writings and beliefs of the Gnostics. Some of the Nag Hammadi books are *The Gospel of Thomas*, *Acts of Peter and the Twelve Apostles*, *Prayer of Thanksgiving*, and *Authoritative Teaching*, all of which are non-inspired and non-authoritative.

3c. Proponents of Heresy

1d. It is said that Simon Magus was the Father of Gnosticism (see Acts 8:9-24). His attempt to purchase the gift of the Holy Spirit became known as “simony” i.e. the sin of buying and selling spiritual offices. Tradition has it that he later went to Rome to form a Gnostic sect.

2d Basilides formed the Alexandrian cult. He was a member of the church in Alexandria and combined Christianity with pagan mysteries (e.g. Egyptian Hermetizism, Oriental occultism, Chaldean astrology, and Persian philosophy).

3d. Valentinus took over the Gnostic leadership when Basilides died. Valentinus was born in Egypt and familiar with Greek culture. Although he nearly became bishop, he chose to separate from the church. He incorporated his idea of *pleroma*, or heavenly world, into Gnosticism. The *pleroma* consists of at least 30 aeons (worlds). He also believed that ignorance is the root of the world and if it no longer existed, the world would cease to exist.

4d. Other ancient proponents of Gnosticism were Marcion, Ptolemaeus, Cerinthus, Menander, and Saturninus.

5d. William Blake, the poet and artist, was a known Gnostic during the late 1700s and early 1800s.

4c. Heretical Doctrines

1d. Gnostic theology

Gnostics believe that the true God has a feminine side, Sophia, the Spirit part of God. Jesus was a product of God and Spirit, and joined them to make up the Trinity. Things went wrong when Sophia wanted to give birth to a being like herself. She proceeded without

permission from God. She gave birth to Demiurge. Demiurge was imperfect and she was ashamed of it, so she hid it in a cloud away from the other immortals. Demiurge was born with some power and used it to create the physical world. The Gnostics identified Demiurge as the OT Jehovah. They say He was an incompetent creator and had made an imperfect world.

2d. Gnostic Christology

To save the world, Jesus was sent from God and the Spirit, not the Demiurge. Jesus came into the world by entering Mary's body after Joseph had sexual intercourse with her (contra Virgin Birth). Jesus imparted the secret knowledge (gnosis) only to Gnostics (the elect ones) which he did not impart to the church. The Gnostics also teach that Christ could not have become flesh in order to be crucified, since they believe that there is a separation of spirit from matter. They view flesh as evil.

3d. Gnostic Soteriology

1e. Gnostics consider themselves "people in the know." They are specially chosen people with secret knowledge of the universe. They believe that God is found within man as well as outside of man, i.e. in nature. Unlike the Christian belief that man is sinful by nature, Gnostics believe that salvation is gained by attaining knowledge (gnosis). The knowledge must be of their inner self or soul. It is similar to the Hindu definition of meditation.

2e. Gnostics also have a different view of the make up of the world. Aeons are worlds, or "distinct spiritual entities," which all together make up the *pleroma*, or fullness. The *pleroma* is above the cosmos and is the "spiritual Divine Reality" (Gnosticism at its highest).

3e. The greatest hope for the Gnostic is to attain ultimate, first-hand knowledge so that they may free themselves from the evil material world and bodily existence.

5c. Opponents of Heresy

1d. Irenaeus (130-200)

1e. Irenaeus was a Greek speaking Christian from Asia Minor. He was the bishop of Lyons in the later part of the 2nd century. He was taught by Polycarp—a disciple of the Apostle John.

2e. Irenaeus was renowned for his attacks on Gnosticism and for many centuries. His polemical work *Against Heresies* was the chief source of information on and against the Gnostic heresy.

2d. Hippolytus (170-236)

1e. Hippolytus was a Greek-speaking pastor in the church of Rome.

2e. He wrote several important books. One of which was *The Refutation of All Heresies* (sometimes called *Philosophumena*) which dealt principally with Gnostic cult and traces the heresy to philosophy.

6c. Biblical Doctrine of Knowledge

1d. “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. The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb” (Ps 19:7-10). Note that there are 7 adjectives: perfect, wise, right, pure, clean, true, righteous. Seven is the number of perfection! The Word of God is altogether perfect (cf Ps 12:6)

2d. “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge” (Prov 1:7). Perfect knowledge comes from the Perfect Word (2 Tim 3:16-17).

3d. “But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things” (1 John 2:20).

5b. **Marcionism**

1c. Definition of Heresy

Marcionism was the heresy of Marcion (died in about 160) who taught that the OT God was different from the NT God, and that the OT and NT Scriptures were contradictory. It flourished together with Gnosticism in the 2nd century

2c. History and Proponent of Heresy

1d. Marcion had a Christian upbringing. His father was the bishop of Sinope in Pontus. However, as he grew up, he began to develop his false theology, being convinced that the material world is evil (possibly influenced by the Gnostics) and that the Jews and their Scriptures were evil.

2d. Marcion arrived in Rome in AD 140. The Christians there received him warmly because he donated money to the church (according to Church father Tertullian, Marcion gave 200,000 sesterces, no small sum). Despite the biblical warnings in James 2:1-5 and 1 Cor 1:27-28, churches are sometimes overly impressed by the

rich, and tempted by the monetary favours that could come from such if special treatment were accorded them.

3d. Beholden to their donor, the Church did not examine his theological views too closely. They were afraid to offend their new benefactor. The church members began to listen to him closely, thinking he was a good man.

4d. Marcion managed to deceive many, and had a large following.

3c. Heretical Doctrine

1d. Marcion wrote a gospel in AD 130 and called it the Gospel of the Lord. It was very deceptive as it contained scriptures identical to the gospels. Also he compiled a list of books that should be read in the church. He also attempted to compile a New Testament. Marcion was excommunicated and the church responded to his challenge by compiling the sacred writings of the apostles.

2d. Marcion believed that Jehovah and God were two separate persons. He did not believe in the OT. The OT he said was by an inferior god called Jehovah, and it should not be read in the Church.

3d. The NT God he called "Father." Unlike the vengeful OT God, the NT God according to him is loving, compassionate and forgiving. The Father God sent his son—Jesus—to save man. He gives salvation freely.

4d. Marcion however denied both Jesus' deity and humanity. Like Docetists, did not believe Jesus had a real body.

5d. Some thought Marcion sounded strange and questioned him: "Come again, Marcion, old fellow," he asked, "What is that you say? The Jews worship a different God than ourselves? The Father of Jesus Christ did not create the world? The Christian Church itself was established to be anti-Jewish?" "Exactly, my friend," answered Marcion, "you finally begin to see the point. We Christians worship an entirely different God than the Jews do. We have absolutely nothing in common with them. Their Scriptures bear witness to a completely different divinity. Indeed, our Christian religion was founded with the purpose of putting the Jewish heritage to rest once and for all. That's the long and short of what the Christian faith is all about."

6d. Marcionism thus takes on two basic forms:

1e. Anti-OT. Today, it is found in theological systems of discontinuity or in extreme forms of dispensationalism.

2e. Anti-Jew. Today, it is found in replacement theologies that seek to replace Israel with the Church.

5c. Opponent of Heresy

1d. Polycarp

1e. “Bishop of Smyrna, one of the most prominent figures in the church of the 2nd century ... Born some 30 years before the end of the 1st century, and raised to the episcopate apparently in early manhood, he held his office to the age of 86 or more. He claimed to have known at least one apostle and must in early life have met many who could tell things they had heard from actual disciples of our Lord. The younger generation into which he lived on, naturally recognised him as a peculiarly trustworthy source of information concerning the first age of the church. During the later years of his life Gnostic speculation had become very active and many things unknown to the faith of ordinary Christians were put forth as derived by secret traditions from the apostles. Thus a high value was attached to the witness Polycarp could give as to the genuine tradition of apostolic doctrine, his testimony condemning as offensive novelties the figments of the heretical teachers. Irenaeus states that on Polycarp’s visit to Rome his testimony converted many disciples of Marcion and Valentinus” (*A Dictionary of Christian Biography*, s.v. “Polycarpus”).

2e. Marcion was one day walking down the street and spotted a new visitor to the city, a very old and famous bishop named Polycarp from Smyrna in Asia Minor. Walking up to him, Marcion inquired, “Do you know me?” The bent and venerable Polycarp looked up at him closely. “Yes,” he answered, “I know you; you’re the firstborn of Satan.”

2d. Irenaeus (130-200)

Irenaeus was Polycarp’s disciple who continued his teacher’s good and faithful work in exposing the Gnostic heresies of Marcion and Valentinus. This above refreshingly rough response of Bishop Polycarp we owe to Irenaeus in his work *Against Heresies* (3.3.4). It well expresses what the Church’s attitude should be toward heretical ideas like those of Marcion.

6c. Biblical Refutation of Heresy

1d. Organic Unity of the Scriptures

1e. Jesus explained the meaning of His redemptive mission on earth in the light of the OT Scripture (Luke 24:25-27).

2e. The Biblical foundation of the Christian Faith hinges upon both the revelation of God in both OT (the Prophets) and NT (Apostles) (Eph 2:20).

3e. Scripture interprets Scripture (1 Cor 2:13). As Augustine said, “The NT is in the OT concealed, the OT is by the NT revealed; the NT is in the OT contained, the OT is by the NT explained.”

2d. Anti-semitism is Unbiblical

1e. God has not forgotten His covenant promise to Israel (Ps 89:3, 34-36; Jer 31:35-37).

2e. God has not cast away the nation of Israel (see Rom 11:1, 25-26).

3e. God will restore His chosen nation to greatness one day (Acts 1:6 cf Isa 11:11-12, Zech 8:21-23).

6b. **Montanism**

1c. Definition of Heresy

1d. Montanism was a heresy derived from the teachings of Montanus in about AD 160.

2d. Montanus taught the view that the Holy Spirit continues to speak through prophecy, visions and dreams. He claimed to have received a series of direct revelations from the Holy Spirit, and was joined by two women, Prisca and Maximilla.

2c. History and Proponents of Heresy

1d. During the middle of the 2nd century, Montanus appeared as a new prophet in Phrygia.

2d. Montanus had two ardent followers who were women—Priscilla and Maximilla—who were called “prophetesses.”

2d. Prophecy was the most prominent feature of the new movement. It led to ecstatic visions, announcing the approach of the second advent of Christ, and the establishment of the heavenly Jerusalem at Pepuza in Phrygia.

3d. Montanism persisted into the 8th century. It is ancient Pentecostalism or Charismatism.

4d. The most widely known Montanist was undoubtedly Tertullian, who is sometimes called the “Father of the Western Church.” He wrote 7 books defending Montanism. However, it did seem that Tertullian was more interested in defending the prophecies of the 2nd Coming of Christ and of the millennium, than Montanism per se.

3c. Heretical Doctrines

1d. Montanus taught that people should experience signs and wonders, see visions and dreams, and speak in tongues like in the days of Pentecost.

2d. As regards the Trinity, Montanists follow the doctrine of Sabellius who believe that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are only one person, and not three.

3d. Montanus also inculcated the severest asceticism and the most rigorous penitential discipline.

4c. Opposition to Heresy

Serapion, bishop of Antioch, declared that Montanism was “the working of the lying organization called the New Prophecy is held in abomination by the whole brotherhood in the world.” He together with Theodotus and other anonymous writers denounced Montanism on the following grounds (taken from James D Smith III, “Testing the Prophets,” *Christian History*, Issue 51, 1996):

1d. “*Abnormal ecstasy.*” Montanus prophesied in a frenzy, without engaging the rational mind, “contrary to the manner which belongs to the tradition and succession of the church from the beginning.”

2d. *No controls.* When respected bishops and church leaders sought to practise discernment with Montanist prophets, the prophets refused to submit.

3d. *Worldliness.* Some questioned the Montanist financial dealings. Others worried about their lifestyle: “Does a prophet dye his hair, paints his eyelids, love adornment, play gaming tables and dice, lend money at interest?”

4d. *Extra-scriptural revelation.* Many were concerned that people would hold the oracles of the New Prophecy in higher esteem than the Scriptures.

5d. *False prophecies.* Maximilla declared that there would be wars and tumults and, after her death, no more prophets but “The End.” Yet, some 13 years after her death, there was peace.

5c. The Cessation of Prophecy at the Completion of the Biblical Canon (see *Charismatism Q&A*, 33-35, 58-62):

The Word of God clearly teaches that signs and wonders, visions and dreams all ceased upon the passing away of the Apostles and the completion of the NT Scripture.

1d. 1 Cor 13:8-10, “Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease;

whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is *perfect* [Word of God] is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.”

2d. Rev 22:18-19, “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.”

3d. For further study, read my book *Charismatism Q&A: Biblical Answers to Frequently Asked Questions on the Charismatic Phenomenon* (Singapore: FEBC Press, 1998).

7b. Donatism

1c. Definition of Heresy

1b. Donatism came from Donatus a bishop of Casae Nigrae in 313-47.

2b. Donatism was not really a heresy but a schism. It was against unregenerate men administering the sacraments, and insisted on rebaptism if anyone was initially baptised by an unregenerate priest.

3b. Donatism was more a practical rather than a doctrinal heresy. “Essentially the Donatists taught nothing heretical in our sense, but they refused to acknowledge the idea that the sanctity of the church lies in its integrity as an institution; they insisted that it had to lie in the spiritual excellence of its leaders” (Harold OJ Brown, *Heresies*, 199).

2c. History of Heresy

1d. It began during the Diocletian persecution. Diocletian the Roman emperor issued an edict against Christians and their churches in AD 303 commanding that all their churches and Scriptures to be destroyed. Some of the bishops who did not wish to be persecuted or martyred surrendered their churches and Scriptures to be burned. They became known as *traditors*—a technical expression to designate those who had given up the Holy Scriptures.

2d. A group of 70 bishops in those days refused to recognise the appointment Caecilian as the bishop of Carthage, charging that his ordination by Felix, bishop of Aptunga, was invalid because Felix was a traditor.

3d. Many in the African church followed Donatus to go against the traditors who had cowardly handed over both Christians and the Scriptures to the enemy during times of persecution. By 350, the Donatists outnumbered the Catholics in Africa, and each city had its opposing catholic and donatist bishops.

4d. The Donatist party owed its success in great part to the ability of its leader Donatus. He was called “the Great” because of his eloquence and force of character. His charismatic leadership led his followers almost to worship him. His opponents on the other hand decried his pride and arrogance.

5d. The Donatist schism in Africa began in 311 and flourished just one hundred years, until the conference at Carthage in 411, after which its importance waned.

3c. Heretical Doctrines

1d. The crusade against traditors led Donatists to the false belief that only those living a blameless life belonged in the church, and that the validity of any sacrament depended upon the personal worthiness of the priest administering it.

2d. The Donatists insisted on the rebaptism of those who have been baptised by traditors. As such they could be considered forerunners of the Anabaptists in the days of the Protestant Reformation.

3d. Extreme Donatism led to isolationism—the view that only one’s church is the only true church, and anyone who wishes to be saved must be a member of that church. Isolationism is one characteristic of a cult.

4c. Opponents of Heresy

1d. Optatus, the bishop of Milevis, wrote several treatises against Donatism.

1e. He published a great work *De schismate Donatistarum* (between 365-378) answering the Donatist Bishop of Carthage, Parmenianus.

2e. His 1st book describes the origin and growth of the schism; his 2nd he shows the nature of the true Church; his 3rd defends the Catholics from the charge of persecuting the Donatists; his 4th refutes the doctrine of Parmenianus that the sacrifice of a sinner is polluted; his 5th shows the validity of baptism even when conferred by sinners, for it is conferred by Christ, the minister being the instrument only; his 6th describes the violence of the Donatists; and the 7th deals with unity and of reunion.

2d. Augustine (354-430)

1e. Augustine battled against Donatism soon after he was ordained into the ministry in 391. The following were his writings against it:

1f. He wrote a popular psalm “*Abecedarium*” against the Donatists where he showed that the sect was founded by traditors, condemned by the church at large

2f. He wrote three books against the letter of Parmenianus in about 400 AD, refuting his false charges and fallacious arguments from Scripture.

3f. His seven books on baptism were particularly important to explain that the effect of the sacrament is independent of the holiness of the minister.

4f. He wrote three books in reply to the principal Donatist controversialist of the day—Petilianus, Bishop of Constantine, a successor of the traditor Silvanus—who had written a letter against the Church and another against him.

5f. His *De Unitate ecclesiae* (403) explained the nature of the church against the isolationism of Donatism.

2e. The arguments used by Augustine against Donatism were historical, doctrinal and personal.

1f. Historically, he proved that they were schismatic and violent.

2f. Doctrinally, he proved from the OT and NT the universality of the Church, and the validity of the sacraments even when administered by impious men, and argued against rebaptism.

3f. Personally, he employed *argumentum ad hominem* pointing to the inconsistency of the Donatists in their pardoning of certain traditors, and their readmittance of some into the church without rebaptism.

5c. Biblical Doctrine of the Church

1d. The Bible teaches that the visible Church is universal (1 Cor 1:2, Rev 7:9). The Westminster Confession of Faith (XXV:II) states, “the visible Church, which is also catholic or universal under the Gospel (not confined to one nation, as before under the law), consist of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion; and of their children: and is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation.”

2d. On the nature of the sacraments, the Westminster Confession (XXVII:III) states, “The grace which is exhibited in or by the sacraments rightly used, is not conferred by any power in them; neither doth the efficacy of a sacrament depend upon the piety or intention of him that doth administer it: but upon the work of the Spirit, and the word of institution, which contains, together with a precept authorising the use thereof, a promise of benefit to worthy receivers” (Rom 2:28-29, 1 Pet 3:21, Matt 3:11, 1 Cor 12:13, Matt 26:27-28).

3d. The Bible teaches separation not isolation (John 17:15-16, 1 Cor 5:1-11 cf, Rom 12:1-2, 2 Cor 6:14-7:1).

4d. The Bible teaches against a self-righteous, holier-than-thou attitude (Luke 18:9-14).

8b. **Monarchianism**

1c. Definition of Heresy

Generally, monarchianism (literally “one ruler”) is the belief that the godhead is singular, consisting of only one divine monarch.

2c. History of Heresy

Monarchianism arose in the 2nd century as an orthodox attempt to maintain monotheism (i.e. there is only one God), and refute tritheism (i.e. there are three Gods). They rejected the duality or plurality of gods as taught by Marcion and the Gnostics. Unfortunately, in its orthodox attempt to defend monotheism, it contradicted the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity.

3c. Proponents of Heresy

1d. The Adoptionists

Theodotus the Tanner and Theodotus the Money-changer taught that Christ was a *psilos anthropos* (a “mere man”) who became divine only at the time of his baptism. The heresy of adoptionism teaches that Jesus is just a mortal being but supernaturally empowered by God, and as such was not the Son of God by nature but the Son of God by adoption.

2d. Paul of Samosata

The primitive adoptionist views of the two Theodotuses were developed further by Paul of Samosata (c 200-275), the bishop of Antioch. He taught that from eternity, the *Logos* was an impersonal power, and could never become a concrete manifestation. In the prophets, the *Logos* was active for instance in Moses, and in many others, and more especially in Jesus Christ, the son of David, born by the Virgin. But Mary *did* not bear the *Logos*: she bore only a man, who in the baptism was anointed with the *Logos*.

4c. Heretical Doctrines

1d. Adoptionist or Dynamic Monarchianism

This form of monarchianism suggested that Jesus was a mere human being in every way until he was adopted by the Father to be his Son. Adoptionists often cited Jesus' baptism as the moment at which he was adopted to be the Christ, claiming that the line—"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased" (Matt 3:17)—was meant to signify precisely this event. The Holy Spirit is but a force or the presence of God the Father, and not a person Himself. Today, the Jehovah's Witnesses, Christadelphians and the Unitarians belong to this category.

2d. Patripassian or Modalistic Monarchianism

This variety of monarchianism believed that the Father, Son and Spirit are numerically one and the same appearing at different times in history under different forms. Modal monarchianism was also called "Patripassianism," literally meaning, "the father suffers," since, if the Son is numerically one with the Father, then anything that happens to the Son must also happen to the Father. The doctrine is also called Sabellianism, after an obscure theologian, Sabellius, who held to this view. Modern groups in this general category are the Oneness Pentecostal groups known as the United Pentecostal and United Apostolic Churches. They maintain that God's name is Jesus, and require baptism "in Jesus' name" only, and not "in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit" for salvation.

5c. Opponents of Heresy

1d. Hippolytus in his *Against the Heresy of a Certain Noetus* refuted the views of Noetus, a reputed Modalist. In his treatise, Hippolytus noted that the Son is the Word made manifest to us.

2d. Tertullian spoke against the modalist, Praxeas. In his treatise, *Against Praxeas*, Tertullian noted that the Godhead consisted of three persons united in one substance. Furthermore, the Son, Jesus Christ, was a single person with fully human and fully divine natures. This meant that the Son was distinctly different from the Father. Thus Tertullian wrote, "The property of each substance [in Jesus Christ] is so preserved that the spirit performed its own actions in Him, such as miracles and feats and signs, while the flesh carried on the affections proper to it, such as being hungry when He was tempted by the devil, being thirsty when He was with the Samaritan woman, weeping for Lazarus, being troubled at death, and at last, actually dying." Tertullian's response here is particularly noteworthy since it supplies the theological language that will be used to carve out the orthodox position in the Christological and Trinitarian controversies of the 4th and 5th centuries.

3d. Monarchianism does not end with Tertullian, nor does it end with the controversies just mentioned. Evidence of this comes in the form of a condemnation of Sabellianism at the 6th century Synod of Braga.

6c. Eternal Sonship of Christ

Jesus Christ did not *become* the Son of God; He *was, is and continues to be* Son of God. The eternity of Christ's Sonship is clearly taught in the Scriptures:

1d. Christ was the Son even before the world was created (Col 1:13-17).

2d. Christ is the Eternally Begotten Son of God (John 1:14, 18, 3:16, 18, 1 John 4:9). Believers are adopted sons (Rom 8:14-16) but only Christ is the uniquely begotten Son of God.

1e. Westminster Larger Catechism Q10: "It is proper to the Father to beget the Son, and the Son to be begotten of the Father, and to the Holy Ghost to proceed from the Father and the Son, *from all eternity.*"

2e. Westminster Larger Catechism Q36: "The only Mediator of the covenant of grace is the Lord Jesus Christ, who, *being the eternal Son of God*, of one substance and equal with the Father, in the fullness of time became man, and so was and continues to be God and man, in two entire distinct natures, and one person, forever."

3d. Christ was the Son of God even before the Father sent Him on His redemptive mission (Mark 12:1-12).

7c. John MacArthur's Heresy on the Sonship of Christ, and His Subsequent Recantation

1d. MacArthur, in his commentary on the book of Hebrews, wrote: "The Bible nowhere speaks of the eternal sonship of Christ. ... He was always God, but He became Son. He had not always had the title Son. That is His incarnation title. ... Christ was not Son until His incarnation. ... He is no 'eternal Son.'"

2d. MacArthur eventually abandoned his modified form of Dynamic Monarchianism in 1999. Read the following papers (see appendix): John MacArthur, "Reexamining the Eternal Sonship of Christ," *JBMW* (Spring 2001): 21-23; and the response by George Zeller, co-author (with Renald Showers) of the book, *The Eternal Sonship of Christ* (Neptune NJ: Loizeaux, 1993).

9b. **Sabellianism**

1c. Definition of Heresy

Sabellius taught that God is one being and one person but appears in three different forms—sometimes as Father, sometimes as Son, and sometimes as Spirit. Also known as Modalism or Patripassianism.

2c. History and Proponents of Heresy

1d. The heresy of modalism was known as Sabellianism in the East, and Patripassianism in the West. It was a part of the great Monarchian movement. It can be traced back to the age of Justin Martyr who said that “the Son is the Father.” Modalism has also been influenced by Gnosticism which regarded the Son and the Holy Ghost as aeons or emanations. Christians had to shew that the existence of the Son and the Holy Ghost could be reconciled with the Divine Monarchy, and so some adopted the view called Ebionite Monarchianism which defended the Monarchy by denying the deity of Christ, while others identified the Persons of the Godhead with the Father.

2d. Two bishops of Rome, Victor and Zephyrinus, were champions of Sabellianism. Callistus who succeeded Zephyrinus explained the Father, Son and Holy Spirit as “one and the same” person. The Father is the Holy Spirit who became the Son when He was virgin born.

3c. Heretical Doctrines

1d. There are no personal distinctions within the Godhead. The Father is the Son, and the Son is the Holy Spirit.

2d. The *Logos* and the Son of God are not the same. The *Logos* was eternally identical with God the Father. The Son of God did not exist till the Incarnation, when the Eternal *Logos* manifested its activity in the sphere of time in and through the man Christ Jesus.

3d. The Sonship of the 2nd Person was not eternal. The Sonship is a mere temporary matter, and when the work of man’s salvation is completed the *Logos* will be withdrawn from the humanity of Christ into that personal union and identity with the Father which existed from eternity, while the humanity will be absorbed into the original Divine nature.

4d. Sabellianism merged into Pantheism. The ultimate end of all things, according to Sabellius, was the restoration of the Divine Unity; that God, as the absolute *Monas*, should be all in all. If the absorption of Christ’s humanity into the absolute *Monas* was necessary, then much more would be the absorption of all inferior personal existences.

5d. Common illustrations used are the sun and water. The sun with its light and heat, and water as solid, liquid or gas reflect the three forms that God can take in His revelation to man.

4c. Opponents of Heresy

Hippolytus and Tertullian (see under “Monarchianism”).

5c. Biblical Proof of the Three Persons of the Godhead

1d. The clearest proof text for the doctrine of the Trinity 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.”

2d. The baptism of Jesus (Matt 3:16-17) is the best passage to prove the existence of the three persons in the Godhead: The Son on earth going through the waters of baptism, the Father in heaven saying “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,” and the Holy Spirit descending from heaven to earth, resting upon the Son.

10b. **Arianism**

1c. Definition of Heresy

Arianism is a heresy which arose in the 4th century, and denied the deity of Jesus Christ.

2c. History and Proponents of Heresy

1d. Arius was born in Egypt in 256 AD, and became a pastor in Alexandria.

2d. Arius had for his teacher Lucian of Antioch who had earlier been condemned for holding that Christ was only a man. Lucian may thus be known as the “Father of Arianism” because Arius and most of the 4th Arian theologians were his students. Calling themselves Lucianists and Collucianists, they developed his adoptionist and subordinationist tendencies into a full heresy.

3d. Arius’ views began to spread among the people and the Alexandrian clergy. Alexander the bishop called a meeting of his priests and deacons. The bishop insisted on the unity of the Godhead. Arius continued to argue that since the Son was created by the Father then at some point He began to exist. Therefore there was a time when the Son did not exist. Arius refused to submit to the Bishop and continued to spread his teaching. Alexander called a synod of bishops of Egypt and Libya. Of the hundred bishops who attended 80 voted for the condemnation and exile of Arius.

4d. After the synod Alexander wrote letters to the other bishops refuting Arius’ views. In doing so the bishop used the term *homoousios* to describe the Father and Son as being of one substance. Alexander used a term which was to become the keyword of the whole controversy.

5d. After his excommunication, Arius joined himself with Eusebius of Nicodemia his fellow schoolmate. He also sought refuge with Eusebius of Caesarea (the church historian). With their assistance, Arius enlisted the support of other bishops, many of whom had studied under Lucian. His supporters held their own synod calling Arius' views orthodox and condemning bishop Alexander of Alexandria.

6d. With the rise of Constantine to power, Christianity became the religion of the Roman Empire. Constantine had politically united the Empire but he was distressed to find a divided Christianity. Constantine, certainly not understanding the significance of the controversy, sent Ossius his main ecclesiastical adviser with letters to both Alexander and Arius. In the letters he tried to reconcile them by saying that their disagreement was merely just a matter of words. Both of them really were in agreement on major doctrines and neither were involved in heresy. The letters failed to have an effect.

7d. In 325 AD Ossius presided over a Council of the Orient in Antioch that was attended by 59 bishops, 46 of whom would soon attend the Council of Nicaea. This Council in Antioch was a forerunner of the latter Council in Nicaea. Under the influence of Ossius a new Church practice was inaugurated—that of issuing a credal statement. At this Antiochan Council Arianism was condemned.

8d. The General Council of Nicea was well attended by the major Eastern bishops, and some Western bishops. Athanasius said the total number of bishops who attended the Council to be about 300. Daily sessions were held and Arius was often summoned before the assembly to present his arguments for his doctrinal teaching. The Council decidedly denounced the impious doctrines of Arius.

3c. Heretical Doctrines

1d. Arius questioned the Trinity. He taught that the eternal Godhead was the Father. The Father created the Son. As such the Son was not pre-existent, and cannot be eternal.

2d. Using Greek terms, Arius denied that the Son is of one essence, nature, or substance with God; He is not consubstantial (*homoousios*) with the Father, and therefore not like Him, or equal in dignity, or co-eternal, or within the real sphere of Deity. The *Logos* which the Apostle John exalts is an attribute—Reason—belonging to the Divine nature, not a person distinct from another. He held the creation of the Son to be out of nothing.

3d. Arianism developed two parties, one of which felt Christ was of a substance like the Father (*homoiousios*). A more extreme wing insisted that as a created being Christ was unlike the Father in substance (*anomoios*). Arius himself would have belonged to the first or more moderate party.

4c. Opposition to Heresy

1d. The Council of Nicea opposed the Arian heresy and stated that Christ is “of one substance with the Father,” and made the Greek term *homoousios* the catchword of the orthodox.

2d. The council’s anathemas were extended to all those who claimed “there was once when he was not;” “before his generation he was not;” “he was made out of nothing;” “the Son of God is of another subsistence or substance;” and “the Son of God [is] created or alterable or mutable.”

3d. The orthodox counterattack on Arianism pointed out that the Arian theology reduced Christ to a demigod and in effect reintroduced polytheism into Christianity.

4d. But in the long run the most telling argument against Arianism was Athanasius’ constant soteriological battle cry that only God, very God, truly God Incarnate could reconcile and redeem fallen man to holy God.

5d. Christ therefore was of one substance with the Father (*homoousion*) but a distinct person. With this understanding the Council of Constantinople in 381 was able to reaffirm the Nicene Creed. The able Emperor Theodosius I threw himself on the side of orthodoxy and Arianism began to wane in the empire.

6d. Arianism has been reborn in the modern era in the form of extreme Unitarianism, and the Jehovah’s Witnesses regard Arius as a forerunner of C T Russell. Ancient heresy often comes back neatly tied up in a subtle package of deceit and error.

5c. Biblical Doctrine of the Deity of Christ

1d. Divine Names

Jesus Christ is called: (1) God (John 1:1, 20:28, Heb 1:8, Titus 2:13, 1 John 5:20). (2) Son of God (Matt 26:53-65, Luke 22:70, John 10:36). He is the *only begotten* Son of God (John 1:14, 18, 3:16, 18, 1 John 4:9). Note that He is *begotten, not created*. (3) I AM (John 8:58 cf Exod 3:13-14): (a) I am the bread of life (John 6:35), (b) I am the light of the world (John 9:5), (c) I am the door of the sheep (John 10:7,9), (d) I am the good shepherd (John 10:11,14), (e) I am the resurrection and the life (John 11:25), (f) I am the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6), (g) I am the true vine (John 15:1,5). (4) KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS (Rev 19:16).

2d. Divine Attributes

Jesus Christ is all powerful (Matt 28:18), all knowledgeable (John 16:30, Col 2:3), all present (Matt 18:20), and fully God (Col 2:9).

3d. Divine Functions

Jesus Christ created the world (John 1:3), upholds all things (Col 1:17, Heb 1:3), forgives sins (Mark 2:5-10, Luke 7:48), raises people from the dead (John 6:39, 40, 54; 11:26, 41-44).

4d. Divine Worship

Worship is due only to God (Matt 4:10, Acts 14:14-15, 10:25-26, Rev 22:8-9). Jesus demands, receives, and accepts worship (John 5:23, 20:28, Matt 14:33, Luke 24:52).

11b. **Apollinarianism**

1c. Definition of Heresy

Apollinarianism was the heresy taught by Apollinaris the Younger, bishop of Laodicea in Syria, in about 361. He taught that the two natures of Christ could not coexist within one person. His solution was to lessen the human nature of Christ.

2c. History and Proponents of Heresy

1d. Apollinaris (*Apollinarios*) the younger, bishop of Laodicea, became prominent in the second part of the 4th century. He was at first highly respected by men like Athanasius, Basil and Jerome for his classical culture, his Biblical learning, his defence of the Christian Faith and his loyalty to the Nicene Creed.

2d. Precisely when Apollinaris came forward with his heresy is uncertain. Up to 376, he hid his erroneous views well. His contemporaries like Athanasius did not suspect that there was anything wrong with his doctrines because of the high regard people had for him. It was only after the Council of Rome (376) that it became open war.

3d. Two more Roman councils in 377 and 381 saw Apollinaris views on Christ plainly denounced and condemned as heretical.

4d. The Council of Constantinople, 381, entered Apollinarianism on the list of heresies, and he died in his error in 392.

5d. He had a large following at one time in Constantinople, Syria, and Phoenicia. But when he died, his followers also fizzled out. A few disciples, like Vitalis, Valentinus, Polemon, and Timothy, tried to perpetuate the error of their teacher but the heretical sect itself soon

became extinct. Towards 416, many returned to the mother-church, while the rest drifted away into Monophysitism (i.e. the heresy that Christ has only one nature).

3c. Heretical Doctrines

Apollinaris based his theory on two suppositions, one ontological and the other psychological.

1d. Ontologically, he argued that Christ cannot be fully God and at the same time fully man. Two perfect beings with all their attributes, he argued, cannot be one. They are at most an incongruous compound, not unlike the monsters of mythology. Although he held to the Nicene defence of the full deity of Christ, he saw no reason why the humanity of Christ should be equally full,

2d. Psychologically, he considered the rational soul or spirit as essentially liable to sin and capable, at its best, of only precarious efforts. Thus he saw no way of saving Christ's impeccability and the infinite value of Redemption, except by the elimination of the human spirit from Jesus' humanity, and the substitution of the Divine *Logos* in its stead. For the constructive part of his theory, Apollinaris appealed to the well-known Platonic division of human nature: body (*sarx, soma*), soul (*psyche halogos*), spirit (*nous, pneuma, psyche logike*). Christ, he said, assumed the human body and the human soul or principle of animal life, but not the human spirit. The *Logos* Himself is, or takes the place of, the human spirit, thus becoming the rational and spiritual centre, the seat of self-consciousness and self-determination.

4c. Opposition to Heresy

1d. Apollinarianism was condemned as a heresy in the Council of Rome (381): "We pronounce anathema against them who say that the Word of God is in the human flesh in lieu and place of the human rational and intellective soul. For, the Word of God is the Son Himself. Neither did He come in the flesh to replace, but rather to assume and preserve from sin and save the rational and intellective soul of man."

2d. The orthodox bishops offered these arguments against Apollinarianism:

1e. Scripture says that the *Logos* took on all that is human including the spirit (*pneuma*), but without sin. Jesus for instance experienced joy and sadness which are properties of the rational soul.

2e. Christ without a rational soul is not a man; such an incongruous compound, as that imagined by Apollinaris, can neither be called God-man nor stand as the model of Christian life.

3e. If Christ did not assume a true human spirit, then He could not have saved that which He did not assume. And if this were true, then the spiritual part of man was left out of His salvific work.

4e. The Apollinarist controversy had its importance in the history of Christian dogma in that it contributed to Christological debate and its eventual refinement in the Chalcedonian Creed.

5c. Biblical Doctrine of the Humanity of Christ

1d. His Incarnation

Jesus Christ came in the flesh by birth through the virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit (Gen 3:15, Isa 7:14, Matt 1:18-25, John 1:14, Gal 4:4). He “emptied” Himself to become man (Phil 2:5-8). He emptied Himself of what? Not of His deity, but only of:

1e. The outward manifestation of His divine essence (*shekinah* glory). This he forsook in order to become man both in nature (essence), and form (flesh). He was fully man (1 John 1:1-13, John 1:14, 17:5, 2 Pet 1:16-18 cf Matt 17:1-13)

2e. The heavenly position of divine kingship. He vacated His heavenly throne in order to become a *doulos*—a bond-slave (Phil 2:7). His voluntary humiliation led to His subsequent exaltation (Phil 2:9-11).

3e. The independent use of His divine attributes. Note that although He gave up the independent exercise of His divine attributes, *He did not, in any way, give up His possession of them* (John 3:13, Col 2:9).

2d. His Human Development and Constitution

Like any other human being, Jesus had to go through the process of birth and physical growth (Luke 2:41-52). His body consisted of real human flesh, blood and bones (Heb 2:14, Luke 24:39). His body was subjected to the infirmities of the natural body like hunger (Matt 4:2), thirst (John 19:28), and tiredness (John 4:6, Matt 8:24). He was “in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Heb 4:15).

3d. His Human Names

Jesus Christ was called “Son of man” (Luke 19:10), and was known as “the man Christ Jesus” (1 Tim 2:5).

12b. Nestorianism

1c. Definition of Heresy

Nestorianism was the heresy of Nestorius who taught that Jesus is two distinct persons.

2c. History and Proponent of Heresy

1d. Nestorius was born in Syria and died in 451 AD. He was a monk who became the Patriarch of Constantinople

2d. Nestorius' heresy resulted in him being deposed as Patriarch and sent to Antioch, then Arabia, and then Egypt.

3d. Nestorianism eventually found its way into China. A stone monument dating from the late 8th century records that in a period of cultural openness during the Tang dynasty, a Syrian bishop brought Nestorian Christianity to China in 635. However Buddhist and Muslim persecutions threatened to wipe out the Nestorian church in the 8th and 9th centuries. It did vanish for a season only to reappear in the 13th century when the Mongolian regime favoured travel and trade, and a Christian presence.

3c. Heretical Doctrine

1d. Christ is divided into two persons—a human person and a divine person.

2d. The growing religion of Mary gave rise to the word *Theotokos* or “Mother of God.” The failure to understand that Mary was simply the vehicle of the incarnation, and that Christ was literally born and assumed a human nature through Mary led Nestorius to reason that Mary could not be the source of the being of the divine person, only his human person and thereby concluding that Christ was two distinct persons.

3d. Nestorianism confused the two natures of Christ and identified them as two persons. This effectively made Christ a schizophrenic.

4c. Opposition to Heresy

The council of Ephesus in 431 condemned Nestorianism as a heresy. It pronounced that Jesus was one person (not two persons) in two distinct and inseparable natures—divine and human.

5c. Biblical Doctrine of the Two Natures of Christ

1d. In his Systematic Theology, Buswell wrote, “In my opinion the psychological difficulties which confront our modern minds as we contemplate the ancient doctrine that Jesus Christ had two natures, can all be dissolved if we but remember that a nature is a complex of attributes and not a substantive entity. The doctrine simply is that our Lord Jesus Christ as the Eternal Son of God retained His entire complex of divine attributes, and always and under all circumstances conducted Himself in a manner perfectly consistent with His divine

attributes. At the same time, without confusion or contradiction, He took a complete complex of essential human attributes, and, during “the days of His flesh” (Heb 5:7) always and under all circumstances conducted Himself in a manner perfectly consistent with sinless human nature.

2d. “His divine nature was a perfect and consistent complex of the attributes which are essential to deity. “In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead (*theotes*) bodily” (Col 2:9). His human nature was His perfect and consistent complex of human attributes. He took to Himself the nature of the seed of Abraham; He took to Himself flesh and blood like the rest of us. He was tried in all points like as we are tried, apart from sin (Heb 2:14-16; 4:15).

13b. **Eutychianism**

1c. Definition of Heresy

1d. Eutychianism was a heresy of the 4th and 5th centuries introduced by Eutyches of Constantinople who taught that Jesus had neither a human nature nor a divine nature, but a different nature that was part-human and part-divine.

2d. Eutyches was condemned and deposed from the Monastery in AD 448 and then finally exiled at the council of Chalcedon in 451.

2c. History and Proponent of Heresy

1d. Eutyches (c 380-456), a priest at Constantinople, came into prominence in AD 431 at the Council of Ephesus, where he zealously opposed the doctrine of the Nestorians

2d. He was subsequently faulted for teaching that Jesus did not have a divine nature when he became flesh, and that his divine nature was only added on to his human nature after his human nature was completely formed.

3d. Eutyches was accused of heresy at a synod chaired by Flavian at Constantinople in 448. He was deposed from his priestly office and excommunicated from the church.

4d. But in the Council of Ephesus held in 449, Dioscorus of Alexandria who convened the meeting was overwhelmed by the large number of Egyptian monks who supported Eutyches. This time Eutyches was reinstated as a priest, and his opponent Flavian deposed.

5d. However, when emperor Theodosius died, a 4th plenary council was called in October 451 at Chalcedon. In this Council of Chalcedon, the synod of Ephesus (449) was written off as a “robber synod” and its decisions were nullified. The Council further declared that the two natures were united in Christ, but without any alteration, absorption or confusion.

6d. Nothing much is known of Eutyches after the Council of Chalcedon and he died in exile.

7d. After Eutyches died, his heresy made inroads into Syria. In the 6th century, a monk named Jacob Baradeus united the different branches of the Eutychians and the Monophysites into what is today the Syrian Orthodox Church which has a prominent presence in Armenia, Egypt and Ethiopia.

3c. Heretical Doctrines

1d. Eutychianism or Monophysitism basically teaches that Jesus Christ has only one nature not two. Jesus was half-human and half-divine.

2d. Monophysitism led to another erroneous view called monothelitism which says that Christ has only one will.

4c. Opposition to Heresy

1d. The Council of Chalcedon in 451 condemned it as a heresy and stated firmly that Christ is the *Theanthropos*, fully God and fully man, and one person with His two natures, and his natures are without mixture, without change, without division, and without separation.

2d. The Council of Constantinople in 680 affirmed that Christ had two wills, his human will being subject to his divine will.

3d. The Westminster Confession of Faith (VIII:2) states, “The Son of God, the second person in the Trinity, being very and eternal God, of one substance and equal with the Father, did, when the fullness of time was come, take upon him man’s nature, with all the essential properties, and common infirmities thereof, yet without sin; being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the virgin Mary, of her substance. So that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures, the Godhead and the manhood, were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion. Which person is very God, and very man, yet one Christ, the only Mediator between God and man.”

5c. An Orthodox Explanation of the Two Natures and Two Wills of Christ (Here is Buswell abridged by Tow and Khoo)

1d. The Orthodox View

The irreducible essentials of the Orthodox view are: (1) That Jesus Christ is one Person, *prosopon*, or *hypostasis*, and (2) that He had a fully divine nature and a fully human nature, the natures not mixed or confused, not divided or separated. The four great Chalcedonian adverbs are essential to orthodoxy.

2d. Modern Terminology

1e. The unity of the Person of Christ consists in the fact that the ego of Jesus who lived in Palestine is numerically identical with the ego of Yahweh God who called Abraham into the promised land (John 8:56-58, Gal 3:17), the Second Person of the Trinity.

2e. The doctrine of the two natures, particularly as expressed in the declaration of the third council of Constantinople, 680 AD, is difficult for our modern minds to understand. I believe the difficulties may be cleared up by a clarification of the vocabulary involved. Let me first of all suggest certain definitions and then apply them to the controversial issues whose history we have just reviewed.

3d. Definitions

1e. A person is a non-material substantive entity, and is not to be confused with a nature. A nature is not a part of a person in the substantive but qualitative sense. E.g. The fox (entity) is cunning (nature).

2e. A nature is a complex of attributes (like holiness, righteousness, goodness, truthfulness), and is not to be confused with a substantive entity.

3e. A will is a certain kind of behaviour pattern and is not to be confused with a substantive entity.

4d. The Confusion of Trichotomy

1e. It has been stated above that the Apollinarian heresy was expressed in terms of trichotomy. The trichotomist holds that the "soul" and the "spirit" of man are two distinguishable substantive entities. The dichotomist holds that these two words are functional names, parallel with the words "heart," "mind," "will," etc,—names which connote the one non-material substantive entity, the human ego in different functional relationships. I have shown that the biblical psychology is consistently dichotomous, but the church of the fourth and fifth centuries did not have the facilities for clarifying this question. The Spirit-guided feeling of the orthodox church simply expressed itself in the condemnation of Apollinarianism. The official canons of the first council of Constantinople do not state the reasons, but the feeling of the orthodox seems clearly to have been that if Jesus did not have a human spirit, He did not have a complete human nature. If this were the case, the incarnation would be incomplete. In this, clearly the ancient church acted in the interest of sound biblical teaching.

2e. For us, in the modern world, rejecting trichotomy, however, what is the implication of the decision of the council? Are we committed to the teaching that Jesus had two distinct spirits in the sense of two numerically distinguishable substantive entities? By no means. None of the ancient creeds recognized by Protestants make any such declaration.

3e. But by implication the rejection of Apollinarianism is commonly regarded as at least committing the church to the position that Jesus had a human spirit. My personal feeling is that we can, without equivocation, accept the implication and declare that Jesus had a human spirit. I mean this, not in the sense that the trichotomist would hold, not in the sense that He had two spirits, but in the sense that His eternal ego, His personality, took to itself in the incarnation all the essential attributes of a human spirit. He had a human spirit in the sense that His spirit became human. (I have suggested above that the statement in the Shorter Catechism to the effect that the Eternal Son of God “took to Himself ... a reasonable soul” must be understood as employing the word “soul” in the sense that His soul became human, not that He took a second personal ego or substantive entity.) This statement can be insisted upon without implying that His being in any sense or in any degree ceased to be divine.

5d. The Two “Wills”

1e. The decision of the third council of Constantinople, 680 AD, declaring that Jesus Christ had two “wills,” expressed in ancient vocabulary, is perhaps the most disturbing to our modern consciousness. Here again I believe that our problem can be clarified by precise definition.

2e. I suggest that we must regard a “will” not as a substantive entity, but as a behaviour complex. Certainly this is what we mean when in modern times we speak of a person “having a strong will,” or “having a weak will,” or “having a will to succeed.” It is true that the word “will” is sometimes used to refer to the personal ego in its function of persistence in choice. When we say, “John Doe is a strong will,” or “John Doe is a great mind,” we are using the word “will” and the word “mind” to refer to the person himself as a substantive entity. Yet such a meaning in the decision of the third council of Constantinople is wholly impossible for it would have been stark Nestorianism. It would have meant that Jesus Christ is two personal beings and the council was wholly opposed to any such Nestorianism.

3e. I suggest, therefore, that we can accept the decision of the third council of Constantinople in the sense that a will is a behaviour complex. Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Eternal Son of

God, retaining all His divine attributes, took to Himself a human volitional behaviour pattern when He took to Himself all the essential attributes of human nature.

4e. It has been pointed out that the humanity of Christ is sinless, like the humanity of Adam before the fall. Not only His divine behaviour pattern, that is, that aspect of His volitional life in which He showed that He knew who He was and what He was to accomplish, but His human behaviour pattern, His normal reactions and volitional acts in all human and earthly relationships, in other words His human will, was also perfectly sinless.

6d. The Two Natures

1e. In my opinion the psychological difficulties which confront our modern minds as we contemplate the ancient doctrine that Jesus Christ had two natures, can all be dissolved if we but remember that a nature is a complex of attributes and not a substantive entity. The doctrine simply is that our Lord Jesus Christ as the Eternal Son of God retained His entire complex of divine attributes, and always and under all circumstances conducted Himself in a manner perfectly consistent with His divine attributes. At the same time, without confusion or contradiction, He took a complete complex of essential human attributes, and, during “the days of His flesh” (Heb 5:7) always and under all circumstances conducted Himself in a manner perfectly consistent with sinless human nature.

2e. His divine nature was a perfect and consistent complex of the attributes which are essential to deity. “In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead (*theotes*) bodily” (Col 2:9). His human nature was His perfect and consistent complex of human attributes. He took to Himself the nature of the seed of Abraham; He took to Himself flesh and blood like the rest of us. He was tried in all points like as we are tried, apart from sin (Heb 2:14-16; 4:15).

7d. The Four Great Chalcedonian Adverbs

1e. It is of the greatest importance, absolutely essential to the orthodox doctrine of the Person and the natures of Christ, that we hold that He possessed the divine nature and the human nature “without mixture, *asynchutos*,” “without change, *atreptos*,” “without division, *adiaretos*,” “without separation, *achoristos*.” If now we insist that a nature is not a substantive entity, but a complex of attributes, can we consistently adhere to these four great historical adverbs enunciated by the council of Chalcedon? The answer must be emphatically in the affirmative.

2e. What do we mean then in literal terms when we say that the divine and the human natures of Christ were not mixed or changed, not divided or separated? We mean, simply and literally, that the entire complex of attributes of His deity was maintained fully and completely in all points and at all times, but also that without contradiction or confusion, the entire complex of attributes which are essential to the nature of man has been maintained at all points and at all times since His Incarnation.

14b. Pelagianism

1c. Definition of Heresy

Pelagianism got its name from Pelagius and refers to a 5th century heresy which denied the doctrines of original sin and Christian grace.

2c. History and Proponents of Heresy

1d. Pelagius was a British monk who came into the historical and theological scene between 380-410. He appeared to belong to the ascetic sort that promoted isolationism as a means to holiness and approval before God.

2d. Pelagius attracted a following by teaching that humans are not descendents of Adam, but, like Adam, have the ability to sin or not to sin. He has a *creationist* view of the soul (i.e., each soul is created immediately by God so man begins life without original sin).

3d. When Rome was conquered in 409-10 by Alaric the Goth, Pelagius went to North Africa, and settled in Carthage. His colleague, Celestius (or Coelestius) moved to Jerusalem where he was charged by Paulinus of Milan of denying the transmission of Adam's sin to all humanity but was cleared by a diocesan synod.

3c. Heretical Doctrines

Celestius, a highly intelligent lawyer from a noble family and a close friend of Pelagius, converted Pelagius' thoughts into theoretical principles. He proposed the following 6 theses:

1d. Even if Adam had not sinned, he would have died.

2d. Adam's sin harmed only himself, not the human race.

3d. Children just born are in the same state as Adam before his fall.

4d. The whole human race neither dies through Adam's sin or death, nor rises again through the resurrection of Christ.

5d. The Mosaic Law is as good a guide to heaven as the Gospel.

6d. Even before the advent of Christ there were men who were without sin.

4c. Opposition to Heresy

1d. Celestius was summoned to appear before a synod at Carthage to answer charges for his erroneous doctrinal statements. He remained defiant and refused to retract them, insisting that the Bible does not speak clearly about the inheritance of Adam's sin and thus it was not heretical to deny the existence of original sin.

2d. The synod of Carthage refused to ordain Celestius, and condemned his six theses. But by then the Pelagian heresy was already quite widespread especially around Carthage. This moved Augustine to take a resolute stand against Pelagianism in his pulpit ministry and private conversations.

3d. Augustine in his *Confessions* (397) taught that all humans are born sinful because we were in Adam. Man had a free will before the fall (it was possible for man not to sin), but after the fall, that free will was lost (it was impossible for man not to sin). As the Puritans (i.e., 16th through early 18th century English, Dutch and North American Calvinists) put it in their rhyme: "In Adam's fall, sinned we all."

4d. Augustine between 412-414 wrote several important treatises which positively established the existence of original sin, the impossibility of complete freedom from sin in this life. The following were his main tenets:

1e. Adam was created sinless. Sin is due to the fall of Adam.

2e. Adam's sin is transmitted from him to all humans through natural descent.

3e. Sin is *traduced* by natural descent (Rom 5:12).

4e. Original sin is to be distinguished from actual sin. Original sin is not just the first actual sin. It is corporate in nature. Therefore we are born to condemnation. We sin because we are sinners, in Adam.

5e. The result of original sin is spiritual and physical death.

6e. Therefore grace is, in the nature of the case, free and unmerited.

7e. God justly condemns those who have not heard the gospel because all have sinned in Adam.

5d. In an attempt to win back the errant brethren, Augustine, in all these writings, never mentioned the authors of the heresy by name.

6d. Quite a number of Church councils condemned Pelagianism as a heresy:

1e. Councils of Carthage (412, 416 and 418)

Celestius was condemned at Carthage in 412. Pelagianism was condemned also in 416 and 418.

2e. Council of Ephesus (431)

Pelagianism was anathematized at the Third Ecumenical (universal) council, on 22 July in Ephesus.

3e. The Council of Orange (529)

The 2nd Council of Orange (Auraisio, France) in 529 upheld Augustine's view of grace and condemned Pelagianism unequivocally.

4e. Protestant Synods and Confessions

Pelagianism was condemned universally by the Protestants:

1f. 2nd Helvetic (1561/66) 8-9. (Swiss-German Reformed).

2f. Augsburg Confession (1530) Art. 9, 18 (Lutheran).

3f. Gallican Confession (1559) Art. 10 (French Reformed).

4f. Belgic Confession (1561) Art. 15 (Lowlands, French/Dutch/German Reformed).

5f. The Anglican Articles (1571).

6f. Canons of Dort (1618-9), 3/4.2 (Dutch/German/French Reformed).

5c. What Happened to Man after the Fall?

1d. Man became *totally depraved* (Gen 6:5). His nature is *totally corrupted* by sin (Jer 17:9, Rom 3:10-12). Man is *dead in sin* (Eph 2:1), and is not able to respond to spiritual things (1 Cor 2:13-14). He is *born in sin*, and *bent on sinning*. WCF IX:3-5, "Of Free-Will," states:

1e. "Man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation: so as, a natural man, being altogether averse from

that good, and dead in sin, is not able, by his own strength, to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto.

2e. “When God converts a sinner, and translates him into the state of grace, He freeth him from his natural bondage under sin; and, by His grace alone, enables him freely to will and to do that which is spiritually good; yet so as that, by reason of his remaining corruption, he doth not perfectly nor only will that which is good, but doth also will that which is evil.

3e. “The will of man is made perfectly and immutably free to good alone, in the state of glory only.”

2d. Adam, being the federal head, represented the whole human race. Thus, Adam’s first sin is judicially *imputed* to his descendents (Rom 5:12-21). Man is not born good, but conceived and born in sin (Ps 51:5).

15b. **Manicheanism**

1c. Definition of Heresy

Manicheanism was a dualistic religion founded by Mani, a Persian philosopher, in the 3rd century. He taught that there were two gods, one good, one evil.

2c. History and Proponent of Heresy

1d. Mani lived in about 210-275 AD. He hails from western Persia. Mani was raised as a Christian but when he reached adulthood, he departed from Christianity to create a new religion that sought to combine all the existing religions, viz., Christianity, Buddhism and Zoroastrianism.

2d. Mani referred to himself as the *Paraclete*, a title which belonged rightfully only to the 3rd person of the Trinity—the Holy Spirit.

3d. The followers of Mani were inclined towards a twisted Christianity and so spared no effort to preserve many of the apocryphal or non-inspired Christian writings like the Acts of Thomas.

4d. The Manichean sect’s most famous convert was Augustine of Hippo who, eight or nine years later, became a Biblical Christian and a potent adversary against Manicheanism.

3c. Heretical Doctrines

1d. The chief tenet of Manichee theology was its “Yin-Yang” type dualism. The universe is divided into two equal forces of a good spiritual god and an evil material god, and they are in constant battle with each other.

2d. Manicheans identified the evil god as Satan, and believed that Satan has as much power as the good God, Jehovah Himself.

3d. The good god is spirit and is light, and is responsible for human souls and minds. The bad god is material and darkness, and is responsible for human bodies and passions. Human beings are the battleground between the two gods, since they are a mixture of mind and matter, the basic principles of the two gods.

4d. The Manicheans taught that Christ was not really human, but a divine being inhabiting a phantom-type body.

5d. Manicheans lived an ascetic life that avoided the material and emotional (like meat and sex) so that they might become fully spiritual and rational. Those who attained full spirituality and rationality could detach their bodies at death and return to heaven. Those who remained attached to their evil material and passionate selves were condemned to a continuing cycle of re-birth into physical bodies.

4c. Opponent of Heresy

Augustine opposed Manicheanism strongly. He denied Mani's apostleship and condemned his rejection of Holy Scripture. There were others who accused Mani of inventing myths, and that his ideas were neither theology nor philosophy but an unorthodox theosophy.

5c. What Does the Bible Teach About Good Versus Evil?

1d. Jehovah is Greater than Satan (Exod 18:11, John 10:29, 1 John 4:4).

2d. Light Overcomes Darkness (John 1:5, the darkness could not overpower [*katelaben*] the light).

3d. Holiness of Body and Spirit (1 Cor 6:15-20, Phil 3:21, 1 Thess 5:23).

16b. **Socinianism**

1c. Definition of Heresy

Socinianism is an anti-Trinitarian religious movement started by Faustus Socinus (1539-1604) in Poland in the 16th century. It is sometimes known as Old Unitarianism

2c. History and Proponents of Heresy

1d. Incipient Socinianism began with such Italian humanists as Bernardino Ochino, Giorgio Blandrata, and Laelius Socinus, who fled to Poland from persecution first in Italy and then in Calvinist Switzerland. Michael Servetus too had a part to play in influencing their anti-Trinitarian views.

2d. The Socinians founded in 1556 the Minor Reformed Church of Poland, making Rakow as an intellectual centre. Faustus arrived in Poland in 1579 to spearhead the movement.

3d. Socinianism was a radical attempt to compromise Christianity with humanism. The doctrine of the Holy Trinity was rejected, the Scriptures were considered authoritative but subordinate to human reason. The Nicene and Athanasian creeds were rejected and Jesus was merely a good human being, and the Holy Spirit merely actions of God.

4d. The movement became known as the Polish Brethren, and communities were formed in imitation of the early Christian church. Its members refused to participate in war.

5d. In the face of constant criticism, the movement finally dissipated in about 1638.

3c. Heretical Doctrines

1d. Denies the doctrine of the Trinity. There is no such thing as a 2nd and 3rd person of the Trinity. Christ was just a good moral example, and the Holy Spirit is merely the activity of God.

2d. Rejects the full deity of Christ and His substitutionary atonement, God's election and predestination, original sin and total depravity of man, and justification by faith alone.

4c. Refutation of Heresy

1d. Christ was not just a Prophet, but also Priest and King (study the Epistle to the Hebrews).

2d. The Son of God became the Son of Man, so that the sons of men might become the sons of God" (Calvin). The substitutionary atonement is taught in Mark 10:45, John 1:29, 1 Pet 2:24, 2 Cor 5:21, Gal 3:13, Col 1:14.

3d. The doctrine of the Trinity is clearly stated in 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."

5c. Socinianism and Neo-Theism ("Critique of Openness Theology/Neo-theism" by Daniel Fick)

1d. This new teaching is really not a new teaching at all. In the book, *The Coming Evangelical Crisis*, Robert Strimple, professor of NT Studies at Westminster Theological Seminary, reminds us of the history of this doctrine. He writes as follows: "They were a small splinter group that arose shortly after the Reformation. This group was especially influential in Poland for a time, later the movement spread to England, where it was eventually absorbed into Deism and disappeared as a separate movement. The movement was named

Socinianism, after its chief proponent. Socinianism is usually remembered for (1) its denial of the deity of Christ and (2) its denial of the need for a substitutionary atonement and for justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ. Socinianism, therefore, was considered a heresy regarding the person and work of Christ.'

2d. At the basis of Socinianism was this same heretical view of God, that is now being promoted by Neo-Theism. And, as Strimple notes, 'Right down to some of its most basic arguments, it is Socinianism all over again.' It was out of that foundation, that their heretical views regarding Christ and His work developed.

3d. Today, the view of God once presented by the Socinians is again being promoted. As we study theology we discover that theological systems hang together. An aberration in one's foundational understanding of who God is, will have ramifications with regard to the interpretation of what God does. A danger in adopting a Socinian view of God, is that this will ultimately lead to a Socinian view of salvation.

4d. The good news of the Gospel is that salvation is by God's grace, 'by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, to the glory of God alone.' What is at stake here is more than a simple understanding of God and his relationship with his people. At issue and at stake will ultimately be the very nature of the Gospel we hold dear.

5d. Those who are promoting this revived Socinianism describe their theology in a variety of ways. They are promoting their doctrine as Neo-theism (a new view of God). This new understanding of God is highlighted by their expression, the 'openness of God.'

17b. **Roman Catholicism**

1c. Salvation the Key Issue

Can a person be saved through the gospel of the Catholic Church? On the basis of God's Word, the answer is an emphatic "No." The Reformers of the 16th century, namely, Luther, Calvin, Knox, Zwingli, and others rejected the doctrine of salvation espoused by the Catholic Church. The gospel of the Catholic Church is a gospel that does not save. It is "another gospel" (Gal 1:8), a heterodox gospel, quite different from the one Jesus and the Apostles preached. The Catholic Church is *still the same*, and has not changed since the Reformation.

2c. Have Catholics Changed?

1d. There are, however, certain prominent "evangelicals" (a meaningless term today) who declare that the Catholics have changed! According to them, Catholics are our "brothers and sisters in Christ." So-called "evangelicals" Bill Bright (Campus Crusade for Christ), Charles Colson (Prison Fellowship Ministries), Os Guinness (Trinity Forum), Richard Mouw (Fuller Seminary), Mark Noll (Wheaton College), J I Packer (Regent College), John Woodbridge (Trinity

Evangelical Divinity School), and others who had signed the ecumenical document of “Evangelicals and Catholics Together” (ECT) in 1994 are claiming that the Catholics have changed. They are calling all Protestants to return to Rome. They have betrayed the Reformation.

2d. The Catholic Church has not changed a single iota of her beliefs. In opposition to the 16th Century Protestant Reformation, the Roman Catholic Council of Trent (1545-63) hurled 125 anathemas (ie, curses) against Christians who believed that “the just shall live by faith” (Heb 10:38). The Council of Trent, specially set up to counter the Reformation, unequivocally rejected these biblical maxims: *Grace Alone, Faith Alone, Christ Alone, and Scriptures Alone*. Till today, these truths are denied. The Second Vatican Council or Vatican II (1962-5) reaffirmed the Council of Trent. The opening statement of Pope John XXIII at Vatican II is revealing, “I do accept entirely all that has been decided and declared at the Council of Trent.” At the 450th anniversary of the Council of Trent, it was reported by *The Boston Globe* (May 1, 1995) that the current Pope—John Paul II—“upholds the work of the Council of Trent. Offers no concession to Protestants.” The Catholic Church “rightly condemned” the Protestant Reformation, the Pope said. John Paul II further stressed, “The dogmatic affirmations of the Council of Trent naturally preserve all their value” (*The Catholic News*, July 9, 1995). It is clear that in the mind of the Pope, it is not the Catholic but the Protestant Church that has to change. The Catholic Church desires very much for the Protestant Church to return to Rome, but absolutely *on her terms*.

3d. The Protestant Church must refuse and resist any and every pressure and temptation to change its doctrine of salvation. The gospel that saves is an unchanging gospel. It is vital for Reformation churches to continue preaching that salvation is obtained by *grace alone*, through *faith alone*, in *Christ alone*, on *Scripture alone*.

3c. ‘Only’ Versus ‘Plus’

1d. Does not the Catholic Church teach the same? No she does not. The Catholic Church does not believe that a person is saved *solely* by grace through faith. If you were to ask a Catholic: “Are you saved by faith?” He would say “Yes.” And you may think that everything is fine and good. But that is a wrong question to ask in the first place. You should phrase the question precisely this way: “Are you saved by *faith alone*?” And you can expect the answer to be “No!” This is because to the Catholic, *works are required for salvation*. The Catholic doctrine of salvation is *grace plus*, *faith plus*, *Christ plus*, and *Scripture plus*; it is not “*alone*.” Let me prove this through the Council of Trent, Vatican II, and *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1994), all of which are official documents of the Roman Church.

1e. Grace and Faith Plus Works

The Catholic Church rejects the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith alone. To Catholics, faith *plus works* equals salvation. The Council of Trent says that anyone who believes in justification by faith alone is cursed: “If anyone says that justifying faith is nothing else than confidence in the divine mercy which remits sins for Christ’s sake, or that this confidence alone is that whereby we are justified, let him be anathema” (6th Session, Canon 12). The Catholic Catechism teaches baptismal regeneration (ie, a person is saved only after water baptism): “Baptism is necessary for salvation The Church does not know of any means other than Baptism that assures entry into eternal beatitude; ... *God has bound salvation to the sacrament of Baptism*” (#1257). It is clear that for Catholics, faith is not enough, one must do something good (like baptism) to earn salvation. Well, this was exactly what the Judaizers in the days of Paul taught: “It is not enough to believe in Christ, you must be circumcised in order to be saved.” The Apostle Paul issued a severe indictment against those who teach salvation by works: “But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed” (Gal 1:8). Salvation is absolutely free: “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that *not of yourselves*: it is *the gift of God: Not of works*, lest any man should boast” (Eph 2:8-9).

2e Christ Plus Mary

The Catholic Church also rejects the doctrine that it is only in Christ that salvation is received. To Catholics, Jesus is not the sole Mediator of the New Covenant, Mary is to be included. Christ *plus Mary* equals salvation. The Catechism states: “In a wholly singular way she [Mary] co-operated ... in the Saviour’s work of restoring supernatural life to souls. For this reason she is a mother to us in the order of grace... . This motherhood of Mary in the order of grace continues uninterruptedly Taken up to heaven she did not lay aside this saving office but by her manifold intercession continues to bring us the gifts of eternal salvation ... Therefore the Blessed Virgin is invoked in the Church under the titles of Advocate, Helper, Benefactress, and Mediatrix” (#968-9). The Catholics believe that Christ is not the only Mediator, Mary is Co-Mediatrix. Moreover, deified as “Mother of God,” Mary is superior to Christ. What does the Bible say? The Bible, especially the Epistles, says nothing about Mary being a Saviour. If Mary is such an important person for our salvation, why is there absolutely no mention of her by Paul, Peter, James, and John in their Epistles? It is very clear in Scripture that there is but one Mediator and one Saviour, and only One!

“For there is one God, and *one Mediator* between God and men, the man Christ Jesus!” (1 Tim 2:5, see also Isa 43:11, John 14:6).

3e. Scripture Plus Tradition

The Catholic Church does not believe that the Word of God is the only basis of faith and practice. The Catholics deem the sayings of the Pope and the Apocrypha (hidden writings) infallible! Holy Scripture *plus human tradition* equals authority (refer to the Catholic Catechism, #81-2, #85, #95, #119). As Protestants, we believe that only the 66 Canonical Books of Scripture are the inspired and authoritative Word of God (2 Tim 3:16, 2 Pet 1:20-21).

3c. Change in Tactics!

So, has the Catholic Church changed? No, not at all. If there is a change, the change is in tactics. In the past, she kept the gospel away from people by forbidding them to read and study the Bible. Bible owners were burned at the stake. This murderous tactic failed. The Catholic Church underestimated the power of true faith in Christ. A new tactic is adopted today. The Catholic Church now shows herself friendly. She has succeeded in getting “evangelicals” to say that Catholicism saves. These ECT signers are telling us that there is no need to evangelise the Catholics; they are already saved. Who suffers? The Catholics suffer. They are made to believe that they are on their way to heaven, when they are not!

4c. Love the Catholics

1d. What should be our attitude towards Catholics? The Bible teaches us to *love the Catholics*. How do we love them? By exposing error, and speaking truth. Love “rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth” (1 Cor 13:6). Love means telling them the Truth of God’s Word gently and patiently. Love means telling them the Good News that *only Jesus saves!*

2d. Dear Catholic friends, please know that *salvation is absolutely free!* Justification is by faith, and faith alone. Good works are important, but they come *after* salvation, not before. Charles Spurgeon has rightly said, “If my garment of salvation requires just one stitch from me, I am lost!” Trust only and fully in Christ, and *come out* of the Catholic Church (2 Cor 6:14-7:1)! The Catholic Church is not safe. You are safe only in Christ. Salvation is *only* by grace through faith in Christ *minus all the pluses*.

3a. **MODERN HERESIES**

1b. **Liberalism**

1c. What is Liberalism?

Theological liberalism or modernism is the “attempt to give Christian content to the stream of man’s general non-authoritative knowledge and to do so by means of a non-authoritative method based on reason, experience and history” (Nels Ferre, “Contemporary Theology in the Light of 100 Years,” *Theology Today* (October 1958), in Robert P Lightner, *Neoevangelicalism Today* [Illinois: Regular Baptist, 1965], 30). J Gresham Machen wrote, “the great redemptive religion which has always been known as Christianity is battling against a totally diverse type of religious belief, which is only the more destructive of the Christian faith because it makes use of traditional Christian terminology. This modern non-redemptive religion is called ‘modernism’ or ‘liberalism’” (*Christianity and Liberalism* [Grand Rapids: Wm B Eerdmans, 1923], 2).

2c. History and Proponents of Liberalism

1d. Satan in the Garden

In the Edenic Garden, Satan tempted Eve by questioning God’s Word, “Yea hath God said?” (Gen 3:1). This is followed by an outright denial of God’s Word. God said, “But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Gen 2:17). But Satan twisted God’s Word by saying, “Ye shall not surely die” (Gen 3:4).

2d. Proponents of Modernism

1e. Immanuel Kant (1724-1804)

He is the father of rationalism. According to Kant, “Religion is essentially belief in God as a good will realizing itself in nature and history, evinced by neither prophecy nor miracle, but by the same good will in ourselves—its object to develop and confirm the will of good in us. The sovereign test of the Bible is our own morality” (*The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, s v “Kant, Immanuel,” by C A Beckwith).

2e. George Hegel (1770-1831)

He adopted Kant’s philosophy and created the idea that “progress is inherent in change.” Hegel’s philosophical methodology “sought to accentuate what he considered to be contradictions in people’s thinking in order to expose the weakness of their views. He thought that error is caused by either incompleteness of thought or abstraction. By his exposing ‘contradictions’, people could see the incompleteness of their thoughts and be driven to an understanding of the particular and the real. Hegel thought of history itself as a

forum in which the contradictions and inadequacies of finite thought and action are exposed, allowing the infinite mind of the Absolute to reach higher levels of cultural and spiritual expression” (*Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, s v “Hegel, George Wilhem Friedrich,” by P H Devries). In other words, Hegel was trying to say that God is not real, only what is in the mind is real, and God is real only when the mind perceives Him to be real.

3e. George Buttrick

In his book, *The Christian Fact and Modern Doubt*, this former Presbyterian minister said, “Literal infallibility of Scripture is a fortress impossible to defend: there is treason in the camp. Probably few people who claim ‘to believe every word of the Bible’ really mean it. That avowal held to its last logic would risk a trip to the insane asylum” In another place, he said, “A God who punishes men with fire and brimstone through eternity would hardly be God-like. He would be almost satanic in cruelty and child-like in imagination—like a nasty little boy pulling off the wings of a fly.”

4e. Harry Emerson Fosdick

He was a Baptist and Professor of Union Theological Seminary. In his book, *The Modern Use of the Bible*, he denied that Jesus is God, “They take the phrase such as ‘Jesus is God,’ not to be found either in the Scripture or the creeds and set it up as a standard of regularity in doctrine. But to suppose that the phrase, ‘Jesus is God,’ is an adequate expression of the Christian faith even in its creedal forms is to display abysmal ignorance of what the church has stood for. That statement alone is not orthodoxy; it is heresy.” Union Seminary with heretics like Fosdick was the School where John Sung lost his faith. John Sung said, “I was enrolled in a seminary that taught a ‘God-is-dead’ theology, under the caretaking of a principal surnamed Coffin. But this seminary became a cemetery to my troubled soul” (Timothy Tow, *John Sung my Teacher* [Singapore: Christian Life, 1985], 69).

5e. Dr Jenkins, Bishop of Durham

He publicly attacked the fundamental doctrines of the Christian Faith such as the virgin birth and the resurrection of Christ. It was reported by an international news magazine that, “Jenkins denied the ‘miracle’ of the resurrection: no concrete event underlies the doctrine, he said. Last Christmas he declared that the church has ‘no right to insist on the literal truth of the Virgin Birth. Again, at Easter, he insisted that there ‘is no (historical) proof’ for Christ’s Resurrection ...” (“Britain’s Doubting Bishop,” *Newsweek* (June 17, 1985).

6e. Dr Robert Runcie, Former Archbishop of Canterbury

In October 82 when he came to Singapore, an article in *The Straits Times* revealed that he did not believe that God is a judge, that God is all-powerful, and that Christianity is the only way of salvation (“Canterbury Tale,” *The Straits Times* (October 27, 1982).

7e. German Higher Criticism

So called “Bible” scholars have interpreted the Scriptures on the basis of Hegelian philosophy. Graf and Wellhausen, influenced by Hegel’s evolutionary philosophy, introduced the JEDP theory which propounds that the God of the Jews evolved from the primitive Jehovah to the advanced Elohim. “Jehovah they stated was the local tribe god of the Jews and that when the Jewish nation grew up and became a great nation in Palestine their god grew up and became Elohim” (Arthur Steele, “Modern Religious Problems,” unpublished lecture notes, 51). Not only are the first five books of the OT being torn apart by such scholars, the first three books of the NT—the Synoptic Gospels—are said to be inventions of the Church; the gospel accounts are not factual. By way of source, form, and redaction criticism, the Jesus Seminar—a group of 74 unregenerate scholars—claim that Jesus did not say 82% of the things He was supposed to have said. The followers of Jesus were the ones who put words in His mouth. John D. Crossan said that the deification of Christ is the result of “a mixture of myth, propaganda, and social convention” (Richard N Ostling, “Jesus Christ, Plain and Simple” *TIME* [January 10, 1994]: 34-5).

3c. Opponents of Liberalism

1d. John Gresham Machen (1881-1937)

1e. He remains one of the key figures in the history of the Christian Church throughout this century. He is known especially for his high level of Biblical scholarship and undying zeal in defending the Christian faith. A number of his books are invariably apologetic in nature, namely, his first book, *The Origin of Paul’s Religion* (1921), the highly acclaimed *Christianity and Liberalism* (1923), and the classic work, *The Virgin Birth of Christ* (1930).

2e. Machen lived in a time when modernism was at its height. He could not but react against the modernists who attacked the Bible and his Lord. Machen, for the sake of the purity of the gospel, took upon himself the responsibility of chief spokesman for conservative Christianity. He wrote convincingly against modernism in *Christianity and*

Liberalism. Stonehouse described the effects of this book, “Defining the issue of the day more incisively than any other publication, it made a profound impression on all sections of the religious world. Thousands of copies were sold within a year. While the book on Paul established Machen’s reputation as a scholarly defender of historic Christianity, this smaller volume catapulted him into the area of ecclesiastical and religious life where the broader controversy between Christianity and modernism was being fought” (Ned B Stonehouse, *J Gresham Machen: A Biographical Memoir* [Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1977], 335).

3e. Machen was so vehement in his attack on modernism that he was charged with bitterness, intolerance, and bigotry. Stonehouse said, “It is perhaps, inevitable that such charges should be leveled against any one so valiant and uncompromising in his defense of the faith and exposure of current error” (Ibid., 338). Indeed, Machen regarded modernism “as another gospel, not really a gospel at all. But if its advocates had merely associated themselves in organizations committed to their own liberal views, he would not have been profoundly disturbed. It was, however, their presence in churches constitutionally committed to the very historic Christianity which they were repudiating which compelled Machen to conclude that a most fundamental issue of the controversy was that of dishonesty” (Ibid.). Such hypocrisy and deception Machen could not tolerate. He made it a point to expose them so that the church may be alerted to the dangers of their double-talk. In the 1924 “Auburn Affirmation,” 1,274 Presbyterian ministers declared that it was not necessary to believe as fact the inerrancy of the Bible, the virgin birth, the substitutionary atonement, the miracles and the resurrection of Christ. These five fundamentals of the Christian faith, they declared, were “theories” (Ibid., 365). Upon reading the “Affirmation,” Machen wasted no time in denouncing it as “a deplorable attempt to obscure the issue” (Ibid.). He wrote a formal letter of protest. Section III of this Counter-Affirmation states, “In Section IV of the Affirmation, the five points covered the pronouncement of the General Assembly of 1923 are declared to be ‘theories’ This means that the Scriptures allow the Virgin Birth, for example, and the bodily resurrection of our Lord to be regarded as facts and not as facts. We protest against any such opinion. The redemptive events mentioned in the pronouncement of the Assembly are not theories but facts upon which Christianity is based, and without which Christianity would fall” (Ibid., 367).

4e. Machen was not a man to let such a serious attack on the historic Christian faith pass without being challenged. His separation from the Presbyterian Church of the United States of

America (PCUSA) was inevitable. Machen, in his article, “The Parting of the Ways,” which appeared shortly after the “Affirmation” said, “The Presbyterian Church of the United States of America has apparently come to the parting of the ways. It may stand for Christ, or it may stand against him, but it can hardly halt between two opinions. ... We do not wish to split the church; on the contrary we are working for the unity of the church with all our might. But in order that there should be sharp separation of the church from the world, the carrying out of that separation is a prime duty of the hour” (Ibid., 368).

5e. The liberal-conservative controversy in the Presbyterian church invariably affected Princeton Theological Seminary. The liberals became increasingly influential in the Seminary and soon gained the upperhand in the Board and Faculty. Machen, in a letter to F E Robinson, President of the Bryan University Memorial Association, wrote of the distressing situation at Princeton, “Princeton Theological Seminary for a hundred years, and never more successful than now, has been defending and propagating the gospel of Christ. It is now passing through a great crisis. If the reorganization favored by the General Assembly ... if the proposed abrogation of the whole constitution of the Seminary and the proposed dissolution of the present Board of Directors is finally carried out, if in other words, the control of the Seminary passes into entirely different hands—then Princeton Theological Seminary as it has been so long and so honorably known, will be dead, and we shall have at Princeton a new institution of a radically different type” (Ibid., 427).

6e. Machen fought untiringly to save Princeton, but the situation was hopeless. When the old Board of Directors was being replaced by a new modernistic one, he resigned from the Seminary, and founded Westminster Theological Seminary. We must pay tribute to Machen, who was called “Mr Valiant-for-Truth” by his contemporaries (Ibid, 7). The Reverend T H Lipscomb testified, “We recall, as we think of him, Bunyan’s Jr Valiant for Truth, ... and having heard many of the ablest scholars of Europe and America, we affirmed frankly and sincerely that we know of no man in any church so eminently qualified ‘to fill a chair of ‘Apologetics and Christian Ethics,’ provided you want the chair filled, the Christian faith really defended, and Christian ethics elucidated and lived. For, let me add that Dr Machen is a humble saint, as well as a rare scholar, not a ‘saint of the world,’ who stands for nothing and against nothing, but a saint of God who loves truth, seeks truth, finds truth, and upholds truth against all adversaries, however mighty ...” (Ibid., 409-10).

7e. His godly mother was especially proud of him. She said, “I feel that ‘life with all it has of joy and pain’ is well worth while to have a son who is a Defender of the Faith!” (Ibid. 342). May the church today be able to say this of her sons.

2d. Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892)

1e. He lived in a period of time when Darwin’s *Origin of Species* (1859) was published. Darwin’s theory of evolution directly contradicted the Holy Scripture, and challenged the very fact of God’s existence. Also, German higher criticism was finding a foothold in the universities and seminaries in England. Higher criticism attempted to explain away the miracles of the Bible, and to reduce the Holy Bible to a mere human book. By 1880, much of secular England had embraced evolutionism, and religious England had endorsed modernism.

2e. In the midst of such blatant unbelief in both the secular and religious communities, Spurgeon arose to defend the faith. He would not tolerate any ridicule of his Lord, and criticism of his faith. When the Baptist Union, in which he belonged, was not keen to take a stand against unbelief and apostasy, Spurgeon wrote, “No lover of the gospel can conceal from himself the fact that the days are evil ... yet our solemn conviction is that things are much worse in many churches than they seem to be, and are rapidly tending downward. Read those papers which represent the Broad School of Dissent, and ask yourself, How much further could they go? What doctrine remains to be abandoned? What other truth is to be the object of contempt? A new religion has been originated which is no more Christianity than chalk is cheese; and this religion, being destitute of moral honesty, palms itself off as the old faith with slight improvements, and on this plea usurps pulpits which were erected for gospel preaching. The Atonement is scouted, the inspiration of Scripture is derided, the Holy Ghost is degraded into an influence, the punishment of sin is turned into fiction, and the resurrection of Christ into a myth, and yet these enemies of our faith expect us to call them brethren and maintain a confederacy with them!” (Arnold Dallimore, *Spurgeon: A New Biography* [Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1984], 206).

3e. Since the Union did not want to take the stand of separation, Spurgeon could not but separate himself from it. He said, “One thing is clear to us: we cannot expect to meet in any union which comprehends those whose teaching upon the fundamental points is exactly the reverse of that which we hold dear. ... With deep regret we abstain from assembling with those whom we dearly love and heartily respect, since it would

involve us in a confederacy with those with whom we can have no fellowship with the Lord” (Ibid., 207).

4e. An interesting thing Spurgeon did, or rather did not do, was that he did not try to lead others out of the Union with him (Ibid.). He wanted the people to decide for themselves whether they should come out or not. The Scripture is very clear on the doctrine of separation. He had written many articles concerning the issues involved too. They had enough information to make a personal decision. He did not want them to leave the Union just because he left but to leave because they understood the issues clearly and knew what they were doing. Spurgeon personally believed that, “For Christians to be linked in association with ministers who do not preach the gospel of Christ is to incur moral guilt. A Union which can continue irrespective of whether its member churches belong to a common faith is not fulfilling any scriptural function. The preservation of a denominational association when it is powerless to discipline heretics cannot be justified on the grounds of the preservation of ‘Christian unity.’ It is error which breaks the unity of the churches, and to remain in a denominational alignment which condones error is to support schism” (G. Archer Weniger, comp, “Charles Haddon Spurgeon and Ecclesiastical Separation,” *Australian Beacon* 271 [Jan 1989]).

5e. In another place, he reiterated, “It now becomes a serious question how far those who abide by the faith once delivered unto the saints should fraternize with those who have turned aside to another gospel. Christian love has its claims, and divisions are to be shunned as grievous sins; but how far are we justified in being in confederacy with those who are departing from the truth? It is a difficult question to answer so as to keep the balance of the duties. For the present it behooves believers to be cautious, lest they lend their support and countenance to the betrayers of the Lord. It is one thing to overleap all boundaries of denominational prosperity and unity. Numbers of easy-minded people wink at error so long as it is committed by a clever man and a good-natured brother, who has many fine points about him. Let each believer judge for himself; but, for our part, we have put on a few fresh bolts to our door, and we have given orders to keep the chain up; for, under color of begging the friendship of the servant, there are those about who aim at robbing THE MASTER. We fear it is hopeless ever to form a society which can keep out men base enough to profess one thing and believe another; but it might be possible to make an informal alliance among all who hold the Christianity of their fathers. Little as they might be able to do, they could at least protest, and as far as possible free

themselves of that complicity which will be involved in a conspiracy of silence” (Ibid.).

6e. Spurgeon contended for the faith right through his evening years. Even though he was poor in health, he never let up but persisted to the very end in his faithfulness to the Lord. When the Lord took him home on Jan 31, 1892, he could confidently say, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith” (2 Tim 4:7).

4c. **Warning Against Liberalism**

1d. The persons mentioned above come from Presbyterian, Baptist, and Anglican churches. They are supposed to be Protestants. How is it that they are no longer protesting against, but on the contrary, promoting that which seeks to destroy the Faith? Jesus had warned, “beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly they are ravening wolves” (Mat 7:15). The Apostle Paul cautioned the Ephesians that after his departure, “shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them” (Acts 20:29-30). These teachers appear Christian with their clerical garbs and pious smiles but are actually acting on behalf of the devil to deceive the elect” (Matt 24:24).

2d. There is a tremendous need for Christians today to earnestly contend for the faith. Edgar C Bundy says that there is a very great struggle in the Christian colleges, theological seminaries and religious publishing houses throughout America (*How Liberals and Radicals are Manipulating Evangelicals* [Florida: Edgar Bundy Ministries, 1982], Foreword). Machen too had observed that modern liberalism is no longer merely an academic matter. It is no longer confined within the theological seminaries or universities. Its attacks upon the fundamentals of the Christian faith is advanced by Sunday-school “lesson-helpers”, by the pulpit and by the religious press (*Christianity and Liberalism*, 17). What has already happened in the West will invariably affect those of us in the East. As a matter of fact, many who have gone to the overseas for theological training in liberal seminaries have returned doctrinally diseased. This is particularly true of Trinity Theological College (Singapore). The College approves of such seminaries as Fuller and Union and sends its graduates there for their Master and Doctoral degrees (“Overseas in Postgraduate Studies,” *Methodist Message* 92 [May 1988]).

2b. **Ecumenism**

1c. **What is Ecumenism?**

The word “ecumenical” comes from the Greek word *oikoumene* which means “the entire inhabited earth.” Ecumenism is the organised attempt to

bring about the co-operation and unity of all believers in Christ but outside of the framework and foundation of Biblical Truth.

2c. History of Ecumenism

1d. “In its beginnings, the modern ecumenical movement was largely the work of Christians in Protestant churches, Reformation and Free, who were committed, in the words of John R Mott around the turn of the century, to ‘evangelization of the world in this generation’. Then, and increasingly, the Orthodox churches began to play a significant part, ... After initial suspicions, and then cautious beginnings after the second world war, the Roman Catholic Church at the Second Vatican Council recognized that other Christians, by baptism and faith in Christ, enjoy a certain, though, imperfect, communion with the Catholic Church’, and that their churches and ecclesial communities are ‘not without significance in the mystery of salvation’—so that finally the way was open for Orthodox Protestants on their side to take the Roman Catholic Church seriously as a partner” (Nicholas Lossky et al, eds, *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement* [Geneva: WCC Publications, 1991], Introduction).

2d. Although the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) is not officially a member of the World Council of Churches (WCC), it is “engaged at many levels with its work” (Ibid). The WCC is currently going through a major restructuring. Due to severe financial problems, it is downsizing. Although now a spent force, the WCC has succeeded in uniting the mainline Protestant churches on the basis of love at the expense of doctrine to engage in social work and political action. It is now replaced by the New World Order’s United Religions (UR) formed in June 1997. The movement toward a false religious union continue unabated.

3c. Supporters of Ecumenism

1d. Charismatic Support

1e. Carl McIntire said the Charismatic Movement functioned as a “cement” between the RCC and the Evangelical-Protestant Church. This is confirmed by Hocken, “The charismatic movement can be seen as a re-capturing on a larger scale of ecumenical elements. ... In this perspective, the Holy Spirit was poured out to revive all the (Protestant) churches. ...

2e. “In the 1950’s, sporadic outbreaks of pentecostal phenomena occurred outside the Pentecostal denominations: in circles which pray for revival (Anglicans and Methodists in Great Britain); among those who seek a deeper spiritual life (Baptists in Brazil); in circles which re-discover divine healing (Episcopalians in the USA, Reformed in the Netherlands, Anglicans in Great Britain); ... Only in the 1960’s did these

preliminary strands coalesce into one recognizable movement. Its interchurch character attracted attention.

3e. “In this process, significant roles were played by the Pentecostal David Du Plessis, the American Episcopalian Dennis Bennet, and the English Anglican Michael Harper. For many grassroot Christians, participation in charismatic prayer meetings was their first experience of fellowship across church boundaries. ...

4e. “The advent of Roman Catholic charismatic renewal in 1967 dramatically advertised the movement’s ecumenical character and potential. Catholics, more than other charismatic-movement Christians, interpreted their pentecostal experience in ecumenical terms. They saw it as a providential result of the renewal thrust and ecumenical openings of the Second Vatican Council” (*Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, s v “Charismatic Movement,” by Peter Hocken). Earl Paulk in his reaction against Dave Hunt’s *The Seduction of Christianity* wrote, “The majority of ‘doom’ prophets view the Roman Catholic Church as the harlot church of Revelation. Most of them refuse to associate with Spirit-filled Catholics, even those with the evidence of the Holy Spirit in their lives and ministries. I contend that religious systems are the harlot church. The harlot church is never composed of born-again, spirit-filled Christians. “Who dares accuse Father Bertolucci of heresy because he honours the Virgin Mary with a reverence which is uncomfortable to many other Christians?” (*That the World May Know* [Atlanta: Dimensions Publishers, 1987], 16).

2d. Anglican Support

The Nottingham Statement of 1977 drafted by the Anglican Church read, “Deeply regretting past attitudes and indifference and ill will towards the Roman Catholics we renew our commitment to seek with them the truth of God and the unity he wills, in obedience to our common Lord on the basis of Scripture” (John Capon, *Evangelicals Tomorrow* [Glasgow: Fount Paperbacks, 1977]).

3d. Methodist Support

The Member Churches of the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) and the Member Conference of the Federation of Asian Bishops’ Conference (FABC) held a joint Protestant-Catholic consultation on “Living and working together with Sisters and Brothers of other Faiths in Asia” from July 5 to 10, 1987 in Singapore which concluded their meeting with this affirmation that, “life is a pilgrimage and that neighbours of other religious traditions are fellow pilgrims in the way. In humanity’s shared pilgrimage, the delegates felt that the Church is called to be an effective sign and symbol of the kingdom of God. In this context, dialogue offers opportunities for

Christian witness when Christians are attentive to the insights of sisters and brothers of other religious traditions as they share insights from their own faith” (*Methodist Message* [September 1987]). Lorna Khoo, an ordained minister of the Methodist Church, in allegorical style described her dream of an ecumenical village where “peace ... washed over the whole village. ... the whole village had come out into the open. Grandfather whose name was Roman Catholicism, Grandfather’s brother, Orthodoxy of the next mansion, the sons and daughters whose names were Anglicanism, Lutheranism, Reformed and the grandchildren—Methodists, Baptists, great grandchildren—Salvation Army, Assemblies of God, Bible Presbyterians were all out in the open. The ancient barriers were down. There was nothing which separated them from each other” (“Christian Unity,” *Methodist Message* (January 1993): 2-3). Lorna Khoo makes it clear that this unity should be based on love, not on truth.

4d. Billy Graham

J A Johnson called Billy Graham “The Jehoshaphat of Our Generation.” This is due to Graham’s compromise with the Ahabs of our time. “Dr Billy Graham maintains close and cordial associations with the Ecumenical Movement. The Ecumenical Movement and its World Council of Churches (WCC) are in the control of ungodly men, many of whom deny the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel. The Billy Graham Crusades are sponsored largely by individuals and churches in the WCC. The Crusades are in actual fact promoting ‘Ecumenical Evangelism’ on a world-wide basis” (“Bible-Presbyterian Church Statement on Billy Graham,” *Banner* [November-December 1978], special supplement). Graham had no qualms about speaking well of the Pope and the RCC. In fact, he willingly accepted an honorary degree of doctor of humane letters (DHL) from Belmont Abbey in 1967. The *Gastonia Gazette* reported that Graham noted the significance of the occasion by saying that it is “a time when Protestants and Catholics could meet together and greet each other as brothers, whereas 10 years ago they could not.” Darrell Turner reported that Graham in his 1991 New York Crusade, “As in all his crusades,...is working with liberal Protestants, Roman Catholics and Eastern Orthodox Christians in preparation and follow-up for his Central Park rally” (*Christian News* [September 23, 1991]). More on Graham’s adulterous affair with Rome may be found in Ian Paisley’s *Billy Graham and the Church of Rome* (Greenville: BJU, 1972), and Wilson Ewin’s *The Assimilation of Evangelist Billy Graham into the Roman Catholic Church* (Canada: Quebec Baptist Missions, 1992).

5d. Luis Palau Missions

Captain Chris Pack, the Executive Secretary of the Luis Palau Auckland Mission who attended the Luis Palau Singapore Mission in June 1986, and has learned much from it commented, “The Mission to Auckland is the beginning of a new era of evangelism in N.Z. The Mission has brought great unity to the Churches, and credibility to the

Gospel message. The unity in this Mission is historic and unique. Catholics and Protestants, Charismatics and Evangelicals have stood together. We've rallied around the centrality of the Christian message while respecting our doctrinal distinctives and differences. It's been a unique, beautiful experience" ("Luis Palau in New Zealand," *Missions Update* [July-September 1987]).

4c. Wang Ming Tao Against Billy Graham

1d. One valiant champion against Billy Graham and ecumenism was Pastor Wang Ming Tao of China. During the early years of his ministry at the Christian's Tabernacle, Wang Ming Tao was already extremely unhappy over the spiritual state of the church. He said, "I became ... aware of the darkness and corruption in the churches. I felt strongly that the church needed a revolution and that the mission to bring about a revolution was entrusted to me" (Wang Ming Tao, *A Stone Made Smooth*, trans Arthur Reynolds [Hants: Mayflower Christian Books, 1991], 40). Wang Ming Tao, thus, spared no effort and minced no words in denouncing the hypocrisy of many so-called preachers "who simply regarded preaching as a means of earning a living. He labelled them as 'regard-piety-as-the-path-to-profit' preachers" (Ibid., 115). He further said, "To talk to people like this about reforming the church was like 'asking a tiger for his skin' (Ibid.). Many an unconverted pastor filled the pulpit. They ruin the faith of the people by teaching heresies. His ministry of warning was met with much opposition. He was extremely disliked by these false pastors. But Wang Ming Tao rather pleased God than man. He said, "I prefer to be attacked by men than to call forth the wrath of God" (Ibid., 90). .

2d. Wang Ming Tao took an uncompromising stand when he refused to join the churches who sought Japanese help when the British and American missionary societies withdrew their support during World War II. He said, "By seeking help from the Japanese, the churches gave the Japanese an opportunity to use them. They (the leaders of the churches) should have looked only to God and not seek help from the Japanese (Ibid., 215). More importantly, "God had forbidden me to be yoked together with unbelievers. Many of the members of those churches had not yet truly repented and believed; moreover there were even pastors who had never repented and believed. God would not allow me to be yoked together with them" (Ibid., 216).

3d. Neither would Wang Ming Tao link himself with the "Three-Self Patriotic Movement" spearheaded by the Chinese Communists. He said, "I have strongly maintained that the church could not allow its activities to merge with worldly customs and that God's workers cannot cooperate with false prophets and false teachers. I have always maintained that churches which stand for the truth ... cannot be affiliated with associations or groups that do not believe these truths" (Ibid., 221). For refusing to sign the communist Manifesto which contained a clause demanding the church give unquestioning loyalty to

the government, and render absolute obedience to the communist party, he was imprisoned for 23 years.

4d. He remained strong in spirit though weak in body during his last years. He did not budge an inch in his conviction that the church must remain separate from all forms of unbelief and apostasy. One evidence of his separatist stand was his refusal to entertain Billy Graham when he was in China. Billy Graham's visit to China was hosted by the communist-controlled China Christian Council (CCC). The American evangelist's visit to Wang Ming Tao, according to analysts, "made the evangelist acceptable in the eyes of many house-church leaders and could cast the evangelist as a bridge-builder between the CCC and the independents" ("Billy Graham in China: Building Bridges," *Christianity Today* [June 17, 1988], 52).

5d. What has Wang Ming Tao to say to this? How did he regard Graham's visit? Did he compromise? Rev Pang Kok Hiong, a graduate of Far Eastern Bible College, who visited Wang Ming Tao and his wife in Shanghai in December 1988 asked him concerning Graham's visit. The following is a translation of the interview,

1e. Rev Pang: Recently, Billy Graham visited you. Did you invite him to come? Pastor Wang: He wanted to see me, but I did not want to see him.

2e. Rev Pang: Why? Pastor Wang: Because if he comes, he would probably come as a guest of the "Three-Self" churches. That is why I was not willing to have any discussion with him. But one day, he came himself.

3e. Rev Pang: You did not invite him to come? Pastor Wang: I said I did not want him to come. This is because even if I did agree to see him, it would be very difficult to talk. He was invited by the "Three-Self" churches; that is why the situation was very difficult. But one day, he suddenly came with an interpreter.

4e. Rev Pang: So, you do not support them? Mrs Wang: Yes, yes. Because of their visit, we were put into a very difficult position. At that time, we not only told them once or twice but three times not to come because ... those pastors those who are close to him are those who have betrayed the Lord.

6d. Before Billy Graham left, Wang Ming Tao admonished him with this verse from Rev 2:20, "be thou faithful unto death." Clearly, Wang Ming Tao wanted no part in what Billy Graham did. Leslie Lyall remarked that Wang Ming Tao spared no effort in warning Christians against the dangers of theological modernism in every form (*Three of China's Mighty Men* [Singapore: Agape Books, 1974]). Wang Ming Tao was a true fundamentalist right till the very end. He was "faithful unto death.

5c. Protestant Response

1d. Dave Hunt says, “Regardless of the precise scenario, the Bible makes it very clear that the major sign of the last days prior to Christ’s return will be religious deception. That this apostasy must come and that it will mirror within the church the very pattern of delusion that is preparing the secular world for Antichrist not only makes sense but agrees with the weight of Bible prophecy” (*Seduction*, 66).

2d. Loraine Boettner wrote, “These are foolish men who choose to walk in darkness. They cannot see the right path because they have chosen to be blind to the evils of the Roman Church, both past and present. Both of these concepts and desire for a Protestant ‘super-church’ and the desire for union with the Vatican, are the very antithesis of Protestantism and will destroy the very thing that gave life to the Reformation. ... Only a militant Protestantism can save America and the world” (*Roman Catholicism* [Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1962], 41).

3b. **Charismatism**

1c. Definition of Charismatism

Charismatism is modern-day Montanism that emphasises the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit that have already ceased upon the passing away of the Apostles of Jesus Christ and the completion of the canonical Scriptures.

2c. History and Proponents of the Signs and Wonders Movement

1d. Who are the Pentecostals, and What is Pentecostalism?

1e. “Pentecost” literally means 50. It refers to the Jewish festival of the Feast of Weeks or Feast of Harvest that is celebrated on the 50th day or 7 weeks after Passover (Exod 34:22, Deut 16:10). It was one of three festivals when all Jewish men were required to appear in Jerusalem with their gifts and offerings (Exod 23:14-17).

2e. Before Jesus ascended to heaven, He told His Apostles to wait in Jerusalem for “the promise of the Father” viz, the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4). Soon after, on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit in the form of cloven tongues of fire came upon the disciples (Acts 2:1-3). They were filled with the Spirit, and spoke in tongues (Acts 2:4).

3e. Modern Christians who believe that this outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost is not a one-time event, but can be repeated and experienced today are called “Pentecostals.” They teach the need for a 2nd baptism of the Holy Spirit. Tongues-

speaking is the sign of the 2nd baptism. Everyone, they say, ought to earnestly seek this baptism, and speak in tongues.

4e. Historically, it all started in 1901 at Bethel Bible College, Topeka, Kansas, founded by Charles Parham in Topeka, Kansas. The tongues-speaking phenomenon started when one of Parham's students—Agnes Ozman—spoke in tongues, reportedly Chinese, after receiving the baptism of the Spirit.

5e. In 1906, tongues-speaking broke out in the Azusa Street Mission in Los Angeles, California pastored by William J Seymour—a black holiness preacher. This Azusa Street revival, so-called, catapulted Pentecostalism onto the world stage. Azusa Street became the Mecca for those seeking the Pentecostal experience. From Azusa Street, Pentecostalism spread throughout the world. The Assemblies of God (AOG) became the largest Pentecostal denomination. The Holiness or Higher Life Movement or Keswick Convention promoted the Pentecostal experience. The Keswick conferences organised by the Full Gospel Businessmen Fellowship were particularly influential in Singapore in the 1970s and early '80s.

2d. Who are the Charismatics, and What is Charismatism?

The word “charismatic” comes from the Greek *charisma* which means “a gift.” In a special sense, it refers to the gifts of the Spirit (Rom 12:6, 1 Cor 12:4, 9, 28, 30f). In the late 1950s, the term “charismatic” was used by Donald Gee to distinguish Pentecostalism as a denomination from Pentecostalism as a movement (ie, the Neo-Pentecostalism). Pentecostal practices (2nd baptism of the Spirit, tongues-speaking, faith healing, etc) were no longer just found in the Assemblies of God (AOG), but have now broken into the mainline denominations (Anglican, Baptist, Brethren, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, etc). The Roman Catholic Church was influenced as well. This eventually led to the breaking down of the barriers that separated Protestants and Catholics. The charismatic movement served as an ecumenical catalyst. Well-known charismatics include Larry Christenson, Kenneth Copeland, Kenneth Hagin, Oral Roberts, and the latest sensation— Benny Hinn.

3d. What is the Third Wave?

1e. The term—”Third Wave”—was coined by C Peter Wagner of Fuller Theological Seminary in 1983. Pentecostalism was the first wave of the Spirit's moving at the turn of the century. charismatism which arose in the '50s was the second. John Wimber, founder of the Vineyard Church, described the new movement “as an opening of the straight-line evangelicals and other Christians to the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit that the Pentecostals and charismatics have

experienced, but without becoming either charismatic or Pentecostal.” In other words, Wimber and followers want to be Pentecostals or charismatics without the stigma.

2e. The Third Wave differs from its predecessor in that it sees no need for a second baptism of the Spirit, and does not require everyone to speak in tongues. Wimber calls his movement the “Signs and Wonders Movement” in order to distinguish it from the charismatic movement. It stresses “power evangelism.” Wimber says the world will only come to know Christ through signs and wonders. Other well-known leaders of this movement are Paul Cain, a self-styled “modern day prophet,” and Jack Deere who was sacked from the faculty of Dallas Theological Seminary when he joined Wimber. This movement later degenerated into what is known as the “Laughing Revival” started by Rodney Howard Browne—the Holy Ghost Bartender.”

3c. Charismatics and Bible Interpretation

1d. Why Bible Interpretation is Important?

It is essential to consider how charismatics interpret the Bible. This is because in discussing charismatism, we are discussing the Bible, and what it says concerning it—its doctrines and practices. It goes without saying that our practices are based on how we understand the Scriptures. The question is: Have we understood Scriptures correctly? What makes certain practices right, and others wrong? How can we be sure about what is right and what is wrong? Can the charismatics be right after all? Or are we correct in warning against modern day charismatic teachings and practices? It all boils down to how we read and study the Scriptures. So it is important for us at the outset to understand what Scripture is all about, and how to study it.

2d. Nature of the Word of God

1e. Let us first of all deal with the nature of God’s Word. The Bible is the divinely inspired Word of God (2 Tim 3:16). When we read the Bible it is not man’s words that we are reading but God’s Word. As Paul said, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.” The Bible is literally “God-breathed.” As such it is no ordinary book. It is an extraordinary, supernatural book. It is the sole authority of our faith and practice. Our doctrines and practices should not be based on human opinions, traditions, or experiences. Our doctrines and practices must be founded on and governed by God’s Word. Opinions, traditions, experiences have very little authority outside of God’s Word. Only God’s Word is fully and absolutely authoritative, and its authority is independent of human opinions, traditions, and experiences.

2e. Every student of the Bible is called to correctly interpret the Word of God. In the Old Testament, we find Ezra not only reading, but also giving the sense or meaning of the Scriptures, thus causing the people to understand the Scriptures (Neh 8:8). In the New Testament, we find the Apostle Paul exhorting young pastor Timothy to do the same: “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 Bible has only one meaning. It is our duty to study the Bible to understand what it truly means. There is a need to interpret the Scriptures accurately.

3d. Principles of Bible Interpretation

The need to accurately interpret and understand the Word of God is especially great when we deal with the doctrines and practices of the charismatic movement. How many times have you tried to explain what God’s Word means when you hear the retort: “Well, that is your interpretation”? This is especially so when one’s interpretation or explanation is contradictory or unacceptable to the other. So how should we interpret Scripture? What are the principles of interpreting Scripture? Is there something concrete we can base on in our attempt to understand Holy Writ? The answer is Yes.

1e. Scripture Interprets Scripture

1d. The Westminster Confession of Faith presents the biblical approach to Scripture interpretation: “The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself: and therefore, when there is a question about the true and full sense of any Scripture (which is not manifold, but one), it must be searched and known by other places that speak more clearly” (I.9). This approach of using Scripture to interpret Scripture is also known as the analogy of faith or the analogy of Scripture. No other book is infallible as the Bible is infallible. As such, the Bible is its own infallible authority and commentary. Note that the Westminster Confession also states that there is but one meaning to the Scriptures: “the true and full sense of any Scripture ... is not manifold but one.”

2d. The Bible interprets itself. For an example, turn to Daniel 2:31-45. In verses 31-35 we have the vision of Nebuchadnezzar, and in verses 36-45, we have Daniel’s interpretation of the vision. God gave the vision and its meaning. There is therefore no question about what the vision means, and we ought not to create meanings other than that which God had intended. Another example would be Isaiah 7:14. Here we have the wonderful prediction of the virgin birth of the Messiah.

Who is He? When was it fulfilled? Matthew 1:22-23 explicitly tells us that this prophecy was fulfilled in none other than Jesus Christ at the time when Herod the Great was king (Matt 2:1).

2e. Interpreting Scripture in Context

In the interpretation of Scripture, context is important. What is context? Context is that part of the text that leads up to and follows the text in question. Many false teachers claim to base their doctrines on the Bible. But upon close scrutiny, we find that many of these “proof-texts” are really taken out of context. For example, an atheist can claim that the Bible supports his view that there is no God. He can cite Psalm 14:1 which does say, “There is no God.” But this statement when read in its context means something quite different: “The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.” When we quote someone, we want to quote him within context. Nobody likes to be taken out of context, God included!

3e. Scripture Does Not Contradict Scripture

In Bible interpretation, Scripture must not be made to clash with Scripture. If my interpretation of a certain verse or passage of Scripture goes against what is clearly taught in other verses or passages of Scripture, then my interpretation must be wrong. For example, Jesus said in John 14:28, “my Father is greater than I.” If I interpret this to mean that Jesus is a lesser God than God the Father, then I would be contradicting other statements by Jesus that equates Him with God (cf, John 1: 1, 8:58, 10:30). Moreover, we have many passages from other parts of Scripture that speak of the absolute deity of Christ (eg, Acts 20:28, Phil 2:5-11, Col 2:9). A single text that appears to go against many other passages of Scripture must be interpreted in the light of the majority. In this case, majority wins. The obscure text must be read in the light of the clear.

4e. Theology Guides Interpretation

We must not forget theology in our interpretation of Scripture. The body of faith has once for all been settled in the canonical Scriptures comprising just 66 books. It is essential for the Bible interpreter to know Christian Theology well. He must be very familiar with the doctrines taught in Systematic Theology under the basic headings of Theology Proper, Biblical Anthropology, Christology, Pneumatology, Soteriology, Ecclesiology, and Eschatology. Theology serves as a fence to keep us from going astray or off the mark in our interpretation of Scripture. For example, Mark 16:16 reads, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.” If I come to the conclusion that this verse teaches that a person must not only

believe in Christ, but must also go through the waters of baptism in order to be saved, then I would be teaching against the whole tenor of Scripture which spells out in no uncertain terms that salvation is by grace through faith in Christ alone, and not by works (Rom 1:17, 5:1, Eph 2:8-9, Titus 3:5).

3d. Charismatic Twisting of Scripture

When interpreting Scripture it is important to realise that the Apostles were infallible in their preaching and writing of Holy Scriptures (1 Thess 2:13, 2 Pet 1:20-21, 2 Tim 3:16), and in their administration of the churches (Acts 5:1-11, 19:13-17, 2 Cor 13:2-3, Gal 1:8, Jude 17). A failure to appreciate this may lead a Bible interpreter to conclude that the Apostles were wrong in those areas of their ministry which seem contradictory. For example, there are charismatics who in an attempt to prove that signs and wonders are necessary for evangelism say that Paul failed in Athens because he merely preached the gospel without performing miracles. This led him to change his method to that of signs and wonders when he was in Corinth, which brought success. The text used to support this is 1 Corinthians 2:4 where Paul said, "And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." Today's Wimber-style power evangelists often quote this text to support their method of doing evangelism. This view of the Apostle Paul and 1 Corinthians 2:4 is erroneous because the Apostles were infallible in their ministry of the Gospel. Moreover, there is no scriptural statement whatsoever that Paul had made a mistake in Athens. In the light of Acts 17-18 where a detailed account of Paul's ministry in those two places were recorded, it is evident that there was no change in the way Paul went about preaching the gospel. Luke in Acts 18 tells us that Paul in Corinth went to the synagogues and there "reasoned," "persuaded" (v4), and "testified" (v5) to the Jews and the Greeks that Jesus was the Christ. In 1 Corinthians 1:17-18, Paul clearly states that the simple preaching of the Gospel of Christ is the power of God, not signs and wonders (see also Rom 1:16). This was exactly what Paul did previously in Athens. There was no change in his evangelistic method.

4d. Charismaticism and Experience

1e. The fundamental fallacy in the charismatic method of interpreting Scripture is its promotion of experience over against Scripture as the primary basis for faith and practice. Instead of reading their experiences in the light of Scripture, charismatics subject the Scriptures to their experiences. It is not an overstatement to say that charismatics base their faith and practice not on the Bible but on an extra-biblical source, namely, their experiences. Their experiences have blurred them from the truth taught in the Scriptures. (A clear example would be the Rev Alfred Yeo's article, "Me, Slain By God," in *Evangel* [Apr-Jun '95]: 13-14, where he argued for the slaying

of the Spirit based solely on his experiences. No scriptural verses were cited except one, Acts 1:13, and that, inaccurately. The verse is supposed to be Acts 2:13.)

2e. A typical charismatic argument against relying on Scripture alone as the basis for all our faith and practice is this: “I don’t need the Bible to tell me what is right or wrong, I have the Holy Spirit, and you have no business questioning my spiritual experiences if you yourself have never experienced them yet.” Is this a valid argument? Actually the above statement is quite contradictory and unbiblical. Firstly, we do need the Bible to tell us right from wrong, true from false. The Apostle Paul, for example, commended the Berean Christians for searching the Scriptures daily to ascertain whether the things Paul taught were true or not (Acts 17:11). This vital need for searching the Scriptures is even more acute today. Paul had warned, “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, and shall be turned unto fables” (2 Tim 4:3-4). In order to protect ourselves from being deceived by false teachers, Paul instructed Timothy to know the Scriptures “which are able to make thee wise ... All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim 3:16-17).

3e. Is it correct to say that since I have the Holy Spirit, I do not need the Bible? No, it is not correct at all. The Holy Spirit does not work independently of God’s Word. The Holy Spirit works through God’s Word. The Word of God is called the Sword of *the Spirit* (Eph 6:17). The Holy Spirit is also called the Spirit of Truth (John 15:26). Jesus said, “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth” (John 16:13). The Truth of God is not found in experiences but in the Word of God. Jesus said, “Thy Word is Truth” (John 17:17).

4e. The problem with charismatic interpretation is that it is not based on knowledge but on emotions. The operating principle is not “I know this is true because God’s Word says so,” but “I know this is true because I feel so.” “It must be right because I feel good about it.” Indulging in sinful pleasures may make us feel good, but that certainly does not make them right.

5e. In saying that experience should be the primary basis of our faith and practice, I am not saying that experience is not important in the Christian life. I believe the Christian religion is a religion of experience. The Bible is replete with accounts of the both joyful and painful experiences of God’s people in their

spiritual pilgrimage. The Scriptures tell us to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, strength, and mind (Luke 10:27). When we give of our substance to the Lord, we are told to give cheerfully (2 Cor 9:7). We are told to weep with them that weep (Rom 12:15). Experiences are part and parcel of Christian living, but they are not the basis for establishing biblical truth. Experience must be subject to Scripture, not vice versa.

4c. Danger of Charismatism

1d. The Charismatic movement has divided many a church and has caused confusion within Christian circles. Today, one can find Charismatics in Anglican, Methodist, Brethren, Baptist, and Roman Catholics. There are many who are asking, "I do not wish to oppose a genuine work of God. Can this sensational phenomenon be from God?" The Charismatic movement cannot be of God because it is the ecclesiastical matchmaker to yoke the Protestant Church to the Roman Catholic Church. It is the ecumenical catalyst. Michael Harper says that the Charismatic movement functions uniquely as a "bridge-builder." This is because "it has penetrated the Roman Catholics and Protestant worlds to about the same extent, it has bridge-building potential of importance to the ecumenical future of the church" (*Three Sisters* [Illinois: Tyndale, 1979], 34). Harper went on to say, "Roman Catholics and Protestants have found each other 'in the Holy Spirit' and 'in Jesus Christ.' They have met each other, not at the point of strength, but that of shared human weakness. They have come together in liturgical freedom and joy. In singing together they have melted into a new oneness, which is hard to separate out again" (Ibid, 104). A case in point would be the "North American Congress on the Holy Spirit and World Evangelization" held in July, 1987 in New Orleans, Louisiana where out of the estimated 40,000 participants, half were Roman Catholics. The rest were made up of Non-denominational, Episcopalian, and Lutheran groups. Billy Graham gave his blessings at the opening night of the Congress via a video clip which was enthusiastically received by the conference participants.

2d. In the local scene, we have the Anglican bishop of Singapore, Moses Tay, who admitted, "In many instances the Charismatic Movement has brought a fresh and deeper unity between Anglicans and Roman Catholics, and has broken down denominational, social, cultural and other barriers" ("The Charismatic Movement: A Way or The Way of Renewal," *The Courier* [Jan 1988]: 7). Former Roman Catholic priest, Bartholomew F. Brewer commented, "the charismatic movement is being used worldwide by the leaders of the ecumenical movement for what are questionable purposes, to say the least. The two movements have been channeled into the same furrow. Why? Because many charismatics and ecumenical leaders claim that through the Holy Spirit the differences between denominations disappear and become meaningless. The present ecumenical movement toward a super one-world church is gaining tremendous momentum from the

charismatic movement. And ... the so-called inspired teachings of the charismatics are being cited as ‘revelations from God’ to support the super one-world church” (Bartholomew F. Brewer, and Alfred W. Furrell, *Pilgrimage from Rome* [South Carolina: Bob Jones University Press, 1982], 111).

3d. The 16th century reformation was a work of God when Luther, Calvin, Knox, Zwingli and others were raised to deliver the Church out of Roman bondage. If we say that the Charismatic movement is from God; are we not also saying that God made a mistake in the 16th century reformation? Please note that God does not and cannot contradict Himself. The Charismatic movement which tries to bring both Protestant and Roman Catholic Church together cannot be of God.

4b. **Neo-Evangelicalism**

1c. Definition of Neo-evangelicalism

1d. In the words of Harold J Ockenga, the father of neo-evangelicalism, “Neo-evangelicalism was born in 1948 in connection with a convocation address which I gave in the Civic Auditorium in Pasadena. While reaffirming the theological view of fundamentalism, this address repudiated its ecclesiology and its social theory. The ringing call for a repudiation of separatism and the summons to social involvement received a hearty response from many evangelicals. ... Neo-evangelicalism differ from modernism in its acceptance of the supernatural and its emphasis upon the written Word as inerrant, ... It differed from fundamentalism in its repudiation of separatism and its determination to engage itself in the theological dialogue of the day. It had a new emphasis upon the application of the gospel to the sociological, political, and economic areas of life.

2d. “Neo-evangelicals emphasized the restatement of Christian theology in accordance with the needs of the times, and reengagement in the theological debate, the recapture of the denominational leadership, and the reexamination of theological problems such as the antiquity of man, the universality of the Flood, God’s method of creation, and others” (Harold Lindsell, *The Battle for the Bible* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976], Foreword).

2c. History and Proponents of Neo-Evangelicalism

1d. Neo-evangelicalism could be traced to Fuller Theological Seminary which was established in 1947. The one who founded it was the famous radio evangelist, Charles E. Fuller of the “Old Fashioned Revival Hour.” The best and most abled theologians in those days were employed to teach in the Seminary, namely, Harold Ockenga, Wilbur Smith, Everett Harrison, Carl F H Henry, Harold Lindsell, Edward J Carnell, William LaSor, Gleason Archer, Bela Vassady, Charles Woodbridge, George Eldon Ladd, Paul K Jewett, and Fuller’s son Daniel. Moreover, there was the world famous evangelist, Billy

Graham, who gave tremendous support to the Seminary (George Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism: Fuller Seminary and the New Evangelicalism* [Grand Rapids: Wm B Eerdmans, 1987], 1).

2d. With such an outstanding faculty, Fuller designed a seminary curriculum that would provide the finest theological defence of Biblical infallibility or inerrancy (Lindsell, *Battle*, 107). This was revealed in Charles Fuller's letter to Wilbur Smith in October, 1946. He wrote, "I agree with you perfectly that if this school is to be, it should be the best of its kind in the world. It should stand out first, as being absolutely true to the fundamentals of the faith and second, as a school of high scholarship" (Marsden, *Reforming*, 13).

3d. Although Fuller Seminary was set up to be an apologetic institution of the highest calibre, its approach was faulty. They wanted to go about converting the neo-orthodox, modernists, and the general unbelieving populace by way of infiltration rather than separation. Thus, Fuller Seminary stood in rivalry with Faith Theological Seminary which was founded by Machen's disciples, Carl McIntire, and Allan A MacRae. McIntire was a fighting fundamentalist with a no-nonsense separatist stand. McIntire and Ockenga had been friends but by that time were becoming enemies. The situation worsened when Ockenga tried to persuade MacRae, one of the most highly respected Old Testament scholars then, to take up the Old Testament chair at Fuller. MacRae turned down the offer and remained loyal to Faith Seminary So, McIntire founded many separatist organizations while Ockenga started inclusivistic ones (Ibid, 28).

4d. Fuller Seminary's policy of infiltration instead of separation was the cause of its doctrinal downfall. In order to engage the modernists in terms of scholarship, they started to recruit men without first making sure what their doctrinal beliefs were. Thus, within the faculty, there were those who did not believe in the verbal plenary inspiration of the Bible. Even when they were found out, no appropriate action was taken to rectify the problem by removing them from the faculty. So, those who held to "limited inerrancy" (ie, the Bible is only inerrant when it deals with salvation, but when it touches on history, geography, or science, it may contain mistakes) continued to teach. Those who did not hold to the inerrancy of Scripture were Vassady, Weyerhaeuser, LaSor, Hubbard, Daane, Ladd, Jewett, and Daniel Fuller (Lindsell, *Battle*, 107-121).

5d. The inerrancy debate came to a head-on clash in December 1962. This day became what is known today as "Black Saturday." After "Black Saturday," a serious split resulted and there remained little hope for reconciliation (Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 208). The whole inerrancy debate as described by Marsden started this way, "... Ockenga, as chairman, ... opened the door for major debate by asking, 'But why do we need a new creed?' He could see no such need. Dan Fuller, the model of candor, and now on his own terrain of theology saw his chance to assume his new leadership role. He pointed to what he saw as a vital need to revise the statement on inerrancy. 'Dr

Ockenga,' he asserted before the whole faculty and board, 'there are errors which cannot be explained by the original autographs. It is simply not historically feasible to say that these errors would disappear if we had the autographs.' He went on to explain the whole theory of the nature of biblical inerrancy—essentially, that the Bible claimed inerrancy only for its 'revelational' teachings, that is, matters that make us wise unto salvation. On incidental matters, such as cosmological theories or historical details, Fuller stated, God accommodated himself to the imperfect standards of the day. The Bible thus contained incidental errors; but these did not hinder God's revelational purpose.'" (Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 213-4).

6d. "The conservative side heard these open attacks on the creed and on the traditional reading of 'inerrancy' with consternation. In their view, inerrancy was the logical implication of the statement in 2 Timothy that 'all Scripture is inspired by God' (3:16). God would not inspire an error, small or large. Furthermore, Jesus' use of the Old Testament implied that he regarded it as historically accurate in detail. In the end, if one said that parts of the Bible were inerrant and other parts had error, who was to decide which was which? What standard higher than the Bible itself was to be used? Christians would be left in a morass of subjectivism and fallible human opinion" (Ibid, 213-4).

7d. The conservatives lost the battle on "Black Saturday." Hubbard was made the new President, and Dan Fuller was appointed Dean of the Seminary.

3c. Lesson From History

1d. History has shown that "any weakness regarding inerrancy would leave an opening through which liberalism would inevitably rush in. The demise of Princeton Seminary as a strict conservative school was one more case in point. As Harold Lindsell later wrote, the lesson was plain. 'Down the road, whether it takes five or fifty years, any institution that departs from belief in an inerrant Scripture will likewise depart from other fundamentals of the faith and at least cease to be evangelical in the historical meaning of that term.'" (Ibid, 214).

2d. Many today say they believe the Bible but as Francis Schaeffer—the Christian philosopher of this century—said, "it must be the Bible as the Word of God in everything that it teaches—in matters of salvation, but just as much as where it speaks of history and science and morality. If it is compromised in any of these areas, as is unhappily happening today among many who call themselves evangelicals, we destroy the power of the Word and put ourselves in the hands of the enemy" (*The Great Evangelical Disaster* [Illinois: Crossway Books, 1984], 25-6). Schaeffer concluded, "Here is the great evangelical disaster—the failure of the evangelical world to stand for truth as truth" (Ibid, 37).

3d. Fuller Seminary has shown that a stand of non-separation eventually leads to doctrinal compromise and spiritual downfall. Schaeffer said, "There is only one word for this—namely

accommodation: the evangelical church has accommodated to the world spirit of the age. First, there has been accommodation on Scripture, so that, many who call themselves evangelicals hold a weakened view of the Bible and no longer affirm the truth of all the Bible teaches—truth not only in religious matters but in areas of science and history and morality. As part of this, many evangelicals are now accepting the higher critical methods in the study of the Bible. Remember, it was these same methods which destroyed the authority of the Bible for the Protestant church in Germany in the last century, and which have destroyed the Bible for the liberal in our own country from the beginning of this century. And second, there has been accommodation on the issues, with no clear stand being taken even on matters of life and death” (Ibid).

4c. Biblical Separation

1d. The Christian Church today is under attack like never before. There is a need to protect our churches from the subtle attacks of the devil. God has placed a defence mechanism for the church, and that is the teaching of ecclesiastical separation. The Christian Church should live in such a manner as to glorify their Saviour and Lord. Separation from all forms of religious apostasy and compromise, and all worldly sinful practices, pleasures, and associations is commanded of God.

2d. We are so prone to forget God’s commands, so easily led astray by the world, so gullible to receive false Christs and false prophets. We need to be constantly reminded. God knows that, and that is why in the OT, we find Him telling Israel over and over again—Be ye separate! Separation is vital for the health and growth of the Church. Biblical separation is the doctrine of church purification and preservation.

3d. In the Old Testament, God commanded His people again and again, “Be ye holy as I am holy.” God says in Lev 20:26, “And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the LORD am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine.” God says “I have severed you from other people;” that is separation. God told Israel to be separate because they are His evangelists in the OT. Isa 43:10-12, God told Israel twice, “Ye are my witnesses.” Witnesses of what? Witnesses of this fact, “I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no Saviour” (v11). Separation is part of evangelism. The Israelites were to bear witness that there is but one living and true God, and He is Jehovah—the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God required Israel to make a clear statement against all the falsity of all the pagan gods of the heathen nations at that time. This is so that the Gentiles might see the Light shining out of Israel and be drawn to Jehovah for salvation.

4d. Dear friends, this is what the Church must do too. We cannot say this applies only to Israel and not us. Why? Because Jesus gave the same command in Acts 1:8, “But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” To be His witnesses, we must live a separated life. We do not live like the world, behave like the world, think like the world, talk

like the world, do business like the world. Separation is a means to evangelism. We separate in order to evangelise. The Gospel is declared through our lives. Jesus said, “You are the light of the world.” We are to be His lighthouse, and if you have seen lighthouses before, you know they stand quite alone and quite apart from their surroundings so that when the beacon shines its light, it will be clear and distinct.

5d. I believe we need to be reminded again and again about our duty to live holy and separated lives. God made sure Israel kept this in mind all the time. How? Let’s turn to Deut 22:10-11. Here we read God telling the Israelites, “Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together. Thou shalt not wear a garment of divers sorts, as of woollen and linen together.” Why? Some commentators say that the ox and ass should not be yoked together because they are incompatible. The ox is strong but the ass is weak, or the ox is industrious but the ass is lazy. Another interesting reason is given by Jamieson, Fausset and Brown who commented on why the ox and ass should be kept separate. They wrote, “the ass, from feeding on coarse and poisonous weeds, has a fetid (foul smelling) breath, which its yoke-fellow seeks to avoid, not only as poisonous and offensive, but producing leanness, or, if long continued, death.” Don’t put them together because the donkey has bad breath that is lethal! I asked my students from agricultural countries whether they ploughed their fields by yoking together an ox and ass. One student from Kenya said, “Yes!” and added that both animals work very well together! Does this not contradict this text on separation? What’s going on here? The Lord also told the Israelites not to make clothes with mixed materials. How many of us here wear 100% cotton? Many of our clothes are synthetic—50% cotton, 50% polyester. So have we broken this command of separation? Don’t worry! Don’t throw your clothes away! Why did God tell them to do this? Let me submit to you that these agricultural and social laws were given for pedagogical reasons. In other words, God was teaching the doctrine of separation to the Israelites by means of practical visual aids. These laws must be read in the light of Deut chapters 6 & 7 where God commanded them to be separate from the Canaanite nations. Day by day they are reminded of this doctrine of separation—when they plough their fields, plant their crops, make their clothes.

6d. This OT truth of separation is the basis on which the apostle Paul commanded the Corinthians, “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers.” That is the first injunction. The second is found in v17, “Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate,” and the third in 7:1, “let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” The command of separation is stated or restated three times. This indicates its seriousness and importance.

7d. But this passage is one of the most misinterpreted texts of Scripture. Many say that this passage is only talking about marriage. It is simply telling us not to marry unbelievers. I want to submit to you that this passage does not mean marriage. Nowhere in this chapter does Paul mention marriage. Paul talks a lot about marriage in 1 Cor 7, but

not here. 2 Cor 6:14 applies to marriage but it does not mean marriage. There is a difference between meaning and application. Scripture has one meaning, but many applications. Not marrying an unbeliever is but one application based on the meaning of the text.

8d. So what is the meaning of 2 Cor 6:14? Context is the key to ascertaining the meaning of any passage. If you are familiar with the Corinthian Church, you will know that it is the most problematic church in the NT. Paul wrote 1 Corinthians to correct them, but certain problems still persisted. So he paid them a visit, but it was a painful one. When he got there, they treated him badly, and rejected him. Paul was heartbroken and left Corinth in tears. What was the root problem of the Corinthian Church? 2 Corinthians tells us that false teachers have infiltrated the church and were discrediting Paul's character and undermining his teachings. These false teachers called themselves super-apostles. That was why Paul defended his apostleship so forcefully in this epistle. Paul was the founding pastor of the church in Corinth. He painstakingly taught them for 1½ years before leaving to plant other churches. That was why Paul was so heartbroken by their defection. He poured out his soul in 6:11, "O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged." In other words, Paul was telling them, "You know how I spared no effort to teach you all the counsel of God. You know how I love you with all my heart. I have given myself totally to you, why are you shutting yourselves up from me. Why instead of listening to me your spiritual father, you are listening to these false teachers in the church who boast of their dubious credentials, who attack me, and who teach you wrong doctrines?"

9d. So what is the solution to the problems of the Corinthian Church? Paul commands them, "Be ye separate!" "Don't be unequally yoked together with these false teachers!" "Excommunicate them!" This passage has to do with false teachers who have entered the church introducing heretical doctrines which led to many sinful practices. Paul says, radical surgery is needed; get them out of the church. That's not all. There is a need to repent, get right with God. Be holy as God is holy. Holy in doctrine, holy in life. "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (7:1).

10d. In many churches today, you will not hear such a message being preached. What you hear is love and unity. Love and unity are good and important, but they must be found within the boundaries of Truth—the Holy Scriptures. Paul said in 1 Cor 13, "Love rejoices not in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth."

11d. Why is separation so important to the health and life of the church? It is because this is God's way of purifying and preserving the church. The doctrine of separation is the immune system of the church body. The fundamental doctrines of the Christian Faith—the inerrancy of Scripture, the virgin birth of Christ, the miracles of Christ, the substitutionary atonement of Christ, the resurrection of Christ, etc—are

just like the red blood cells which supply oxygen to support life in our body. The fundamental doctrine of separation is like our white blood cells which defend and protect our body from all the harmful bacteria and viruses that invade us. If a man has red blood cells in his system but no white blood cells, will he live for long? Is he not like a person suffering from AIDS? Likewise, a church may believe in all the life-giving doctrines of the Christian Faith, but if it rejects the protective doctrine of separation, that church is committing ecclesiastical suicide.

11d. The Scriptures predict an end-time apostasy. Evangelicals today are betraying the 16th century Reformation, returning back to Rome. This is seen in the Evangelical and Catholics Together (ECT) document of 1994 and 1997. In a joint declaration on Reformation Day, October 31, 1999, the Lutheran World Federation told the Roman Catholic Church—we are the same as you. They purposely signed it on Reformation Day to mark the end of the Protestant Reformation. October 31, 1999 was not Reformation but Deformation Day. In June 2000, the United Religions Initiative (URI) headed by an Episcopal Bishop called William Swing will bring all religions together into one. Beware the Apostate Swing.

12d. What is our response to all these happenings in the world? The Bible tells us that as Christians, we are not children of darkness but of light. The light comes from God's Word. Know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free. What should we do? Do the work of the Cross. The Cross is a Salve that saves. Preach the gospel to everyone that they might know Christ as their Saviour. That is the only way by which man can escape from the judgement to come. The Cross is also a Sword that divides. We must separate ourselves from all forms of unbelief and compromise. There are many Christians out there who do not know the doctrine of separation. It was never taught to them. There is a need to reach out to them. How? Gently and patiently share with them this vital truth through Bible study. Dr Arthur Steele, Chancellor of Clearwater Christian College, calls on all faithful defenders of the faith to be armed with these two things: not guns and grenades, but Scripture and evidence. I hope you will take time to read my book on *Biblical Separation: Doctrine of Church Purification and Preservation*. You will find this doctrine taught from Genesis to Revelation. Separation is not a minor doctrine, but truly a major doctrine of the Christian Faith, in the same standing as the virgin birth, substitutionary atonement, resurrection of Christ etc.

13d. Biblical separation is a vital pillar of the Christian Church. Remove it and the church will eventually collapse. May we never remove this pillar from our system of faith. May we never despise it. May we not be ashamed of it. May we never take it lightly. There needs to be a 21st century Reformation movement. I quote my teacher—Rev Dr Timothy Tow, “In the words of Sun Yat Sen, the Father of the Chinese Republic to his comrades, ‘The Revolution is not finished. Let us struggle on,’ we who are sons of both the 16th and 20th century Reformations must carry on the fight into the 21st century.” May all true Christians be faithful till the very end (Rev 2:10).

5b. Theistic Evolutionism

1c. Heresy of Theistic Evolution

1d. Strictly speaking, theistic evolutionism teaches that the process by which God formed man from the dust of the earth was a genetic process—or in other words, that man must have been derived, as to his physical nature, from some non-human form. Then after his body was formed, by a special act of God such as is described in the last part of the verse, Gen 2:7, man was constituted as man. The view is seriously erroneously and leads to grave misconception. If the implications were carried out, they would undermine the entire structure of Christian doctrine.

2d. Generally speaking, theistic evolutionism may be attributed to any system that attempts an unbiblical synthesis between evolutionism and creationism. So-called “Progressive Creationism” is one such system. See Quek Suan Yew and Jeffrey Khoo, “The Bible and Science: Progressive Creationism Examined in the Light of Scripture,” *The Burning Bush* 8 (2002): 1-9.

2c. Biblical Creationism

Answers to questions about the origin of the earth and of human life are not sourced in man but in God. Man was not eyewitness to creation; only God was. He was there at the very beginning. Only the Creator Himself can say for sure what happened, not Darwin, nor science. God has revealed to man in His Word how He created the universe. Thus, the Bible alone has the answers. The Christian ought not to marry science with the Bible. It is an unequal yoke! Divine Science and not human science provides infallible facts on how the whole universe came into existence. From Genesis One, we learn three facts about God’s creative work: He created all things (1) out of nothing, (2) by the power of His Word, and (3) in six literal days.

1d. Out of Nothing

1e. Gen 1:1 says, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” In the beginning, when there was nothing, when there was only God, God created the heaven and the earth. God created *out of nothing*. This is also taught in John 1:3, “All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.” Col 1:16-17 says, “For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.” Heb 11:3 likewise states, “By 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.” God created all things out of nothing. The creation of the universe was no accident. God created the universe out of His own good

pleasure and will. God created not accidentally, but intentionally.

2e. The world was created not evolved. Verse 1 states explicitly “God created.” Evolution is atheistic. There is no God and there was no creation. Everything on earth is a result of millions or billions of years of chance and change. To the man who says God does not exist, God only has one word for him: “You are a Fool”--”The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God” (Ps 14:1, 53:1). He is also a fool who says that the earth is a result of chance. All creation shouts design not chance. Ps 19:1 says, “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handywork.” Rom 1:19-20 says, “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.” Why does the evolutionist not see this? Rom 1:21-22 tells why, “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.”

2d. Divine Fiat

In v3, we read “And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.” In verse 6, again we read, “And God said, Let there be ...” This is repeated in verses 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, and 26. Ps 33:6 says, “By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.” “For he commanded and they were created” (Ps 148:5).

3d. Literal Days

1e. We have a young earth of about 10,000 years and not an old earth of millions or billions of years. Scientists tell us that the universe is about 15 billion years old. Nothing can be further from the truth. Unfortunately, certain Christian scientists try to fit Scripture into science. It is futile. One cannot fit a square peg into a round hole. In order to fit Genesis into the theory of evolution, they make the days of Genesis to mean not literal days but figurative days of long periods of millions and billions of years. They argue that the word “day” can be taken metaphorically, eg, “the day of the LORD.” It is agreed that at times, the word “day” in Scripture can mean a period of time and not necessarily 24 hours. But insofar as the days of Genesis are concerned, there are three reasons why they must be literal and not figurative days.

1f. First, we find in Genesis One, the numerical adjective. Whenever the numerical adjective (1st, 2nd, 3rd etc) is used with the word “day” it always refers to a literal 24 hour day.

2f. Second, the qualifying phrase, “evening and morning” suggests the beginning and ending of a day within a 24-hour cycle.

3f. Third, the 4th commandment in Exod 20:11 interprets the creation week as a literal week of six days plus a day of rest. If the days are millions of years, then how long must we work before we rest? Moses clearly understood the days of Genesis to be literal days. As God’s creation week was a literal week, so is man’s. God Himself has set the infallible pattern.

2e. God created the whole universe out of nothing by the power of His Word in six literal 24-hour days. The Westminster Confession states, “It pleased God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, for the manifestation of the glory of his eternal power, wisdom, and goodness, in the beginning, to create, or make of nothing, the world, and all things therein, whether visible or invisible, in the *space of six days*, and all very good.”

3c. Creation of Man

1d. God created human beings special, in His image. Ps 8:4-5 tells us that we were not made slightly higher than the animals, but slightly lower than the angels. There is a lot of difference between man and animals. “What is man, that thou art mindful of him? And the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.” God promotes man, but Science demotes man. It is an insult to God and to man, to say that man, made in the image of God, came from the apes.

2d. Furthermore, to theorize that man may have been genetically derived from the non-human, does not simplify matters for one who accepts the Bible as the Word of God, for the creation of Eve (Gen 2:21, 22) completely blocks any attempt at a naturalistic explanation of humanity.

3d. Then follows the record of the creation of woman as a suitable help for man. The creation of woman is given a spiritual and social interpretation in the three verses which follow. We should not deny that there may be spiritual symbolism in the act by which God created woman. It has been poetically said, woman was not taken from man’s feet to be his inferior, nor from his head to be his superior, but from his side to be his companion and equal.

4d. Nevertheless we must insist that the story of the creation of Eve must be understood as intended to teach that woman was a special creation by a special miraculous act of God.

4c. Special Creation

1d. Returning now to Genesis 2:7, it would seem that the particular statement that God “formed man of the dust of the ground,” although the process of formation is not specified, was intended to convey the thought of *special creation* from materials originally inorganic, rather than *derived creation* through some previously living form.

2d. This thought is borne out by the statement that God “breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul.” Breath symbolizing Spirit is a common metaphor throughout the Scriptures, “By the Word of the LORD were the heavens made and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth” (Ps 33:6). By the symbolical act of exhaling, Jesus, meeting with His disciples after His resurrection, symbolised for them the reception of the Holy Spirit (John 20:22). The Spirit breathes into man the spiritual life of regeneration (John 3:8). Thus, the breath of God in Genesis 2:7 symbolises the special Spiritual creative act whereby man was made a living being. As a living being, the soul of man was created in the image of God. This was not the case with the souls or lives of the beasts (Gen 1:20, 21, 24).

6b. **Psychoheresy**

1c. What is Psychoheresy?

“Basically, psychoheresy is a term to describe what you have when secular psychological counseling ideas and concepts are mixed with the teachings of the Bible” (see <http://www.psychoheresyaware.org>)

2c. Psychoheretical Attack on Scripture

1d. Mixing the Bible with psychology happened about 30-40 years ago. Before that, Christians viewed psychology with suspicion, and relied solely on the saving grace of the gospel, the sufficiency of Scripture, and the ministry of the Spirit to get them through life’s difficulties and problems.

2d. Gustav Niebuhr, in his article “Evangelical Christians see value of psychology,” calls it a “cultural shift” and gives his “visit to a Christian bookstore” as one example: In the section devoted to the “Christian life,” once the province of books on prayer and devotions, you can now find guides on how to stop worrying, overcome codependency, manage stress and live free of guilt (*Santa Barbara NewsPress*, February 15, 1997, p. D2).

10d. According to psychoheresy experts—Martin and Deidre Bobgan—there are now around 500 different and often conflicting

theoretical systems of psychological counseling. Such an idea of truth is like the New Age definition of *truth* being “whatever is truth to you”—completely subjective with no standard. Psychological counseling and its underlying psychologies are not based on the one secure foundation of truth, the Holy Bible. Instead, psychological counseling is based on systems of human opinion.

3c. Sufficiency of Scripture

1d. The Bible is the all-sufficient source for all of man’s emotional and psychological needs. 2 Peter 1:3 tells us that God “hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue.” Peter goes on to tell us that “We have a more sure word of prophecy: whereunto ye do well that ye take heed” (2 Pet 1:19).

2d. Furthermore, 2 Timothy 3:16-17 states, “All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.”

3d. The Holy Spirit will use the all-sufficient Word of God to produce His fruit within believers: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law” (Gal 5:22-23). The Holy Spirit is the best Comforter or Counsellor through the Holy Scriptures (John 14:16-17, 26; 16:7-8).

4d. The Bible is not a medical textbook, but it is certainly a psychological one. It is all-sufficient in dealing with the problems of the soul (psyche). [but] it does claim to be sufficient for dealing with problems of the soul (psyche, in Greek). How can we determine which psychological “truths” are true? If we answer, “Whatever works,” we’re on thin ice, since many false religious and spiritual techniques produce results. Scripture is the only basis for determining absolute truth (John 17:17).

5d. Christians must not seek the wisdom of the world to solve their emotional or psychological problems. They ought rather to seek God’s wisdom in His infallible and inerrant Word (Ps 1:1-2; Isa 55:8-11; Jer 2:13; 1 Cor 1:18-2:16).

4c. A Warning from Steven J Cole, Pastor of Flagstaff Christian Fellowship.

1d. Serious problems have plagued the human race since we fell into sin. If a relationship with the living God and His Word was not adequate for coping with these problems, but we needed the insights of modern psychology to resolve them, then God has left people without sufficient answers for the past 2,000 years, until Freud and company came along to save the day. This is preposterous! The God who went to

such expense to save us from sin would not abandon us to the world's ways to find answers to our deepest problems (Rom. 8:32). While some problems may be new to our times (anorexia, mid-life crisis, etc.), and thus are not specifically addressed in Scripture, the principles in God's Word are sufficient to deal with the underlying causes of these problems. There is no "new" problem for which Christ is not sufficient (Col. 2:10; 3:1-4).

2d. The danger for modern Christians is that "Christian" psychologists read their psychological biases into Scripture and then cite Scripture as supporting and teaching these "truths." One flagrant example: In Worry-Free Living, [Thomas Nelson, 1989] Frank Minirth, Paul Meier, and Don Hawkins operate on the psychological premise that a lack of self-worth is the basis of most psychological problems (p. 140). This is not biblically sound. The Bible clearly and repeatedly states that sin is the basis of most problems. But, the authors seek to illustrate this false psychological premise by claiming that the ten spies who brought back a negative report to Moses suffered from a negative self-concept, whereas the two spies who brought back the good report had proper self-esteem (p. 136)! They tell us that the reason that David could defeat Goliath, but Saul was a coward, was that David had good self-esteem, whereas Saul did not (p. 139)! This psychologizing of the Bible perverts its intended meaning (the Bible clearly attributes these varying responses due to the faith, or lack thereof, of the men) and leads the unsuspecting astray.

3d. In His inscrutable sovereignty, God allows trials, some mild, some severe, into every life. Some people have horrible childhoods—a physical, sexual, and verbal abuse—that cause deep emotional problems. The question is where does a person turn for healing? God's Word repeatedly claims that God Himself is our healer, sufficient to bind up our wounds and make us whole through trusting in Him (see Psalm 147:1-11 for one example of many). God's perfect and complete provision for our needs is the death and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ. We are warned not to be taken captive by the world's philosophies and principles, but to walk in the fullness of Christ, our all in all (Col. 2:6-15; 3:1-4, 11).

4d. When we learn to rely fully on Jesus Christ as our source of strength and healing, He gets the glory due to Him as the only True God. When we rely on worldly psychology for part or all of our healing (if it can, indeed, provide such), psychology gets the glory. This is not to say that walking with the Lord provides miraculous, easy, instant emotional healing. Many passages show the struggles and difficulty of the Christian walk (2 Cor. 1:9; 4:7-11; 11:23-28; 12:7-10). The Christian life is pictured as warfare, and war is never easy! But God wants each of us to learn that He is the all-sufficient One who knows us and can meet our deepest needs. We don't need the insights of worldly men to grow up in Christ.

5d. Can you find a single verse that says that you need to build your self-esteem? Many distort the command, “Love your neighbor as yourself” (Matt. 22:39), to fit the current psychological “wisdom.” They say, “The Bible commands us to love ourselves.” Some even go so far as to say that we cannot love God and others until we first learn to love ourselves. Thus they turn people toward a futile search for self-love. If you study the verse in its context, it is clear that Jesus says there are two commands, not three: Love God and love your neighbor. The standard for loving your neighbor is how you do in fact already love yourself! Jesus assumes that we each love ourselves so much that if we just love our neighbor that much, we have obeyed the command. Paul also assumes that each person loves himself (Eph. 5:28-29) and uses this as the standard by which men must love their wives. Even those with poor “self-esteem” love themselves too much, because they are consumed with self. They aren’t sacrificing themselves for God and others. The mark of biblical love is self-sacrifice, not self-esteem (Eph. 5:25; John 13:34; 15:13; 1 John 3:16).

6d. Not only does the Bible not encourage self-love; it strongly warns against it! Self-love heads the list of terrible sins that marks the end times (2 Tim. 3:2-4). The first requirement if we want to be followers of Jesus is to deny ourselves, not affirm ourselves (Mark 8:34). In fact, this is to be the daily experience of all disciples (Luke 9:23, “daily”). Many verses in the Bible tell us to humble ourselves and not to think too highly of ourselves (see James 4:6-10; 1 Pet. 5:5-6; Rom. 12:3); but none tell us to focus on how wonderful or worthy we are (because we’re not worthy—grace is for the unworthy). We are commanded to esteem others more highly than ourselves (Phil. 2:3).

12d. The problem with building your self-esteem is that the focus is wrong. Jesus said that if you seek to save your life, you’ll lose it, but if you lose your life for His sake and the gospel’s, you will save it (Mark 8:35). If you say no to your own self-focus and live for Jesus and others (the two great commandments), God graciously gives you the fulfillment you need. But if you seek fulfillment or self-esteem, you will come up empty in the end.

13d. The problem is not that God’s Word has been tried and failed, but that it hasn’t been followed completely. We need to take every thought captive to obedience to Christ (2 Cor. 10:5). We must examine ourselves and judge wrong attitudes, thoughts, and motives by God’s truth (2 Cor. 13:5; 1 Cor. 11:28-31; 1 John 1:5-10). We are to seek God with all our hearts and not lean on our own or the world’s understanding (Psalm 63; Prov. 3:5-7; Isa. 55:6-11). We are to seek first His kingdom and righteousness, not the things the world seeks (Matt. 6:19-33). No one who has done this can say, “It didn’t work!”

14d. Who made you and understands every hidden motive and thought of your heart: a therapist or the living God (Ps. 139)? We can’t even understand our own hearts completely, because we are blinded by sin (Jer. 17:9). Only God knows us thoroughly and only in

His Word does He tell us how we must live to experience His blessing. Specifically His Word warns us against walking in the counsel of the wicked and promises that if we delight in His law, we will be blessed (Psalm 1). Why are believers turning to therapists trained in the ways of Freud, Jung, Rogers, Maslow, Skinner, and other scoffers rather than to godly men and women who rely solely upon God and His Word? In whom do you trust? The Bible repeatedly warns against trusting in anything or anyone other than the one true God. To do so is the essence of idolatry.

15d. Much of the counseling that has flooded into American Christianity through psychology is contrary to God's Word of Truth. The Bible is clear that we often need the wise counsel of others, especially those who are mature in the faith (Rom. 15:14; Gal. 6:1; Prov. 24:6). We dare not be independent Christians, living apart from the body of Christ of which we are members. We desperately need one another, just as my hand needs my arm and the rest of my body to function (1 Cor. 12:12-31). Those who are strong need patiently to admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, and help the weak (1 Thess. 5:14). Thus we need counsel; but make sure that it's biblical counsel, because, "There is no wisdom and no understanding and no counsel against the Lord" (Prov. 21:30). "He who trusts in his own heart is a fool, but he who walks wisely will be delivered" (Prov. 28:26).

7b. Postmodernism

1c. What is Postmodernism?

1d. Postmodernism is a worldview that is difficult to define. It emerged as a subject of academic study only in the 1980s, and is found in various academic disciplines not excluding theology.

2d. Perhaps, postmodernism is best described as an attitude of subjectivity and relativity; that there is no such thing as objective truth. Meaning is meaningless personally and universally.

3d. Postmodernism grew out of modernism. Modernism was optimistic. The modern man thought he could change the world to make it a better place to live in, morally speaking. But the opposite is true. A pessimism arose which led to a pessimistic worldview.

4d. Postmodernism is more pragmatic than theoretical in its view of knowledge. This is the observation of Dr Mary Klages (University of Colorado): "In modern societies, knowledge was equated with science, and was contrasted to narrative; science was good knowledge, and narrative was bad, primitive, irrational (and thus associated with women, children, primitives, and insane people). Knowledge, however, was good for its own sake; one gained knowledge, via education, in order to be knowledgeable in general, to become an educated person. This is the ideal of the liberal arts education. In a postmodern society,

however, knowledge becomes functional—you learn things, not to know them, but to use that knowledge. ... educational policy today puts emphasis on skills and training, rather than on a vague humanist ideal of education in general. This is particularly acute for English majors. ‘What will you DO with your degree?’”

5d. The emphasis on the pragmatic is also seen in the shift from Bible-centred to Ministry-centred training programmes in most Bible Colleges and Seminaries. Courses on the Biblical books, Biblical languages, and Systematic Theology are played down, and practical courses on administration, counseling, conflict management, church growth methods, community development are played up.

6d. Postmodernism may also be seen as a movement away from the systematic to the fragmented. Postmodernist theologians for instance have been propagating a fragmented theology over against a systematic theology of the Christian Faith. This has given rise to the fragmentation of theology into African Theology, Asian Theology, Black Theology, Latin American Theology, Indian Theology Western Theology, etc. There is no one overarching theology, but many localised theologies.

2c. Three Attitudes of Postmodernism

1d. Skepticism: What is Truth? There is a rejection of the concept of absolute certainty or objective truth. Postmodern theologians have no confidence that believers can know things with certainty. Biblical propositions are uncertain, subjective, relative, and hence tentative.

2d. Rebellion: That is your interpretation! Meaning is confined only to a given individual or community, and does not apply to others outside of that individual or community. Meaning is not universally valid or applicable; it is relative only to a given context--person(s), place, or time--or only true for certain individuals or societies or cultures. One should not impose his interpretation or meaning on another. Dogmatism is taboo.

3d. Unbelief: There is no such thing as a universal, supreme and final authority. There is no such thing as an existing, tangible, absolutely infallible, totally inerrant, and supremely authoritative Scripture. Propositional truths not to one’s liking are reduced to personal convictions. Personal convictions overrule propositional truths.

3c. Antidote: Back to Basics!

1d. God is True

1e. God is all-knowing (Ps 147:4-5, Prov 15:3, Matt 10:29-30, Acts 15:18, 1 John 3:20).

- 2e. God is characterised by truth (Tit 1:2, Heb 6:18, 10:23).
- 2d. His Word is Truth (John 8:30-32, 17:17)
 - 1e. His Word is perfectly inspired and completely sufficient (2 Tim 3:16).
 - 2e. His Word is perfectly preserved and supremely authoritative (Matt 5:18).
- 3d. Faith is the Key

Sinful man needs to humbly believe in and submit to God and His Word in order to see, know, understand and be certain of what is true and what is truth (John 3:3, 1 Cor 2:14, Heb 11:1-3).

8b. **Open Theism**

- 1c. What is Open Theism?
 - 1d. Open Theism is a radical Arminianism that denies God's omniscience. Open Theists like Clark Pinnock, Greg Boyd, and John Sanders teach that God does not know the thoughts and intents of man and the events of the future.
 - 2d. Simply put, Open Theism is the belittling of God.

2c. Open Theism of Clark Pinnock

Clark Pinnock has written a couple of books espousing his open theistic views: (1) *The Scripture Principle* (San Francisco, Harper & Rowe: 1984), and (2) *The Most Moved Mover* (Grand Rapids, Baker: 2001). The quotations below come from these 2 books (abbreviated SP and MMM respectively) as culled out by Norman Geisler in his paper, "Open Theists and Inerrancy: Clark Pinnock on the Bible and God."

- 1d. Pinnock on the Bible
 - 1e. The Bible is not Completely Inerrant
 - 1f. "This leaves us with the question, Does the New Testament, **did Jesus, teach the perfect errorlessness of the Scriptures? No, not in plain terms**" (Pinnock, SP, 57).
 - 2f. Although **the New Testament does not teach a strict doctrine of inerrancy**, it might be said to encourage a trusting attitude, which inerrancy in a more lenient definition does signify. **The fact is that inerrancy is a very flexible term in and of itself**" (Pinnock, SP, 77).

3f. “Once we recall how complex a hypothesis inerrancy is, it is obvious that **the Bible teaches no such thing explicitly. What it claims, as we have seen, is divine inspiration and a general reliability**” (Pinnock, SP, 58).

4f. “Why, then, do scholars insist that the Bible does claim total inerrancy? I can only answer for myself, **as one who argued in this way a few years ago**. I claimed that the Bible taught total inerrancy because I hoped that it did—I wanted it to” (Pinnock, SP, 58).

5f. “**For my part, to go beyond the biblical requirements to a strict position of total errorlessness only brings to the forefront the perplexing features of the Bible that no one can completely explain** and overshadows those wonderful certainties of salvation in Christ that ought to be front and center” (Pinnock, SP, 59).

2e. The Inerrancy of Intent, not Fact

“We will not have to panic when we meet some intractable difficulty. **The Bible will seem reliable enough in terms of its soteric [saving] purpose,...** In the end this is what the mass of evangelical believers need—not the rationalistic ideal of a perfect Book that is no more, but the trustworthiness of a Bible with truth where it counts, **truth that is not so easily threatened by scholarly problems**” (Pinnock, SP, 104-105).

3e. The Bible is not the Word of God

1f. “**The Bible does not attempt to give the impression that it is flawless in historical or scientific ways**. God uses writers with weaknesses and still teaches the truth of revelation through them” (Pinnock, SP, 99).

2f. “**What God aims to do through inspiration is to stir up faith in the gospel through the word of Scripture, which remains a human text beset by normal weaknesses [which includes errors]**” (Pinnock, SP, 100).

3f. “**A text that is word for word what God wanted in the first place might as well have been dictated, for all the room it leaves for human agency**. This is the kind of thinking behind the militant inerrancy position. God is taken to be the Author of the

Bible in such a way that he controlled the writers and every detail of what they wrote” (Pinnock, SP, 101).

4e. The Bible is not Completely Infallible

1f. **“The Bible is not a book like the Koran, consisting of nothing but perfectly infallible propositions,... the Bible did not fall from heaven.... We place our trust ultimately in Jesus Christ, not in the Bible....** What the Scriptures do is to present a **sound and reliable testimony [but not inerrant]** to who he is and what God has done for us” (Pinnock, SP, 100).

2f. **“Inspiration should be seen as a dynamic work of God. In it, God does not decide every word that is used,** one by one but works in the writers in such a way that they make full use of their own skills and vocabulary while giving expression to the divinely inspired message being communicated to them and through them” (Pinnock, SP, 105).

5e. There are Minor Errors in the Bible

“The authority of the Bible in faith and practice does not rule out the possibility of an occasionally uncertain text, differences in details as between the Gospels, a lack of precision in the chronology of events recorded in the Books of Kings and Chronicles, a prescientific description of the world, and the like” (Pinnock, SP, 104).

6e. The Bible Contains Myth and Legend

1f. **“In the narrative of the fall of Adam, there are numerous symbolic features** (God molding man from dirt, the talking snake, God molding woman from Adam’s rib, symbolic trees, four major rivers from one garden, etc.), so that it is natural to ask whether this is not a **meaningful narration that does not stick only to factual matters”** (Pinnock, SP, 119).

2f. “When we look at the Bible, it is clear that it is not radically mythical. **The influence of myth is there in the Old Testament. The stories of creation and fall, of flood and the tower of Babel, are there in pagan texts and are worked over in Genesis from the angle of Israel’s knowledge of God,** but the framework is no longer mythical” (Pinnock, SP, 123).

3f. “We read of a coin turning up in a fish’s mouth and of the origin of the different languages of

humankind. We hear about the magnificent exploits of Samson and Elisha. We even see evidence of the duplication of miracle stories in the gospels. **All of them are things that if we read them in some other book we would surely identify as legends**” (Pinnock, Sp, 123).

2d. Pinnock on God

1e. The Bible Has False Prophecy

1f. **“... some prophecies are conditional, leaving the future open, and, presumably, God’s knowledge of it”** (Pinnock, MMM, 50).

2f. **“... there are imprecise prophetic forecasts based on present situations, as when Jesus predicts the fall of Jerusalem** (Pinnock, MMM, 50).

2e. God is not Bound to His Own Word

1f. **“God is free in the manner of fulfilling prophecy and is not bound to a script, even his own”** (Pinnock, MMM, 51 n.66).

2f. **“We may not want to admit it but prophecies often go unfulfilled...”** (Pinnock, MMM, 51, n.66).

3e. God’s Foreknowledge is Limited

1f. **“It is unsound to think of exhaustive foreknowledge, implying that every detail of the future is already decided”** (Pinnock, MMM, 8).

2f. **“Though God knows all there is to know about the world, there are aspects about the future that even God does not know”** (Pinnock, MMM, 32).

3f. **“Scripture makes a distinction with respect to the future; God is certain about some aspects of it and uncertain about other aspects”** (Pinnock, MMM, 47).

4f. **“But no being, not even God, can know in advance precisely what free agents will do, even though he may predict it with great accuracy”** (Pinnock, MMM, 100).

5f. **“God, in order to be omniscient, need not know the future in complete detail”** (Pinnock, MMM, 100).

- 4e. God is not in Complete Control of the World
- 1f. **“This means that God is not now in complete control of the world... things happen which God has not willed... God’s plans at this point in history are not always fulfilled”** (Pinnock, MMM, 36).
- 5e. God Undergoes Change
- 1f. “For example, even though **the Bible says repeatedly that God changes his mind and alters his course of action**, conventional theists reject the metaphor and deny that such things are possible for God” (Pinnock, MMM, 63).
- 2f. “I would say that God is *unchangeable in changeable ways*,...” (Pinnock, MMM, 85-86).
- 2c. Biblical Refutation of Open Theism
- 1d. God is omniscient. He knows all things—past, present, future (Ps 147:4-5, Prov 15:3, Matt 10:29-30, Acts 15:18, 1 John 3:20).
- 2d. The classic proof-text for God’s omniscience is Isaiah 40-48. Here God proves that He is the living and true over against idols precisely because He knows and declares the future (Isa 41:21-29, 42:8-9, 43:8-13, 44:6-8, 24-28, 45:1-7, 18-25, 46:8-11, 48:3-8).
- 3d. Explanation of Difficult Passages
- 1e. Genesis 22:12, “... now I know that thou fearest God.” This does not mean that God did not know that Abraham feared Him until this time, nor that God had learned something new about Abraham here. There is nothing God does not know, or needs to learn. Read 1 Chron 28:9 and 1 Sam 16:7 (always bear in mind that the clear text must shed light on the not so clear). When God says “I know” here, it must surely mean “I have eternally known.” The word “now” must mean the *fulfilment* of that divine foreknowledge when Abraham completed His act of obedience to God.
- 2e. Genesis 3:8-13, “...where art thou? ... what is this that thou hast done?” does not at all mean that God does not know. These are *rhetorical questions* or *anthropomorphisms* (i.e. figures of speech to describe God the Creator as if He were human or a creature, e.g. Ps 91:4).
- 3e. Genesis 9:13-17, God sets in place the rainbow so that He “will remember” His covenant. This does not at all mean that God is capable of forgetting. In fact, when God says “I will remember,” He is speaking of His perfect memory and

knowledge. The rainbow was not for God to remember but for man to understand God's faithfulness in keeping His covenant promises (Heb 6:9-10, Matt 6:31-33). Forgetfulness is man's weakness, not God's (homework: check the concordance, s.v. "Forget" and "Forgetful" and see how many times those words are used with reference to man).

4e. Exod 32:14 says that "the LORD repented." Does this mean that God changed His mind? Surely not, for Num 23:19 says, "God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? Or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" See also 1 Sam 15:29, 2 Tim 2:13, Titus 1:2, Heb 6:18. These texts state clearly and certainly that God makes no mistakes, and does not change His mind. The text in question is thus an anthropomorphism. In other words, divine "repentance" must not be equated with human repentance which involves human weaknesses, shortcomings, or mistakes. "The LORD repented" in Exod 32:14 is simply a figure of speech to allude to how God feels—that He is longsuffering and does not delight in the destruction of the wicked, and if sinners would return to obey Him and His commandments, He is ever ready to forgive them of their sins (1 John 1:7, cf Jon 3:5-10).

9b. **Neo-Fundamentalism (or Neo-Deism)**

1c. What is Neo-Fundamentalism?

1d. In the last decade or so, a new breed of fundamentalists following after the heels of the neo-evangelicals have begun to undermine the King James Bible and its underlying Hebrew and Greek Scriptures.

2d. Neo-fundamentalism affirms the verbal plenary inspiration but denies the verbal plenary preservation of the Scriptures.

3d. According to neo-fundamentalists, the Bible is only perfect (i.e. infallible and inerrant) in the past (i.e. in the autographs), but no longer perfect today (since the autographs are no longer in existence).

4d. Since what the church possesses today are not the autographs but apographs (copies), it is concluded that there is no such a thing as an existing infallible and inerrant Scripture.

5d. Such a view may be deemed neo-deistic because it suggests that the God who has so perfectly inspired His Word cannot also perfectly preserve His Word so that in every generation believers may affirm that they have all the inspired words of Holy Writ to the jot and tittle (Matt 5:18). According to them, some of the inspired words have been lost.

6d. Neo-fundamentalists reject the existence of an infallible biblical standard by which all versions or translations should be judged. In their opinion, the only ones really capable of judging the Scriptures are the textual critics (i.e. the so-called “scholars,” who examine the thousands of manuscripts by using their self-made rules to determine for us what is God’s Word and what is not). In the so-called science of textual criticism, man is promoted and God demoted. In such an exercise puny, finite and corrupt man seeks to judge the infinite and eternal God and His forever infallible and inerrant Word.

2c. Critique of Neo-Fundamentalism

1d. Against Central Baptist Theological Seminary—Roy E Beacham and Kevin T Bauder, *One Bible Only?* (Kregel, 2001)—read my paper, “The Emergence of Neo-Fundamentalism: *One Bible Only?* Or ‘Yea Hath God Said?’” in *The Burning Bush*, January 2004, 2-47.

2d. Against Bob Jones University—James B Williams, *From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man* (Ambassador-Emerald, 1999)—read my paper, “Bob Jones University and the KJV: A Critique of *From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man*” in *The Burning Bush*, January 2001, 1-33.

3c. Do We Have an Infallible and Inerrant Bible Today?

Read my paper “A Plea for a Perfect Bible” in *The Burning Bush*, January 2003, 1-15.